the legacy of HO CHI MINH:

nothing is more precious than independence and freedom

• speeches, writings and poems of the leader of the Vietnamese Revolution read in English by Vu Thien Dinh

• the actual voice of Ho Chi Minh addressing the American people in English

• music of the Vietnamese people and songs to the memory of Ho Chi Minh sung by Barbara Dane, Chris Iijima, Pablo Milanes and others

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HOW DID THIS RECORD COME TO BE?
For a number of years I have hoped to be able to put some of the ideas of Ho Chi Minh into the form of a recording, as a way of dramatizing his signal leadership of the Vietnamese people and the Worker’s Party, with its lessons for the progressive peoples of the entire world. Whenever I have sung the Ballad of Ho Chi Minh, written twenty years ago by the Scottish singer/songwriter Ewan MacColl, whether it was at an anti-war rally or teaching it to G.I. resisters outside an army base [where the song often had to be repeated twice on a program by popular demand], the spirit of internationalism intimately connected with the highest form of patriotism, which runs through all of the teachings of Ho Chi Minh, deepened and became more concrete in my own mind. Then I heard a recording of a Sardinian peasant leader who sang of his inspiration from Lenin and Ho Chi Minh, and it brought home again that even in corners of the world where there are few telephones or electric lines, and where technology as known in the capitals of world-wide imperialism is seldom taught, that the spirit of nationalism has touched and changed people, making it possible for them to formulate strategies which have proven to have the capacity to liberate them.

So many people have contributed to the making of this record, some knowingly and some unwittingly. We want to thank all of them by name, but we have no way of knowing the names of, for example, the members of the Voice of Vietnam orchestra and chorus, who most probably bicycled through the blackouts in Hanoi to the recording studio, or the Vietnamese young people who were studying in Havana at the time that I arranged a reception for them and the U.S. citizens residing in Cuba at which they sang these songs. When I sang in Vietnam in 1974, I met many of the composers whose work can be heard here, but there was no practical way to tell them how I was planning to use their compositions at that time.

A few people’s contributions were made especially for this record. Chris Iijima recorded his beautiful setting for Ho Chi Minh’s poem “Fine Weather” and a group of New York friends of Vietnam sang “We Will Liberate the South.” Their names are: Lizzie Berry, Cathy Blank, John Gummery, Andrée Martinez, Jane Spelman, Ted Tuleja, and Phyllis. They also enriched the chorus on Ballad of Ho Chi Minh. Vene Villapando of the KDP (Union of Democratic Pilipinos) recorded the solo trumpet band of the “Internationale.”

The Cuban television documentary producer, Ernesto Piñeiro, sent us the recordings of Pablo Milanés’ setting for the Ho Chi Minh poem “Insomnio” or “A Sleepless Night”, and the poem “Four Months Have Passed” which is read in Vietnamese by Le Hang, a Vietnamese studying in Cuba. The poem by Cuban poet Felix Pita Rodriguez called “Su Nombre, Ho Chi Minh”, which has become known to millions of young people there through the effective musical setting by Pablo Milanés, may also be heard on Paredon P-1910 “Cuba Viva” by Danny Schecter, a documentary producer from Boston, found the original tapes with the actual voice of Ho Chi Minh speaking to the American people.

Most particularly, we want to thank Vu-Thien-Dinh of The Association of Vietnamese Patriots in the U.S. Vu had never recorded or tried reading aloud for audiences until his work with the Association brought us in contact with him. Once he agreed to take on the task of reading the voice of Ho Chi Minh, he applied himself to it with dedication and care, out of respect for the subject matter and especially out of his admiration for the beloved leader of the Vietnamese people. Overcoming all difficulties, he has done a fine job.

The editing of Ho’s speeches and poetry was done by Matthew West. Selection of the music was by myself, Neal Conan, Matthew West, and Vu Thien Dinh. Neal Conan and I were responsible for the production of the tape, with Jonathan Thayer engineering on original material and C. Pitts engineering the mixes of speeches and music. The cover drawing of Ho Chi Minh was done by Cuban artist Pablo Labaffino, and the layout was done by Ronald Clynne. The booklet typesetting was done by the Guardian Typesetters, and the booklet layout was by Arbolito. If there are others who should be named individually, forgive our omissions in the name of getting the record out in time to be part of the celebrations honoring the Thirty-first Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence of Vietnam. September 2, 1945 to September 2, 1976.

Barbara Dane
Executive Producer

VU-THIEN-DINH, who reads the voice of Ho Chi Minh, is a member of the Union of Vietnamese in the U.S., now transformed and expanded into the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in the U.S. The goals of the association are:

1) To unite the Vietnamese in the U.S. in the spirit of concord and reconciliation, without distinction of social class, religious affiliation, or past activity; to facilitate their contribution towards the creation of a peaceful, independent, reunified, democratic and prosperous Vietnam.

2) To encourage mutual aid in the Vietnamese community, and to preserve and foster the national culture.

3) To contribute to the consolidation of the friendship between the American people and the Vietnamese people.

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Friends of Indochina
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120 Maryland Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002
Indochina Mobile
Education Project
1224 18 St., NW
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Organizations: 235 East 49th St.
New York City, N.Y. 10017

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Was Ho Chi Minh a “revolutionary nationalist” or was he a communist?

This kind of debate probably still goes on in the U.S. State Department as the makers of American foreign policy try to chart a course that will “protect” the interests of U.S. imperialism in an increasingly revolutionary world. The question is, of course, ridiculous—the kind of question posed by strategists unable to comprehend the reality of the latter half of the 20th century in which the struggles for national liberation and socialism have merged. President Ho Chi Minh was, clearly, both a “revolutionary nationalist” and a communist. To see him as either one or the other—as though the two were mutually exclusive—is to fail to understand not only the man but the Vietnamese revolution.

As with many other third world revolutionaries, it was patriotism that brought Ho Chi Minh to communism—for he found in the theories and practice of Marx and Lenin the only scientific solution to the problem of colonialism. He came to see the oppression of the Vietnamese people by the French as a state of affairs that grew inexorably out of the urgencies of capitalism, just as he came to understand that the liberation of Vietnamese people would only be achieved by an all-out military struggle.

Today the entire world stands in awe of the accomplishments of the Vietnamese people, who not only defeated France and Japan but went on under the most difficult conditions to wage a triumphant people’s war against a U.S. invasion of their country. There is, inevitably, a certain tendency to romanticize the heroism of the Vietnamese people, to depict them as “a special kind of human being,” suggesting some mystical quality in the Vietnamese land and tradition in order to account for a victory deemed possible by few in the mid-sixties, when the U.S. had committed more than 500,000 troops to the struggle and was waging the most fierce air war in history against North Vietnam. Such a view, however, represents a complete misunderstanding of the reality of Vietnam and—though intended as a tribute—is actually a denial of the truth that every people and every nation is capable of the same heroism and steadfastness that brought the people of Vietnam their treasured victory.

Herein lies the great contribution of Ho Chi Minh for, more than any other individual, he enabled the Vietnamese people to transform their patriotism, their courage and their steadfast will to resist, into an invincible weapon of liberation. His key was the founding, in 1930, of the Indochinese Communist Party, which enabled the struggle to proceed on a scientific basis over the course of the next 45 difficult years under its unwavering leadership.

“The Vietnamese people owe everything to the Vietnamese communists.” That is the way Hoang Tung, editor of Nhan Dan newspaper and member of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers Party, put it to three visiting Americans, Jack Smith (managing editor of the Guardian), Barbara Dane and myself, in December of 1974, in Hanoi.

What exactly did Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese communists do?

1. They found the correct way to combine the two strategic tasks of the revolution: struggle against colonialism and the struggle against semi-feudalism. This was not as obvious a proposition as it might appear today. There were many Vietnamese patriots who did not understand the class nature of the independence struggle, and who therefore would have permitted the patriotic struggle to come under the hegemony of those classes unable to see it through to the end. There were others who saw only the struggle against backward social relations, underestimating the significance of the independence struggle. It was the communists who linked the two by putting forth, from the beginning, two strategic slogans: “national independence” and “land to the tiller.”

2. The Vietnamese communists based their revolutionary strategy on the principle of “relying on the masses” rather than the patriotic educated elite, thus laying the foundation for genuine people’s war.

3. The Vietnamese communists adopted the strategy of a “two-stage revolution.” Here is the way they explained it (in 1930) in their first political thesis: “In its initial period, the Indochinese revolution will
be a bourgeoise (subsequently changed to “national” - 1.S.) democratic revolution, for it cannot yet directly tackle the organizational problems of socialism. The country is still very weak economically, many feudal vestiges still linger on, the relation of class forces is not yet tipped in favor of the proletariat, and besides, imperialism still holds oppressive sway. For these reasons, in the present period the revolution will have only an agrarian and anti-imperialist character. The bourgeois democratic revolution is a preparatory period leading to socialist revolution.”

4. The Vietnamese communists developed a strong united front of all patriotic classes and sectors in the struggle against colonialism. The cornerstone of this united front was the worker-peasant alliance.

5. The communists taught the Vietnamese people that they must prepare for, and engage in, mass armed struggle if they were to achieve liberation. To do this, they had to overcome two tendencies which had previously prevailed. One was a pacifist-reformist tendency, which either shunned violence on principle or promoted the illusion that Vietnam could win its independence through elections, appeals to major powers or other forms of passive struggle. The other was an adventurist view, which relied primarily on terrorism, assassinations and small group actions rather than mass armed struggle. The communist strategy was explained by Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap (brilliant designer of the battle of Dienbienphu which finished off the French in 1954, as well as the master mind of the great offensives of Tet in 1968 and the final liberation of the south in 1975): “It was necessary to formally grasp the strategy of a protracted resistance and to exalt the will to be self-supporting . . . . From the military point of view, our strategy and tactics had to be those of a people’s war and a protracted resistance.”

6. From the very beginning, the Vietnamese communists saw the struggle for the emancipation of women as a critical revolutionary struggle, proclaiming “equality between man and woman” as one of the ten “essential tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution” in the 1930 thesis.

7. The Vietnamese communists were able to link up the struggle of more than 60 different national minorities against their own national oppression with the overall struggle for independence and national liberation.

8. The Vietnamese communists taught—and practiced—self-reliance as the guiding principle of their struggle, always welcoming whatever assistance might be obtained from other countries while making clear their understanding that they had to make their revolution themselves.

9. The Vietnamese communists always promoted an internationalist outlook, which enabled them to forge an objective alliance between themselves and the French masses during the war against France, and later with the U.S. anti-war forces (representing tens of millions who opposed the war) during the period of the American aggression.

10. The Vietnamese communists always projected their view that socialism was the long-term goal of revolution, and that, however, this objective could only be achieved in a step-by-step way once foreign imperialism had been vanquished.

11. The Vietnamese communists taught the necessity of leadership in a successful struggle. Spontaneous struggle, however militant, was seen to be ultimately self-defeating, and their leadership of a tightly organized, disciplined Marxist-Leninist party demonstrated itself to be a prerequisite for victory. At the same time, they fashioned their party into one which enjoyed the confidence of the masses, openly practiced criticism and self-criticism, and integrated itself into the lives of the masses on every level, sharing hardships and sacrifices as well as joys and triumphs.

12. Finally, the Vietnamese communists demonstrated that Marxism-Leninism is a living science of revolution, not a sterile dogma. “Our party attaches great importance to the study of the revolutionary experience of the fraternal countries and parties,” said Le Duan, first secretary of the Vietnam Workers Party, “but it always regards the concrete practice of the Vietnamese revolution, and the living realities of Vietnamese society with its original features, . . . as a starting point in applying the principles of Marxism-Leninism . . . . The tremendous victories reaped by the Vietnamese revolution are precisely due to the independent and creative manner in which its lines and methods have been elaborated.”

The political essence of Ho Chi Minh is encompassed in all of the above. Clearly, the Vietnamese revolution was not the handiwork of one man—not even Ho Chi Minh. But Uncle Ho had the vision—as well as the practical organizing ability—needed to forge that political/military force which could produce the kind of collective leadership capable of leading the Vietnamese people to victory.

One need not try to fashion a lasting tribute in words to Ho Chi Minh. That victory, along with the peaceful reunification of his homeland as the Vietnamese people now set out on the path of building socialism in their own independent country, is his greatest and most lasting tribute.

Irwin Silber

[Irwin Silber is Executive Editor of the Guardian.]
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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

(Sept. 2, 1945)

"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This immortal statement appeared in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense it means: "All the peoples of the earth are equal from birth. All the peoples have a right to live, and to be happy and free.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, made at the time of the French Revolution in 1791 also states: "All men are born free, and with equal rights."

Nevertheless, for more than eighty years the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our people. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.

Politically, they have deprived our people of every democratic liberty. They have enforced inhuman laws. They have set up three different political divisions in the North, Central and South in order to wreck our country's oneness, and to prevent our people from being united. . . .

They have sucked us dry . . . robbing our rice fields, our mines, our forests and our other natural resources . . . They have invented numerous unjustifiable taxes and reduced our people, especially our peasantry, to extreme poverty. They have made it impossible for our national bourgeoisie to prosper. They have mercilessly exploited our workers.

. . . . . When the Japanese fascists invaded Indochina to establish new bases against the Allies, the French colonialists went down on their bended knees to . . . . welcome the Japanese in . . . . They either fled or surrendered, showing that they were not only incapable of "protecting" us, but that in a period of five years they had twice sold our country out to the Japanese . . . .

When the Japanese surrendered to the Allies, our entire people rose up to take power and founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese, not from the French . . . .

We, the Provisional Government of the new Viet Nam, representing the entire people, hereby declare that from now on we sever all relations of a colonial character with France . . . . and abolish all privileges held by France in our country.

A people who have courageously opposed French enslavement for more than eighty years, a people who have resolutely sided with the Allies against the fascists . . . such a people must be free. Such a people must be independent.

For these reasons, we, the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam solemnly make this declaration to the world:

Vietnam has a right to enjoy freedom and independence, and in fact has become a free and independent country. Our entire people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property if need be, in order to safeguard our freedom and independence.
THE PATH WHICH LED ME TO LENINISM

(1960)

After World War I, I made my living in Paris, now as a retoucher at a photographer's, now as painter of "Chinese antiquities" (made in France!). I would distribute leaflets denouncing the crimes committed by the French colonialists in Viet-Nam.

At that time, I supported the October Revolution only instinctively, not yet grasping all its historic importance. I loved and admired Lenin because he was a great patriot who liberated his compatriots; until then I had read none of his books.

Heated discussions were then taking place in the branches of the Socialist Party, about the question of whether the Socialist Party should remain in the Second International, should a Second-and-a-half International be founded, or should the Socialist Party join Lenin's Third International?

What I wanted most to know—and this precisely was not debated in the meetings—was: Which International sides with the peoples of colonial countries?

I raised this question—the most important in my opinion—in a meeting... A comrade gave me Lenin's "Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions," published by l'Humanité, to read.

There were political terms difficult to understand in this thesis. But by reading it again and again, finally I could grasp the main part of it. What emotion, enthusiasm, clear-sightedness, and confidence it instilled into me! I was overjoyed to tears. Though sitting alone in my room, I shouted aloud as if addressing large crowds:

"Dear martyrs, compatriots! This is what we need, this is the path to our liberation!"

At first, patriotism, not yet Communism, led me to have confidence in Lenin, in the Third International. Step by step, along the struggle, by studying Marxism-Leninism parallel with participation in practical activities, I gradually came upon the fact that only Socialism and Communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery... .

SPEECH AT THE TOURS CONGRESS

(December 1920)

"You all know that French capitalism entered Indochina half a century ago. It conquered our country at bayonet point and in the name of capitalism. Since then we have not only been oppressed and exploited shamelessly, but also tortured and poisoned pitilessly. (I would stress the fact that we have been poisoned, with opium, alcohol, etc.) I cannot, in but a few minutes, reveal all the atrocities perpetrated by the predatory capitalists in Indochina.

Prisons outnumber schools and are always overcrowded. Any native suspected of having socialist ideas is arrested, and sometimes put to death, without trial. So goes justice in Indochina, for in that country there is one law for the Annamese and another for the Europeans... . We have neither freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, nor freedom of association. We have no right to emigrate or travel abroad as tourists. We live in utter ignorance because we have no right to study... . Thousands of Vietnamese have been led to a slow death and thousands of others have been massacred to protect interests that are not theirs.

"Comrades, such is the treatment inflicted upon more than twenty million Annamese, that is more than half the population of France. And yet they are said to be under French protection!... .

The Socialist Party must carry out propaganda for socialism in all colonial countries. We shall see in the Socialist Party's joining the Third International the promise that from now on it will attach to the colonial questions the importance they deserve... ."
REPORT ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS AT THE FIFTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

(1924)

In his speech on "Lenin and the National Question", Comrade Stalin said that the reformists and the leaders of the Second International did not dare to put the white and the colored peoples on the same footing. He said that Lenin had rejected this inequality, smashing the obstacle which separated the civilized slaves from the uncivilized ones...

Like their Vietnamese brothers, the peasants in Africa lead unbearably hard lives, subjected to continuous forced labor in press gangs, and to heavy taxation. Their misery and suffering are beyond description... Even in good harvest years, peasants are seen rummaging in rubbish heaps and disputing scraps of food with dogs. In the lean years, one can see the fields and roads strewn with corpses.

The lives of the peasants in West Africa and French Equatorial Africa are still more horrible. These colonies are in the hands of about forty companies. They control everything: the land, the natural resources, and even the lives of the people, who do not even have the right to work for themselves... To force them to work for nothing... all lands and fields are confiscated. Only those peasants who agree to work for the companies are allowed a tiny plot of land... But they are not allowed to till their own land until they have finished work for the big plantations. Because of this, there are frequent famines and widespread epidemics in the colonies...

Popular anger has followed in the wake of misery and famine in all the French colonies. The people are ready for insurrection. In many colonies, they have already risen up, but their rebellions have all been drowned in blood. The reason for their present apparent passivity is the lack of organization and leadership. The Communist International must help them to re-organize, it must supply them with leading cadres, and it must show them the road to revolution and liberation!
VIETNAMESE WOMEN AND FRENCH DOMINATION

(from Le Paria, August 1, 1922)

Colonization is in itself an act of violence by the strong against the weak... It is bitterly ironic to find that the very civilization which uses the gentle image of woman to symbolize liberty and justice is capable of inflicting upon its living emblem the most ignoble treatment. This same system, run by a category of men who consider themselves champions of gallantry, often afflicts women shamefully, in her manners, her modesty, and even her life.

A few instances of the sadism of the colonizers will make it possible for our Western sisters and brothers to understand both the nature of the so-called “civilizing” mission of capitalism and the sufferings of their sisters in the colonies.

“When the soldiers arrived,” related an eye-witness, “the population fled. Only two old men remained, along with two women. One of these was very young, and the other was a mother, suckling her baby and holding by the hand an eight-year-old girl. The soldiers asked for money and opium. When they could not make themselves understood, they became furious, and knocked down one of the old men with their rifle butts. Then, two who were already drunk when they arrived began to amuse themselves by roasting the other old man over a wood fire.

“In the meanwhile, the others busied themselves by raping the two women, along with the eight-year-old girl. When they wearied of that, they murdered the child. At this point, the mother was able to run away with her infant, where, from a distance of a hundred yards and hidden in some bushes, she watched her companion being tortured. She saw one of the soldiers many times, slowly thrust his bayonet into the young girl’s stomach and, very slowly, draw it out again. Then he cut off the dead girl’s finger to remove a ring. Finally, he cut off her head to steal a necklace.

“The three corpses lay flat on the ground there in the former salt marsh: the child naked, the young woman disemboweled, with her stiffened left forearm raising a clenched fist to the indifferent sky. The old man, horrible, naked like the others, was disfigured by his own fat, which had run, melted, and congealed with the skin of his belly, which was now bloated, grilled and golden, like the skin of a roast pig.”
APPEAL MADE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FOUNDING OF THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

(February 18, 1930)

Workers, peasants, soldiers, youth and school students! Oppressed and exploited fellow countrymen! Sisters and brothers! Comrades!

... In order to restore the forces of capitalism in France, the French imperialists have resorted to every perfidious scheme to intensify capitalist exploitation in Indochina. They have set up new factories to exploit the workers with low wages. They have plundered the peasants' land to establish plantations and drive them to poverty. They have levied new heavy taxes. In short, they have driven our people to utter misery.

... However, the French imperialists' barbarous oppression and ruthless exploitation have awakened our compatriots, who have all realized that revolution is the only road to survival, and that without it they would simply go to die! This is why the revolutionary movement has grown stronger with each passing day. The workers refuse to work, the peasants demand land, the students strike, the traders boycott. Everywhere the masses have risen to oppose the French imperialists.

The revolution has made the French imperialists tremble with fear. On the one hand, they use the feudalists and compradors to instigate the people. On the other, they terrorize, arrest, they jail, deport and kill a great number of Vietnamese revolutionaries. If the French imperialists think that they can suppress the Vietnamese by means of terror, they are grossly mistaken. For one thing, the Vietnamese revolution is not isolated but enjoys the assistance of the world proletariat in general and that of the French working class in particular. Secondly, it is precisely at the very time when the French imperialists are frenziedly carrying out terrorist acts that the Vietnamese Communists, formerly working separately, have united into a single party, the Indochinese Communist Party, to lead the revolutionary struggle of our entire people.

Workers, peasants, soldiers, youth and school students! Oppressed and exploited fellow countrymen!

The Indochinese Communist Party has been founded. It is the Party of the working class. It will help the proletariat lead the revolution waged for the sake of all oppressed and exploited people....

ON REVOLUTIONARY MORALITY

(1958)

Revolutionary morality consists of the following:

To devote one's life to struggling for the Party and the revolution. This is the most essential point.

To work hard for the Party, observe Party discipline, and implement Party lines and policies.

To put the interests of the Party and the laboring people before and above one's own interests. To serve the people wholeheartedly. To struggle selflessly for the Party and the people, and to be exemplary in every respect....

To study Marxism-Leninism and constantly use self-criticism and criticism to heighten our ideological standards, improve our work, and progress together with one's comrades...

To advance to socialism, we must wage a long and hard struggle. We must have revolutionaries, for there still exist enemies who oppose the revolution.

There are three kinds of enemies: first, capitalism and imperialism; second, backward habits and traditions; the third enemy is individualism, the petty bourgeois mentality which still lurks in each of us....

To struggle against individualism is not "to trample on individual interests".... But one must realize that only under the
LAST NIGHT I DREAMED OF UNCLE HO

Last night I dreamed
of meeting Uncle Ho.
His beard is long,
and his hair is white.
I warmly kissed his cheek,
and he nodded and said
I am one of his good
nephews and nieces.

The socialist system can each person improve his private life, and
develop his personality and his strong points.
... In a society ruled by the exploiting class, the individual
interests of only a few people belonging to this class are met,
whereas those of the toiling masses are trampled underfoot. But in
the socialist and communist systems, of which the laboring people
are the masters, each person is a part of the collective, plays a
definite role in it, and contributes his part to society. That is why
the interests of the individual lie within those of the collective and
are part of them. Only when the interests of the collective are
secured can the former be satisfied ...

(and) to study Marxism-Leninism is to learn the spirit in which
one should deal with things, with other people, and with oneself. It
means to study the universal Marxist-Leninist truths in order to
apply them creatively to the practical conditions of our country.
Theory should go hand in hand with practice ...

Revolutionary morality does not fall from the sky. It is developed
and consolidated through daily struggle and effort. Like jade, the
more it is polished, the more it shines ...

APPEAL FOR NATIONWIDE RESISTANCE

(December 20, 1946)

Compatriots all over the country!
As we desire peace we have made concessions. But the more
concessions we make, the more the French colonialists press on,
for they are bent on reconquering our country.
No! We would rather sacrifice all than lose our country. Never
shall we be enslaved!

Compatriots! Rise up!
Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed,
political affiliation and nationality, all Vietnamese must rise up to
fight the French colonialists and save the Fatherland. Those who
have rifles will use their rifles; those who have swords will use
their swords; those who have no swords will use shovels, hoes or
bamboo sticks ....

Members of the army, the self-defense corps and the militia!
The hour for national salvation has struck! We must shed even
our last drop of blood to safeguard our country.

Even if we must endure the greatest hardships in our war of
resistance, with our determination to face all sacrifices, we are
bound to win.

Long live independent and unified Viet Nam!
Long live the victorious Resistance!

Faster, Incognito! For God's sake show a little loyalty!!!

Cartoon drawn by Ho Chi Minh
for the newspaper "Le Pariab"
which he edited in Paris in the
1920s under the name of
Nguyen Ai-Quoc.
REPORT ON THE DRAFT AMENDED CONSTITUTION

(Dec. 18, 1959)

For the first time in history, an oppressed nation defeated the aggression of a mighty imperialist power, won back national independence, brought land to the tillers and genuine democratic rights to the people. This victory was due to the ardent patriotism and valiant struggle of our army and people, the close unity of our entire people within the National United Front, the reliability of our people's power on the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class and the Party, and the support of the fraternal countries in the socialist camp along with the forces of peace and democracy throughout the world.

The victory of the August Revolution and the great war of resistance proves that even a small and weak nation can most certainly defeat the imperialist aggressors, if it is closely united under the leadership of the working class and its Party and correctly follows the Marxist-Leninist line.

ANSWERS TO THE PRESS ON U.S. INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA

(Published in Cuu quoc, organ of the Viet Minh, July 25, 1950.)

The U.S. imperialists have long since openly intervened in Indochina. It is with their money and weapons and on their instructions that the French colonialists have been waging war in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

However, the U.S. Imperialists are seeking more and more to oust the French colonialists and gain complete control over Indochina. They intervene ever more directly and actively in every field—military, political and economic.

The U.S. imperialists supply their henchmen with armaments to massacre the Indochinese people.

And they put their goods in Indochina to prevent the development of local small industries.

They disseminate a depraved culture to poison the youth in areas under their temporary control.

They practice a policy of corruption, cajolery and division. They take bad elements into their service and work out joint schemes to conquer our country.

What shall we do against them?

To gain independence, the Indochinese peoples must completely defeat the French colonialists, their enemy number one. At the same time, we must oppose the U.S. interventionists. The deeper their interference, the closer our solidarity and the more vigorous our struggle.

We must expose their plots before all our people, especially those living in areas under their temporary control.

We must unmask all those who serve as running dogs for the US imperialists.

Close solidarity between the peoples of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos constitutes a force capable of defeating the French colonialists and the US interventionists. The US imperialists have failed in China. They will fail in Indochina.

THE BALLAD OF HO CHI MINH

Far away across the ocean, far beyond the sea's eastern rim, lives a man who is father of the Indochinese people, and his name it is Ho Chi Minh. Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh! [2x]

Ho Chi Minh was a deep-sea sailor. Served his time out on the seven seas. Work and hardship were part of his daily education, exploitation his ABC's.

Ho, Ho . . .

Ho Chi Minh came home from sailing, and he looked out on his native land, saw the want and the hunger of the Indochinese people, foreign soldiers on every hand.

Ho, Ho . . .

Ho Chi Minh went to the mountains, and he trained a determined band. Heroes all, sworn to liberate the Indochinese people, drive invaders from the land.

Ho, Ho . . .

Fourteen soon became a hundred, a hundred thousand, and Ho Chi Minh. Forged and tempered, the army of the Indochinese people, freedom's army of Viet Minh.

Ho, Ho . . .

Every soldier is a farmer. Comes the evening, and he grabs his hoe.

Comes the morning, she swings a rifle on her shoulder, that's the army of Uncle Ho.

Ho, Ho . . .

From the mountains and the jungles, from the marshlands to the Plain of Reeds, march the men and the women of the Indochinese army, planting freedom with victory seeds.

Ho, Ho . . .

From Viet Bac to the Saigon delta, march the armies of Viet Minh, and the wind stirs the banners of the Indochinese people, peace and freedom and Ho Chi Minh! Ho, Ho . . .
THIRTY YEARS OF ACTIVITY
OF THE PARTY

(1960)

... There are two great tasks which lie before the Vietnamese Revolution: the construction of socialism in the North, and the completion of the national democratic revolution in the South. Both these historic responsibilities have only one common goal, which can be summed up in the following way:

* to consolidate peace
* to increase our national unity
* To struggle vigorously for the reunification of our country on the basis of independence and democracy
* To complete the national democratic revolution in the whole country
* to strengthen the North and lead it to socialism
* to build a Vietnam that is peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous and to contribute actively to the defense of peace in Indochina, in Southeast Asia, and the world.

(from article written for the review Problems of Peace and Socialism, No. 2, 1960.)

APPEAL TO PATRIOTS
AND FIGHTERS
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

(July 17, 1966)

The barbarous US imperialists have unleashed a war of aggression in an attempt to conquer our country, but they are sustaining heavy defeats.

They have rushed an expeditionary force of nearly 300,000 men into the South of our country. They have fostered a puppet administration and puppet troops as instruments of their aggressive policy. They have resorted to extremely savage means of warfare—toxic chemicals, napalm bombs and other means—and applied a “burn all, kill all and destroy all” policy. By committing such crimes, they hope to subdue our Southern compatriots.

But under the resolute and skilful leadership of the National Front for Liberation, the South Vietnamese armed forces and people, closely united and fighting heroically, have scored splendid victories, and are determined to fight on until complete victory in order to liberate the South, defend the North, and proceed towards national reunification.

The US aggressors have cynically launched air attacks on the North of our country in the hope of getting out of their disastrous situation in the South and compelling us to “negotiate” on their terms.

However, North Viet Nam has not flinched in the least....

Johnson and his clique should realize this: they may bring in half a million, a million or even more troops to step up their war of aggression in South Viet Nam. They may use thousands of aircraft to intensify their attacks against North Viet Nam. But never will they be able to break the iron will of the heroic Vietnamese people, their determination to fight against American aggression, for national salvation. The more turbulent they grow, the more serious their crimes. The war may last five, ten, twenty or more years; Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities may be destroyed; but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Once victory is won, our people will rebuild their country and make it even more prosperous and beautiful.

Our cause is just; our people are united from North to South; we have a tradition of undaunted struggle and the great sympathy and support of the fraternal socialist countries and progressive people all over the world. We shall win!....

Compatriots and fighters throughout the country, march valiantly forward!
“American aggressors are mistaken if they think they can get victory in Vietnam. They are more grossly mistaken when they think that they can bomb[ing] the north part of our country to get victory in the south. We will never, never submit to aggressive force. We will fight to the end. And we are sure that the popular world in our country will be victorious.”

WE WILL LIBERATE THE SOUTH

Arise together, comrades, forward march!
Our blood and bones will liberate the south!
We will end giao my,* make the traitors flee
before our united wrath!
High in the Truong Son, along the Mekong,
we’ll raise our one great flag with Ho Chi Minh.
Side by side, and we will win!
Arise, heroic southern land.
Advance, take rifle in your hand.
Brave women and men will fight to the end.
Our homeland soon will see an end to this night, the triumph of light,
the golden dawn of victory

*giac my = American aggression

“Comrades and friends: What monstrous crimes the U.S. imperialists have committed on our soil. Our entire people from North to South, closely united, have risen up to defend their freedom and independence, and, at the same time, contribute to the cause of the peoples struggling for their emancipation and peace. We are absolutely sure of our victory, since our cause is just. We are strong, with our entire people and with the growing support of the people of the world, including the American people. Once again, thank you. Long live the friendship between the Vietnamese and the U.S. people!”
SU NOMBRE,  
HO CHI MINH

Porque usted, Presidente Ho Chi Minh,  
poesía Ho Chi Minh,  
sérano campesino vietnamita Ho Chi Minh,  
tiene setenta y siete años de lucha  
en vida entera,  
y porque usted ha dejado de ser  
todos sus nombres una voz,  
un aliento, una mirada  
para ser solamente y nada menos  
que tierra y sangre y huesos de la  
Patria;  
por todas esas cosas y por muchas  
otras  
es difícil encerrar en jaulas de  
palabras,  
y porque para usted la dignidad  
del hombre es  
mas alta que el pan,  
mas alta que la gloria,  
mas alta que la propia  
supervivencia,  
su nombre, Ho Chi Minh,  
puede ponerse en verso.

A usted puede cantársele  
como se canta al mar y a las  
montañas,  
porque cantarle a usted,  
Presidente,  
poesía, campesino,  
es cantarle a la tierra hermosa  
y atormentada de Vietnam,  
que no tiene ya la forma de una  
vara de bambú  
con una cesta en cada extremo,  
sino la forma gloriosa de la única  
puerta  
por la que puede entrar al  
mundo del futuro.

YOUR NAME,  
HO CHI MINH

Because you, President Ho Chi Minh,  
poet Ho Chi Minh,  
quiet Vietnamese peasant Ho Chi Minh,  
have spent seventy-seven years  
in struggle,  
your whole life,  
And because you have given up  
being  
all your names, a voice,  
a breath, a glance,  
to be only, and nothing less than  
the earth, blood and bones of your  
homeland,  
because of all these things and  
many others  
which cannot be imprisoned in  
cages of words,  
and because for you the dignity of  
man is  
more important than bread,  
more important than glory,  
more important than one's own  
 survival,  
your name, Ho Chi Minh,  
can be put in verse.

Poets can sing to you  
as one sings to the sea and to the  
mountains,  
because to sing to you, President,  
poet, peasant,  
is to sing to the beautiful  
and tormented land of Vietnam,  
that no longer has the shape of a  
bamboo pole  
with a basket on either end,  
but the glorious shape of the only  
door  
through which one may enter the  
future.
THE FINAL TESTAMENT OF HO CHI MINH

Even though our struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, may have to go through more hardships and sacrifices, we are bound to win total victory. This is a certainty....

Tu Fu, the famous poet of the Tang period in China, once wrote: "In all times, few are those who reach the age of seventy." This year, being seventy-nine, I can already count myself among those few.... But who can say how much longer I shall be able to serve the revolution, the Fatherland, and the people?

I therefore leave these few lines in anticipation of the day when I shall go and join Karl Marx, Lenin, and the other revolutionary elders....

First, about the Party:
Thanks to its close unity and total dedication to the working class, the people and the Fatherland, our party has been able, since its founding, to unite, organize and lead our people from success to success in a resolute struggle. Unity is an extremely precious tradition of our party and people. All comrades, from the Central Committee down to the cell, must preserve the unity and oneness of mind in the party like the apple of their eye.

Within the party, to establish broad democracy, and to practice self-criticism and criticism regularly and seriously, is the best way to consolidate and develop solidarity and unity. Comradely affection should prevail. Ours is a party in power. EACH party member, each cadre, must be thoroughly imbued with revolutionary morality, and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total dedication to the public interest, and complete selflessness....

The Working Youth Union members, and our young people in general, are good. They are always ready to come forward, fearless of difficulties, and eager for progress. The party must foster their revolutionary virtues and train them to be our successors, both "red" and "expert," in the building of socialism....

Our laboring people, in the plains as in the mountains, have for generations endured hardships, feudal and colonial oppression, and exploitation. They have, in addition, experienced many years of war. Yet our people have shown great heroism, courage, enthusiasm, and industriousness. They have always followed the party since it came into being, with unqualified loyalty....

The war of resistance against U.S. aggression may drag on. Our people may have to face new sacrifices of life and property. Whatever happens, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the U.S. aggressors 'till total victory.

Our mountains will always be. Our rivers will always be. Our people will always be. The American invaders defeated, we will rebuild our land ten times more beautiful....

About the world communist movement:
Being a man who has devoted his whole life to the revolution, the more proud I am of the growth of the international communist and workers' movement, the more grief-stricken I am by the current discord among the fraternal parties.... I am firmly confident that the fraternal parties and countries will have to unite again....

When I am gone, a grand funeral should be avoided, in order not to waste the people's time and money.

Finally, the whole people, the whole party, the whole army, to my nephews and nieces, the youth and children, I leave my boundless love. I also convey my cordial greetings to our comrades and friends, and to the youth and children throughout the world.

My ultimate wish is that our entire party and people, closely joining their efforts, will build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam, and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution.

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TWILIGHT

Now the wind's edge is sharpened on mountain rocks.
The spear of cold pierces the branches of trees.
The gong from a far-off pagoda hastens the traveller's steps,
and boys are playing flutes
As they drive the buffalo home across the twilight.

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FINE WEATHER

The wheel of law turns without pause,
After the rain,
in the wink of an eye comes the sun.
Ten thousand miles,
the land of brocade,
light breezes blowing,
the flowers smiling as one.

Sing bird of freedom,
tell of the world to come.
Fly, bird of freedom....

And high in the trees
among sparkling leaves,
together the birds sing,
revived, reborn are we.

And after the sorrow
will come the joy.
What is more natural?
After the sorrow comes joy.

Sing, bird of freedom,
tell of the world to come.
Fly bird of freedom....

And after the sorrow
will come the joy,
after the sorrow
will come the joy,
after the sorrow....
Liberation fighters being welcomed into Saigon, now renamed Ho Chi Minh City, on April 30, 1975.

READING LIST:
There is today no lack of literature about Vietnam. This was not always the case. Twenty years ago, with the exception of the books by Wilfred Burchett, there was almost nothing available in the English language other than dry tracts from the French colonialist point of view. The following, then, is a brief selection of material that Paredon believes to be particularly useful in understanding more about Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh.

Ho Chi Minh

Books by Wilfred Burchett on Vietnam and Indochina:
Ho Chi Minh: An Appreciation Guardian, 1972
North of the 17th Parallel
Mekong Upstream
The Furtive War: The U.S. in Vietnam and Laos
Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerrilla War
Vietnam North
Vietnam Will Win!

Other Important Titles from the Foreign Language Publishing House (Hanoi):
Le Duan: On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam Some Present Tasks
The Vietnamese Revolution; Fundamental Problems, Essential Tasks
General Vo Nguyen Giap: To Arm the Revolutionary Masses, To Build the People’s War, People’s Army.
Nguyen Khac Vien: The Long Resistance (1858-1975)

An Outline of Institutions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam
Vietnam: A Historical Sketch

Also useful:
FIRE IN THE LAKE by Frances Fitzgerald; the Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam (Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1972)
MY LAI by Seymour Hirsch (Vintage, 1972)
CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA; a reader on the widening war in Laos and Cambodia, edited by Marvin and Susan Gettleman and Lawrence and Carol Kaplan (Vintage, 1970)
VIETNAM, VIETNAM by Felix Greene, photographs with texts (Fulton, 1966)
THE ENEMY by Felix Greene, concise summary of the nature of imperialism (Vintage, 1971)

OTHER PAREDON RECORDS RELATED TO VIETNAM:

P-1008 VIETNAM: SONGS OF LIBERATION
Ballads, marching songs, lullabies, folk songs, anthems and instrumental.

P-1009 VIETNAM WILL WIN! The fighting songs of the north and south (NLF) including We Will Liberate the South.

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