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The typicality of the Vietnamese people's national liberation struggle for the "historic confrontation" with the US imperialists

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ABSTRACT

The Vietnamese people's resistance war against the US imperialists' invasion to gain national liberation and reunification in the 20th century was a struggle expressing the Vietnamese people's intense desire for peace and national reunification and opposing the American neo-colonialism. The struggle of the Vietnamese people was deeply epochal, and typical of the national liberation movement in the world. This was not merely a struggle for national liberation, but also a struggle that reflected and fully converged three major revolutionary trends of the era: national independence, democracy and socialism. The article focuses on presenting brief outlines of the struggle for national independence, typical features of the Vietnamese people's struggle for national liberation, and puts it in the relationship between the revolution in Vietnam and revolutionary movements in the world. As a result, not only the value and aspiration for peace of the Vietnamese people and progressive humanity, but also the art of combining national strength with the strength of the times in the American war was recognized.

Keywords: Vietnam, the resistance war against the US, US imperialism, "historic confrontation", National Liberation Movement

1. Introduction

Researching on historical issues, international relations, world and regional politics in the 50s and 60s of the twentieth century, researchers believe that the struggle for independence during the anti-French colonial period and the American empire of Vietnam had a great influence on the struggles for independence of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples. It was the aspiration for peace, the will to fight heroically for the independence and unity of the Vietnamese people that created a great spread, encouraged and mobilized the colonial and dependent peoples to rise up and fight against colonialism and empire.

The failure of French colonialism in Vietnam in 1954 was the opening milestone for the end of old colonialism on a worldwide scale. During this time, many new subjects appeared in the international political arena, more and more countries and peoples gained independence, joined the world political life and gained a more and more prominent position. At the same time, many other countries and peoples continued to fight for their independence.

According to the law of society, the end of one historical process is at the same time the beginning of a new historical process. Once the old colonialism lost its dominant role and position, the new colonialism appeared to replace it. Looking back at the previous resistance war against the French and the resistance war against America of the Vietnamese people that took place after the Geneva Agreement, this is also a prominent and typical link in a new historical process. As an epochal choice, the US imperialists carried out a new colonial war in South Vietnam, against the aspiration for independence and national reunification of a people on the other side of the world, creating a "unique confrontation in contemporary world history" and often referred to as "historic confrontation".

In that "historic confrontation", what relationship, influence and impact did the Vietnamese revolution have on the world's national liberation movement? Why when the French colonialists failed in Vietnam, the American empire not only did not withdraw from the region, but also replaced France, taking on the role of "international gendarme" to oppose the national liberation movement on a worldwide scale? Within the framework of the topic "The world people's movement against the war, demanding peace for Vietnam (1954 - 1975)"¹, our research team also took the initial step discuss some issues about the impact and influence of the Vietnamese revolution on the revolutionary movement in the world during this period.

From the above-mentioned analysis and judgments, the article focuses on presenting the outlines of the struggle for national independence, the basic and typical characteristics of the national liberation struggle that the Vietnamese people were doing, as well as the relationship between the Vietnamese revolution and the world revolutionary movement. Thereby, contributing to clarifying the legitimacy, identifying the strength of the

Vietnamese nation as well as the strength of the times was promoted in the resistance war against the US imperialists from 1954 to 1975.

2. Findings and discussion

From Vietnam's struggle for independence

The country of Vietnam is likened to a balcony in front of the East Sea: both adjacent to the Pacific Ocean and to the Asian continent, an important part of the world's bustling maritime trade route. Due to its important geo-strategic location and abundant natural resources, throughout the nation's history, Vietnam has always been invaded by major countries. In the late modern period, the French colonialists waged a war to invade Vietnam in 1858. From that time, the struggles for national independence of all strata of the people took place continuously despite fierce repression by the French colonialists. After the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, the national liberation movement was led by Vietnamese patriots, typically Nguyen Ai Quoc. Under the leadership of the communists, movements fighting for national independence along the path of proletarian revolution in Vietnam were soon formed.

From 1930, the movement to fight for national independence against the French colonialists grew stronger. In 1945, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam led by President Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people overthrew the Japanese fascists, the French colonialists and gained power over the country.

On September 2, 1945, Vietnam declared to the world its national independence, abolishing all colonial and fascist domination. At the same time, Vietnam also proclaimed that the country would fight and overcome challenges to protect the independence that had just been won.

On September 23, 1945, the French colonialists returned and waged a war to invade Vietnam with the intention of restoring French domination in Indochina (the time to enjoy peace was only 3 weeks). The Vietnamese people carried out a nine-year resistance war against the French, making the French colonialists bogged down and suffering great losses. The Vietnamese people's resilient resistance to French colonial rule went beyond Indochina and spread to other regions of the world, including the peoples still under French colonial rule, becoming the encouraging symbol of the struggles for independence of the dependent and colonized peoples of the world.

Meanwhile, waging the second war of aggression, France was increasingly exhausted, dependent on American aid. With long-term strategic interests in Asia in general and in Southeast Asia in particular, and in order to enlist France to support the US and Western European countries as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, the US actively aided to France during the war in Indochina. The US became France's main donor, from 19% to 73% of war costs, but the US could not save the situation.

On May 7, 1954, the French fortress group in Dien Bien Phu was wiped out, shocking the world. The French colonialists were forced to sign the Geneva Agreement. This was an important victory of the Vietnamese people after nine years of long resistance war and an essential international legal basis for the Vietnamese people to continue to fight for national liberation and reunification.

The milestone of France's defeat opened a new historical process in the cause of the Vietnamese people's struggle for national liberation in the twentieth century. However, for the US, the defeat in Dien Bien Phu as well as the entire war was a failure, an unacceptable setback.

To the driving force of the national liberation movement in the world

From the burning fire of the Vietnamese revolution, in the late 1950s, many countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America were emboldened to regain their independence. By the 1960s, the colonial system of imperialism was in serious decline. The end of colonialism was only a matter of time². Vietnam defeated the French colonialists, which brought about the collapse of old colonialism on a worldwide scale. From the victory of the Vietnamese people's resistance war, the world political map witnessed the emergence of a series of nationalities regaining their independence, participating in world political life. The newly independent peoples made many contributions to the process of solving political, military, diplomatic, economic, cultural and social issues internationally and had an increasingly strong voice in international forums, especially the right of peoples to self-determination.

Vietnam's victory in the resistance war against the French was considered a symbol of the national liberation struggle movement. Nguyen Thi Hanh (2018) said that, "This victory is a great source of encouragement for the colonial peoples in Africa and Latin America to stand up for independence in many different ways, including politics and armed forces". The experience of the Vietnamese people in organizing the resistance war against the French colonialists was studied and applied by the dependent peoples, colonies and democratic forces in their struggle. Previously, the national liberation struggle rooms, the movements for people's livelihood and democracy in African and Latin American countries lacked unity among forces, did not have a united front, political parties, the divided, factional, isolated Communist Party has not yet shown its historical role. Previously, the national liberation struggles and movements for people's livelihood and democracy in African and Latin American countries lacked unity among forces, did not have a united front, political parties, and the divided, factional, isolated Communist Party did not show its historical role. Therefore, the national liberation struggle led by the Vietnamese communists "suggested that the people, first of all, the revolutionary forces in African countries think new about the ways and methods of fighting against colonialism" (Ministry of National Defense, 1991).

Once the colonial system declined, it meant that the status of the colonial countries would also be seriously reduced. This forced countries such as Britain and France to adjust their foreign policies to match the new balance of forces, "recognizing the independence of the colonies is an inevitable trend that these countries must accept to be able to gain influence or interests in former colonial countries" (Nguyen Thi Hanh, 2018).

For the people of the dependent countries and colonies, when monitoring the developments of the resistance war that the Vietnamese people had won against the French colonialists, they have drawn the lesson of "the Vietnamese people's determination and unity to stand up and fight against the French for independence and freedom contributed to transforming the national movement into a new, vibrant, active and continuous phase" (Ministry of National Defense, 1991).

During the period of resistance against the French, the people of the dependent countries and colonies saw the Vietnamese spirit and received the strength of the Vietnamese national spirit; they considered Vietnam as a flag to summon the people to struggle for national independence. Then, Vietnam continued to enter the resistance war against the first global superpower, which was holding the leadership role of capitalist countries, to gain independence and unify the country. The bravery and resilience of the Vietnamese people in the front line against the old and new colonialism created great encouragement for countries that were still dependent and did not achieve complete independence in Asia, Latin America or third-world countries to have more motivation and strength to fight, erase the old colonialism and be ready to defeat the new colonialism led by the US imperialists.

From the spirit of Vietnam, we also realized the organic relationship between Vietnam's resistance war against colonialism and imperialism and the national liberation movement of colonial and dependent countries and the struggle for independence in the world in the late 50s of the twentieth century. When they gained independence, these countries supported the Vietnamese people's resistance war in many different ways, joined the United Nations' political system, and demanded that the colonial and imperialist countries not violate the Charter on the right to self-determination, equality and independence of the peoples of the world. The strong development of the national liberation movement after the victory of the Vietnamese people was also recognized on the victory of the aspect of gathering forces and the recognition of international institutions. A symbolic event about the victory of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and nations in the world was that in 1960, the 15th United Nations General Assembly adopted "The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". The United Nations Declaration is the international legal basis, the foundation in political relations between countries in the world, affirming equality for colonial and dependent countries, and the progressive trend of humanity. This is a process of arduous struggle that many colonial

and dependent countries take decades, even hundreds of years, to claim their actual political status and recognition by the international community.

From the actual conditions of the national liberation struggle and the source of encouragement from the Vietnamese people's resistance war - the source leading to the international legal struggle, colonial and dependent countries asserted their independence. The process of struggle began after the Second World War in 1945 to the time when the United Nations issued "The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" in 1960.

The typicality of the Vietnamese people's national liberation struggle from the historical confrontation with the US imperialists

Vietnam was a bridge connecting the world socialist system with Southeast Asia, which was boiling with revolutionary struggle, and at the same time a flag to strongly encourage national liberation movements in the world. Therefore, by all means, the US had to bring South Vietnam into the "orbit of the free world". It would be an utter defeat for the US if Vietnam became a "unified communist country": "The US imperialists do not want to lose Vietnam and Indochina, considering this is the first domino that needs to be kept in order to prevent the socialist revolutionary movement from spreading to Southeast Asia". (Ministry of National Defense, 1991). Tran Nham (1995) said that the US invasion of Vietnam would form "a springboard at the threshold of Asia, implementing neo-colonial expansionism deep into the mainland, the US imperialists chose Indochina and Vietnam as the main destination for the US imperialists pilot their strategic conspiracy".

From 1954 to 1956, the US built the South into a political entity which had a separate country, a government, a main apparatus, a complete army, a congress, a constitution and diplomacy, in order to permanently divide the two regions of the country. My applied a new colonialist regime in South Vietnam, "turning South Vietnam from a battlefield against democracy into a place of counter-revolutions" (Ha Minh Hong, 2005). South Vietnam quickly became a military base, an important link in the US global strategy, a wall to prevent communism from spilling over into Southeast Asia and a springboard to attack the North and socialist faction from the south. Vietnam became an integral part of the US global strategy. Also Tran Nham (1995) said that "Clearly, imperialism, led by the US, has a strategic need to prevent revolutionary forces in Southeast Asia where Vietnam is the key point. In contrast, the revolutionary forces has a critical need to push them away from this vital position. These two opposing forces meet here and lead to a decisive historic confrontation".

There were four strategies that were applied by successive presidents from 1953 to 1975. And in its 200-year history, the United States never had a prolonged war requiring human and material resources such that just to force a nation to be obedient to the

American will. Because of its importance and fierceness, people often called the Vietnamese people's resistance war against the US imperialists a "historic confrontation". This was an extremely hot and fierce front line between the typical force of the national liberation movement and the American neo-colonialism.

Stemming from the typical nature of the war of national liberation that the Vietnamese people waged against the US imperialists, the war had a profound epochal nature. As judged by the war-summarizing Steering Committee under the Politburo (1996) on the epochal nature of the resistance war: "It took place in a heated area where many fierce contradictions of the era were concentrated. Waging war to invade our country, the US imperialists not only aimed to defeat Vietnam, but also learned from experience in dealing with the world revolution, preventing the national liberation movement and socialism, and at the same time fighting for influence with other empires on the continents"³. This was the historical confrontation of the world's revolutionary forces in which our people directly fought against one of the strongest oligarchs in the capitalist world. "In the drastic bout between these two opposing forces, the American empire encountered the miraculous power of a heroic nation, a power multiplied by the great power of the whole era - the synthesis of three world revolutionary cascades" (Tran Nham, 1995).

It was not by chance that the US chose Vietnam as the focal point to oppose the national liberation movement. Determined to prevent communism from spilling over into this area, with savage counterattacks, the US intended to block the offensive arrow of the Vietnamese revolution. American strategic planners were fully aware that this was the hottest place of the world revolutionary movement. Therefore, the historical confrontation here was deeply epochal. In this typical encounter, American imperialism was not only against our nation, but also against the three revolutionary cascades in the present era. They not only carried out their goals locally, but also implemented their counter-revolutionary global strategy.

In that sense, the Vietnam War was not only a historical confrontation between our people and the imperialists, but also a fierce battle between socialist countries and war-making imperialists, between the forces of national liberation with invading imperialist forces, between peace-loving forces and belligerent forces, led by the US imperialists. Also as claimed by Tran Nham (1995), "The US consciously chose Vietnam as the focal point to oppose the world revolutionary movement, as a place to experiment with their new colonial strategies. So for the revolutionary forces, this was the most typical encounter, the biggest decisive battle against the American empire ever".

3. Conclusion

In the 50s and 60s of the twentieth century, the Vietnamese people waged a resistance war against the US in a very complex international context: confronting the socialist and capitalist system led by the Soviet Union and the US, the contradiction between imperialism and the national liberation movement, and the people's livelihood and democracy movements took place continuously. The American empire replaced the French colonialists and waged an unjust war of aggression to subdue the will of unity and the peaceful aspiration of the Vietnamese people. However, with the spirit of "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom", the Vietnamese people accepted the confrontation with the US imperialists. The struggle to liberate the South and reunify the Fatherland became the sacred calling of the whole nation in the 20-year long war. From 1954 to 1975, in order to reach peace and unify the country, the whole nation had to go through many hardships and challenges when entering a unique confrontation in human history in the 20th century.

The Vietnamese people's resistance war against the unjust aggression of the US imperialists became a symbol of the national liberation movement in the world. This was the main and most important factor in the formation of the world people's movement against the war and in favor of peace for Vietnam from 1954 to 1975. This was also the "typical" historical confrontation between the American neo-colonialism - the stronghold of imperialism and the nation with the will and desire to gain independence and unify the country - the stronghold of the national liberation movement. From the example of the Vietnamese people's struggle, the world witnessed a worldwide wave of colonial and dependent peoples' struggles for independence on a worldwide scale. That struggle created great power to overthrow old colonialism and continue to relentlessly attack American neo-colonialism. This contributed to a clear explanation of the typical character of the Vietnamese people's national liberation struggle from the historical confrontation with the US imperialists.

The struggle of the Vietnamese people was not merely the struggle for national liberation, but the struggle reflected and fully converged the three great revolutionary trends of the era: national independence, democracy and socialism. Here, these three trends are not separated from each other but united into a common "waterfall". Wherever the nationalist movement united these three revolutionary movements, the revolutionary tendency was most evident; there it was able to defeat the fierce counterattack of neo-colonialism. Vietnam meets those conditions!

1. Project code C2020-18b-07, "The world people's movement to oppose the war and demand peace for Vietnam (1954-1975)".
2. The most obvious number is that if before the world war in 1939, the colonial system of imperialist countries was 91,500. 000 km² with 1.5 billion people in the world; then, by 1967, there was only 5.2 million km² with 35 million people.

3. War-summarizing Steering Committee under the Politburo (1996). *Summary of the resistance war against the US to save the country - victory and lessons*, page 27-28.

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