PREFACE

National movements in world politics and international relations, have a profound impact in shaping and forming the perceptions and images that influence a nascent nation's external relations and foreign policy. The study of a polity's evolution and examinations of its political blooming have a direct and invariable relation with the efforts of consolidation of national identity and the dynamics of independence movement. This observation gets additional relevance and salient attention if the country in question is breaking free from the shackles and fetters of colonial bondage. This phenomenon may be termed as 'transition from state to nation-in-making'.

The study of the National Front for the Liberation (NLF) of South Vietnam, even though a post-colonial phenomenon, is a testimony to the vibrant nationalist aspirations of Vietnamese people. In this context, the period from 1960 to 1975 is considered symbolically the most crucial period of political developments in the history of Vietnam. The present work focuses on the origins, expansion and modus operandi of the NLF and its role in Vietnamese politics.

The significance of the NLF's role can be observed by the fact that the party whose raison d'être was to
emancipate South Vietnam from the tentacles of 'alien power and achieve unification, had dove-tailed itself into the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in 1975, after its mission came to fruition.

The period from 1960 to 1975 spanning one and a half decades is a vivid demonstration of Vietnamese fervour for their anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle to achieve One Vietnam. The NLF's tensile strength, elastic sustenance and extent of success against powerful forces, further emphasize this point. The dynamics of 'Liberation of South-Vietnam, as the manifesto of the NLF describes it, was truly a second independence after the first one on 2 September 1945. In a way the liberation of South Vietnam by the NLF on 30 April 1975 completed the independence process that was initiated by the ICP in the 1930s and the Vietminh in the 1940s.

The factors responsible for the success of the NLF, the stakes of the non-Communist governments, their instrumental role in the formation of the NLF, the evolution of the NLF as a revolutionary party, its relations with the Communist and non-Communist world, and the NLF's steps towards the country's unification form the basic content of the present study.

The study is chapterized into five parts, each highlighting a particular aspect either as an influencing element or as a representative force of the NLF's
activities and organizational skills.

The first chapter is a broad historical survey and traces the evolution of the Vietnamese national movement that forms an important backdrop and sequential background for the present study. Particularly the elements that led to the formation of NLF in 1960 are given primary focus.

The second chapter deals with the origin, expansion and various methods employed by the NLF in its organization and day-to-day functioning. The analysis is focused on the process and operational flow rather than mere enumeration of its structural aspects.

Chapter three is a sequel to the preceding chapters in its theme and content. This chapter analyses the ideological forces and indoctrination efforts behind the widespread mass base of the NLF. Its political campaign, recruiting process and its cultural roots in the 'psyche' of the people of Vietnam form the principal theme of this chapter.

The penultimate chapter concentrates on the ramifications of the NLF's activities in the international arena. The role of the international Communist movement and the NLF's relations and equations with the Communist movement are analysed in assessing the NLF's capability of mobilization and manoeuvrability of tactics. Particularly, the ingenuity and impressive marshalling of international public opinion by the NLF against the US policies are
The final chapter is the conclusion which provides a pithy summary of the whole work with general reference to the movement's impact on Vietnam and its external relations.

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