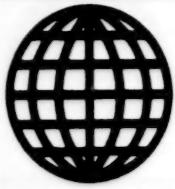


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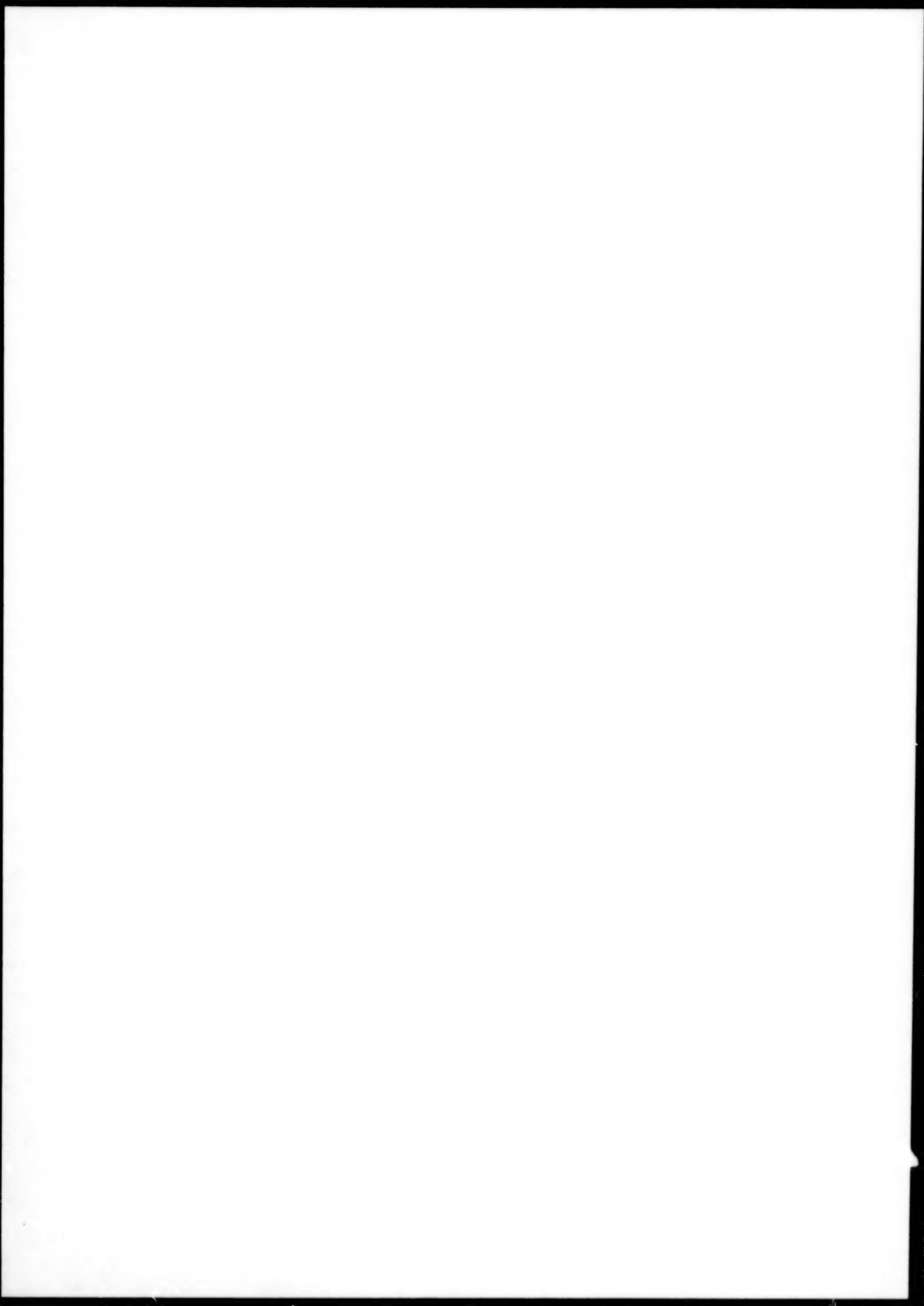
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VIETNAM: TAP CHI CONG SAN

No 10, October 1987

[Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents, the following is a complete translation of the monthly theoretical and political journal of the Vietnam Communist Party published in Hanoi.]

Heighten the Quality of Cadres and Party Members, Preserve the Purity and Enhance the Militant Strength of the Party

42100004a Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 1-7

[Article by Do Muoi, member of the CPV Central Committee Political Bureau]

[Text] The quality of cadres and party members is a decisive factor in the party's quality and strength and directly influences the masses' relations with and confidence in the party. Throughout his life, while carrying out revolutionary activities, Uncle Ho always devoted himself to cultivating the quality and virtues of cadres and party members, considering virtues as the roots of revolutionaries. Uncle Ho himself set an unsurpassed shining example of revolutionary virtues. Before leaving us forever, he once again advised: Ours is a ruling party; therefore, each party member and cadre must be truly imbued with revolutionary ethics, truly industrious, thrifty, honest and impartial. We must keep our party really pure and we must be worthy of being the leaders and utterly faithful servants of the people.

Painstakingly educated and trained by Uncle Ho and our party and benefiting from their own constant self-improvement efforts in their daily struggle, the overwhelming majority of cadres and party members have clearly shown their political reliability and their loyalty to the party, the fatherland and socialism; displayed pure qualities, adopted healthy lifestyles; and remained united with the working class and the people. Thanks to this, our party has enjoyed considerable prestige among the people, has won their confidence and support and has led them in achieving many great and glorious victories.

In the present conditions, when the country still faces numerous difficulties and society is still strewn with negative practices, the majority of cadres and party members continue to maintain their confidence in the party's leadership; have consciously preserved their qualities and virtues, their militancy and their sense of responsibility; have stoically endured difficulties and looked for ways to overcome them; have lived honest lives; and have satisfactorily fulfilled their tasks in production, combat and official work. It can be said that goodness—quality and virtue—is still the fundamental aspect and basic character of our contingent of cadres and party members. This is a positive factor ensuring our party's leading role. This character originates from the fine traditions of the nation, the party's ideological

education and organizational work, Marxist-Leninist consciousness and patriotism and the self-improvement efforts of cadres and party members. This is a cause for pride that should be affirmed and developed.

However, in recent years, under new historical circumstances and in the face of new fierce trials, not a few cadres and party members have failed to preserve their revolutionary qualities and have proven unworthy of their party member title. Negative phenomena within the party and state machinery and in society have tended to increase and have become increasingly serious. Although our party and state have done no small amount of work in the struggle against negativism, have applied numerous measures in difficult forms to educate and enhance the quality of cadres and party members—such as the movements to improve party members' quality, expel unqualified people from the party, issue party membership cards and make self-criticism and criticism in accordance with Directive No 79 of the Party Central Committee Secretariat—have disciplined many cadres and party members and have expelled hundreds of thousands of people from the party, in the main they have still not yet been able to stop negative phenomena in the party and to enhance party members' quality. At present, in the party there still remain not a few party members whose quality has declined, in the state machinery there are still many corrupt people, and in society there are still many negative phenomena. This is an abnormal thing.

The common manifestations of the current negative phenomena are:

—Decline of militancy and revolutionary zeal, lessening of the sense of responsibility, conservatism, sluggishness, poor sense of organization and discipline, acting at variance with official positions and policies and violations of party and state order and discipline;

—Negative attitude in labor and combat, little zeal and laziness in labor and official work, careless and slipshod work and refusal to live on one's labor and earning a living through unlawful means instead; and

—Negative attitude toward socialist property which consists of not only a failure to respect and protect it, thus causing considerable waste and losses, but also of a seeking for all ways to steal state and collective property; failure to distribute goods according to socialist principles; failure to ensure social justice; enjoying material conditions not created by one's own labor; abusing one's power to confer special privileges on oneself; indulging in feasting; and unlawfully giving and accepting gifts.

Theft of public property is the most serious negative phenomenon. Smuggling, speculation and bribery develop at quite an alarming rate. Bureaucratism, arrogance and bullying of the masses and violations of their

right of mastery are quite serious. Superstition and debauched living patterned after feudalism, capitalism and neo-colonialism are also prevalent.

All these negative phenomena are developing on a large-scale basis and in some areas, they have become commonly practiced behavior even for party organizations and state agencies and all sectors, localities and organs. They go hand in hand with social vices and are providing a ground for the latter to flourish.

Negativism has become a very serious social and political issue. In many instances, the regular measures adopted by the proletarian dictatorship have failed to curb it. Realities indicate that negative phenomena have no opponents and aim their spearheads at all of us, no matter what positions we may hold. If we are not tough enough, we will fall into their hands. There are cases in which high-ranking cadres and veteran party members were gunned down by sugar-coated bullets. Some of the cases are very heartbreaking ones. It can be said that the losses we have sustained in the past 10 years far exceed what we experienced during our war of resistance against the aggressor enemy.

It is necessary to fully realize the seriousness and great consequences of negative phenomena. The current campaign to enhance the militant strength of party organizations and the state machinery must necessarily include the struggle against negativism, which constitutes a burning battlefield and an integral part of our common struggle. The reason is that, at present, negativism has become a major obstacle to the implementation of the party's leadership. Not only have negative phenomena caused major losses to the property of the state and collectives and eroded revolutionary ethics, but they have also corrupted many cadres and party members, limited the militant strength of party organizations and the strength of the state machinery, reduced the masses' trust in the party and the good nature of our regime and seriously affected the relationship between our party and state and the people. This is one of the reasons why our party's leadership is not on a par with the revolutionary tasks. Negativism has stood in the way of the renovation undertaking, including renovation of thinking, workstyles and cadre organization, and has tied our party to sluggishness, conservatism and the mechanism of bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies.

The objective causes of all these negative phenomena lie in the fact that our country is in the first stage of the transitional period. We have not completed reforming the old economic system, exploiting economic components still exist, remnants of the old ideology and lifestyles are still rampant and the enemy's schemes of sabotage are very insidious.

As far as the subjective causes are concerned, we have displayed shortcomings in socio-economic policies and lines, economic management, management of cadres, social control and guidance over work implementation.

Many party committee echelons have belittled the efforts to educate cadres and party members in the areas of communist ideals and revolutionary ethics, shown one-sidedness when it comes to capabilities and use of material incentives and believed that violations of moral values could be dealt with through meetings and counsel. As a result, they have failed to promptly and resolutely take preventive action.

Management and evaluation of cadres and party members, especially those holding important positions, has been lax. No strict and fair disciplinary measures have been adopted and only light action has been taken against leading cadres. No due respect has been shown to the law of the proletarian dictatorship state. A number of higher-ranking cadres have failed to set good examples, especially when it comes to quality and lifestyle and have not matched words with deeds. Many deviant and degenerate elements have taken advantage of loopholes in our management system to make profits. They have corrupted many cadres, party members and state employees and condoned, abetted or colluded with hoarders, speculators, smugglers and other bad elements in stealing state property and disrupting our organizations from within.

The Sixth Party Congress severely criticized these negative phenomena, clearly analyzed their causes and decided to launch a campaign to purify the party and state machinery and to promote healthy social relations. The congress stressed: in conjunction with raising the capabilities and improving the bearing of cadres and party members, we must effect a vigorous change in cultivating and enhancing their revolutionary qualities. Enhancing the revolutionary qualities of cadres, party members and the people is a pressing requirement and a main task of ideological work.

Implementing the Sixth Party Congress' decision, the Party Central Committee Political Bureau recently issued a resolution on launching a campaign to purify and enhance the militant strength of party organizations, to purify and enhance the managerial efficiency of the state machinery, to push back and abolish negative phenomena, to promote healthy social relations and to realize social justice.

This is a major campaign aimed at further raising the revolutionary qualities of cadres, party members and the people; struggling against, preventing and pushing back negative phenomena; and purging and punishing degenerate and deviant people within the party and state organs and those who earn their living through illegal means in society, thereby contributing to purifying the party and state machinery, restoring order and discipline in society and creating decisive conditions for successfully implementing the tasks set forth by the Sixth Party Congress.

Enhancing party members' quality and preserving the party's quality are a basic and vital objective of the campaign to purify the party and state machinery and to promote healthy social relations. This is truly an arduous and complex revolutionary struggle in the domains of ideology, organization and workstyle and methods, a struggle between renovation along the line charted by the Sixth Party Congress and conservatism and sluggishness, between the socialist business and accounting system and bureaucratism and state subsidies.

Closely related to the struggle between the two roads and the struggle against the enemy's multifaceted war of sabotage, it requires the application of a combination of numerous positive and uniform measures in the educational, administrative, economic, organizational and control fields and calls for close coordination with the efforts to implement the resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and other resolutions of the Party Central Committee. Party committees and administrative organs at all levels should firmly grasp the requirements, objectives, guidelines, measures and steps laid down by the Political Bureau to guide the implementation of this important campaign in a truly satisfactory fashion.

Improving the party members' quality and preserving the party's purity is a fundamental and central goal of the campaign to purify the party and the state apparatus and ameliorate social relations. Truly, this is a revolutionary struggle replete with difficulties, hardship and complexity as regards ideology, organization, conduct and workstyle—a struggle between renovation along the line charted by the Sixth Party Congress and conservatism and sluggishness as well as between socialist business accounting and bureaucratism and state subsidization. It is closely related to the struggle between the two roads and the struggle against the enemy's multifaceted war of sabotage. It calls for the integrated application of numerous positive and uniform measures in the fields of education, administration, economy, organization and control and is closely linked to the efforts to implement the Sixth Party Congress resolution and the various Party Central Committee resolutions.

Party committee echelons and administrative organs should firmly grasp the requirements, objectives, guidelines, measures and procedures established by the Political Bureau, and provide guidance to insure that this important campaign will be carried out in a truly satisfactory manner. In particular, attention must be given to the following basic issues:

1. We must fully realize the important significance and pressing requirements of the task to foster and forge the revolutionary quality of cadres and party members and deeply incorporate the fostering of party members' quality in all of our activities. The ethical quality of party members must be manifested by their working class stand; by their steadfastness in the struggle between the two roads, between ourselves and the enemy and between the healthy and the corrupt; by the spirit of one

for all; by their confidence in the people's strength; by leading a life true to ideals; and by living on their own labor. By their leadership of efforts to organize the implementation of political tasks in conjunction with other campaigns, all echelons and sectors should devise plans and measures designed to intensively foster the revolutionary quality of cadres and party members; regularly control and closely supervise party members in all respects, especially as concerns their quality and lifestyle; and require that all party members, including those who are leading cadres, constantly study to enhance their revolutionary ethics, follow the exemplary virtues of Uncle Ho, combat individualism and preserve and uphold their title as communists.

This campaign is linked very closely to the process of thoroughly understanding and implementing the Sixth Party Congress resolution and the various resolutions of the Party Central Committee as it supports the implementation of the congress resolution. Striving to implement the congress resolution satisfactorily constitutes a necessary condition for curbing and repelling negativism and insuring the results of the campaign. Therefore, in their work programs, party committee echelons must discuss and decide on matters concerning the fostering of party members' quality and on measures for generating broad public support for and appreciation of good deeds and good individuals and units. At the same time, they must strongly denounce and struggle against all manifestations of negativism, especially irresponsibility, corruption, theft of public property, bribery, speculation and smuggling, prerogatives and privileges and persecution and oppression of the masses.

Ethical quality must naturally have a certain economic basis. As we will soon strive to realize the targets of socio-economic development, great attention should be given to stabilizing the livelihood of cadres and party members. Difficulties in life have made many cadres and party members feel ill at ease in their work and, at the same time, have provided loopholes for degenerate and deviant elements to capitalize on and corrupt honest cadres and party members.

However, great attention must also be attached to the strength of the ethical factor without which, as Lenin put it, we cannot talk about any step of revolutionary change. The ethical prestige of the ruling party must hold a dominating role in the spiritual life of society. Marxism-Leninism must serve as a scientific *raison d'être* of our society. The party must become the intellect, honor and conscience of our times. We must oppose the view that slights the strength of ethics and lowers the requirements and criteria of party members. While the economy and life are fraught with difficulties and social negativism is on the rise, it is all the more necessary to stress the forging of ethical quality. A contingent of pure cadres and party members serves as the mainstay of the struggle to drive back the manifestations of social negativism. To strongly emphasize economic interests is not meant to

separate economic interests and efficiency from the issue of ethics, which would lead to chasing after economic interests exclusively and forgetting all ethical criteria and the law.

Fully observing the guideline of using education as the chief measure, we must motivate cadres and party members to voluntarily make self-criticism and criticism and correct shortcomings. Leading cadres must set an example by taking the lead in doing this. The higher one's position is, the more exemplarily he must act. We must be truly strict with ourselves and actively combat individualism. The exemplariness of leading cadres at all levels and the fortitude of higher party committee echelons must be clearly manifested in the course of this campaign; this is a very important factor guaranteeing the success of the campaign. Only by making changes at the level of leading cadres can we change party members and society as a whole; only by effecting changes at higher echelons can we bring about changes at lower echelons satisfactorily. If leading cadres did not act in an exemplary manner and higher party committee echelons neither took direct action nor matched their deeds with their words, they would not be able to educate or persuade anyone and would eventually fail to create any change. Consequently, the masses would be neither encouraged nor instilled with confidence.

2. Along with education, we must rescreen the contingent of party members and firmly, strictly and justly deal with those who violate party discipline and the state law. Party committee echelons should be able to specifically and accurately grasp the qualitative status of cadres and party members under their management, make correct personnel assessment and promptly uncover and deal with those who commit serious mistakes—with attention given especially to party members of position and power, including high-ranking cadres; those who are directly in charge of supplies, commodities, money and labor; and those who are responsible for cadre organization work. No one whatsoever is allowed to stand outside the law.

Our guideline is to take one steady and cautious step at a time and to follow the dictate of logic and reason. But we must be truly positive and firm, neither evading the issue nor giving in to deference. All compromising, deferential, easygoing and perfunctory tendencies will be detrimental to and seriously hinder the struggle to purify the party. Realities in past years have shown that some localities have failed to enforce discipline against a number of errant cadres and party members and to expel from the party those not qualified for party membership for no other reasons than they are hampered by deferential, easy-going and evasive tendencies; by protective umbrellas; by factionalism, departmentalism and parochialism; and by a fear of losing their good track records, which leads to protection and cover-up for the offenders. Some party committee echelons or leaders themselves have interfered even in the work of judiciary organs.

Naturally, in taking disciplinary action against errant party members, we must firmly grasp the goal to educate cadres and party members in strictly observing party discipline, adopt a suitably cautious attitude, and clearly determine the gravity of their offenses in a logical and reasonable manner. For those who make mistakes but voluntarily confess, sincerely admit their shortcomings and mistakes, and are determined to set things right, our party will show leniency. For persons who commit serious mistakes, especially those who refuse to voluntarily and sincerely admit their mistakes for rectification, discipline must be strictly enforced. Degenerate and deviant elements—this includes irresponsible persons, big thieves and grafters and oppressors of the masses—must be immediately expelled from the party and immediately removed from the state machinery, whomever they may be and whatever positions they may hold.

3. All organs of dictatorship must urgently conduct studies and start investigations focusing on punishing degenerate and deviant elements—big bosses of dishonest traders, thieves of socialist property, speculators and smugglers—who seriously undermine our economic and financial system. Though these elements are not very numerous in number, they collude with one another like parasitic worms to eat away at the body of our state and society, causing great harm.

They never voluntarily admit their crimes unless the investigating agencies hold undeniable evidence. They lead a luxurious and licentious life, arrogantly defying public opinion and law. Their usual trick is to buy off cadres and their superiors, corrupt subordinate cadres and make under-the-counter connections with degenerate and deviant elements in the state agencies and with illicit businessmen in society. Sometimes, they have been exploited by the enemies to sabotage our economy. In fact, they have become a group of dangerous people opposing the state and the people. They are the enemy of socialism, whether they have been detected or not.

Each locality and sector can select and try some cases and openly inform the public. We must closely combine the discovery and denunciation by the masses, the press and other mass information media with the investigation, verification and severe and just action by legal agencies. We must also closely combine the campaign to purify the party and the state machinery with the struggle against negative phenomena in society.

We must be vigilant against the enemy plots to take advantage of the struggle against negativism to sabotage us, and must promptly suppress their malicious acts.

4. We must study and publish necessary socio-economic policies and systems specifying the administration of cadres and party members and concerning the treatment of cadres—such as allocating houses and cars, rewards and discipline, reception, entertainment, internal distribution and so forth. We must immediately get rid of the

systems of subsidization that are initiated by various sectors and localities against the commonly prescribed system. The newly established systems should be announced publicly for the masses and agencies to know about. This will help make supervision and control effective. We must revamp and consolidate legal agencies, assign qualified and competent cadres to control and inspect agencies, purge corrupt and degenerate elements and secure real strength and competence for these agencies to adequately and scrupulously perform their functions, responsibilities and jurisdiction.

5. We must combine the struggle within the party and the state agencies with motivation of the masses to participate in building the party and the state machinery. We must motivate the masses to join in criticizing cadres, party members and state employees; to detect and denounce opportunistic, degenerate and deviant elements; and, at the same time, to supervise and control the correction of mistakes and shortcomings of cadres, party members and state employees. We must contribute our views to the party organizations on the educational tasks and the administration of party members. Here, the role of the press and other mass information media is very important. The press is the voice of the party and the people. It greatly contributes to creating public opinion of the masses and society.

The experience in the campaign to conduct self-criticism and criticism according to Directive No 79 of the Party Central Committee Secretariat in 1986 as well as the experience of those localities and units that have experimentally carried out the campaign this time, have indicated that wherever the masses could be motivated, good results could be obtained in detecting negative phenomena regarding the quality and lifestyle of cadres and party members, in struggling to overcome mistakes and shortcomings, and in advancing all the tasks of localities and units.

In order to create a mass movement to struggle against negativism, the important thing is that all party committee echelons and responsible agencies must insure true democracy and publicity, really respect and listen to the people's views, sincerely admit shortcomings, resolutely remedy the shortcomings exposed by the masses, answer the questions raised by the masses and, at the same time, establish regulations to protect frank denouncers of vindictive villains.

Along with punishing slanderers who take advantage of public criticism to cause internal trouble, we must severely deal with acts of suppression and revenge against those who denounce and criticize with a constructive sense.

The legal agencies must coordinate closely with the press agencies to truly serve as a prop for the mass struggle. This campaign cannot help but encounter many difficulties and obstacles. Under direct party leadership, by intensifying the dictatorship of the proletariat, relying

wholly on the masses, and tightly uniting, we resolve to make this party purification campaign a milestone that marks a turning point of decisive significance in strengthening the party and enhancing the party prestige over the masses in order to insure that the party can surge forward and up to the level required by the new tasks, implement well all the tasks set forth by the Sixth Party Congress and really deserve to be the leader and loyal servant of the people.

An Important Part of the New Approach to the Mobilization of Youths

42100004b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 10, Oct 87 pp 8-13

[Article by Vu Mao, 1st secretary of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union]

[Text] The realities of recent years have shown that in order to achieve high results in the mobilization of youths, we definitely must take a new approach. The scope of this new approach is very broad. It encompasses changing the way we think and the way we mobilize youths in a manner consistent with the demands of new tasks, with the nature and characteristics of the new period, the new age and with the psychology and aspirations of youths. It demands that we change the way that we provide education and change our style of guidance along lines that are democratic, diverse and planned. It demands that we combat the administrative, bureaucratic style, the style of doing things to suit convenience and not calculating returns. It demands that we oppose forms of activity that are formal and dry and lead to "organizational sterility," to "Youth Union sterility." It demands that we raise the level and quality of the integration and coordination of work between the Youth Union and state agencies and social organizations under the leadership of the party in order to further develop the enormous potentials of youths while giving attention to meeting the legitimate needs and satisfying the legitimate aspirations of youths, etc.

Due to its limited framework, this article only delves into one aspect of this new approach: changing and improving the integration and coordination of work between the Youth Union and the sectors of the state with a view toward bringing the combined strength of the entire proletarian dictatorship system into play in the mobilization of youths.

As we know, ever since seizing political power, our party has had very large and important tools in the form of the entire system of schools, the army, the mass media and the new culture to use in assembling, educating and forging youths and teenagers.

Examined simply from the perspective of documents, it was not until the mid-1950's that directives and resolutions of the party began to set for the various sectors and circles the requirement of coordinating with the Youth Union on a number of jobs with the aim of supporting

the war of resistance and national construction. In the mid and late 1960's, this matter was advanced one step farther. And, the Fifth Congress of the Party strongly and clearly asserted: youth work must be conducted by means of the combined strength of the proletarian dictatorship system and "all levels, all sectors and all society have the responsibility of mobilizing youths." In practice, however, the role of the state and, to some extent, the role of society in youth work has been evident from the time our people first won political power, from the day that Uncle Ho sent a letter to students on the occasion of the opening of the first school, from the day that Uncle Ho signed the order establishing the Directorate of Youth, from the day that the party issued the directive requiring that the work of the Youth Union and the Youth Federation be closely coordinated with the Directorate of Youth... (Footnote 1) (See: "Party Documents on the Mobilization of Youths," Thanh Nien Publishing House, Hanoi, 1969)

Today, the integration and coordination of work between the Youth Union and the agencies of the state and, conversely, between the agencies of the state and Youth Union organizations, have become a necessity, become a salient feature of the mobilization of youths within the context of the party being the party in power and building the economy and socialism. In July 1985, Resolution 26 of the Political Bureau on strengthening the party's leadership of youth work pointed out: "The state considers youth work to be an important part of socio-economic strategy. Long and short-term plans must include themes and measures regarding this work and appropriate investments in it. The State Planning Commission, the labor, finance, economic and other sectors must promulgate procedures and policies in order to uphold the right of collective ownership of youths in productive labor and economic management, raise the occupational standards of young workers and look after their interests. In particular, positive steps must be taken to provide jobs to youths who reach work age. The education sector, cultural sector, physical culture-sports sector, public health sector... must give their attention to teaching politics and ideology. At the same time, they must meet the needs of youths to study, improve their health and participate in cultural activities. A Youth Law must be promulgated to guarantee and uphold the right of collective ownership of youths." Political Bureau Resolution 26 also points out that an appropriate percentage of National Assembly deputies and the members of the people's councils on the various levels must be youths and that Youth Union secretaries should participate in the meetings of the Council of Ministers and the peoples committees on the various levels. Representatives of the Youth Union must also be members of those councils that relate to the obligations and rights of youths, such as emulation, student recruiting, military recruiting, labor recruiting and other councils.

In recent years, the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has taken the initiative in establishing widespread integration and coordination

with the various ministries and sectors on the central level and with some localities to solve the pressing problems of youths, such as the problems of work, jobs and education, and help youths to fulfill their obligations in building and defending the fatherland. This integration has largely taken the forms of holding joint conferences, issuing joint resolutions, providing guidance together and conducting preliminary and final reviews and learning from experience together.

On the productive labor front, the Youth Union Central Committee has established ties with the Ministry of Agriculture to organize youths in implementing the grain program. On the cultural and ideological front, the Youth Union Central Committee has joined with the Ministry of Culture to launch a campaign to establish the new, socialist way of life among youths. The Youth Union has joined with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of National Defense to launch campaigns or emulation movements to build the armed forces, build security shock youth forces, maintain combat readiness and defeat the enemy's wide-ranging war of sabotage. The Youth Union has coordinated with concerned sectors to gain the participation of youths in the struggle against negative phenomena, thereby helping to purify the party, purify the state apparatus, achieve democracy and social fairness, etc.

These forms of integration have produced some important and very significant results. These results, however, are only initial results. There are still more than a few obstacles and weaknesses that must be overcome. On the Youth Union's part, the implementation of many joint directives and resolutions issued along with other sectors is not being inspected and the actual results being achieved are not known. Bureaucracy, formalism, reliance upon others and a passive attitude are still widespread. However, it must also be mentioned that mistakes in socio-economic policy, in ideological and organizational work, and especially the light attention given to youth work by many party committees, administrations and economic agencies and the relaxation of their efforts in this area have adversely affected this integration. Some comrades in economic sectors still view integration with the Youth Union as a matter of having youths "assault" difficult jobs and "lessening our own heavy burden." As a result, they only give their attention to using youths on specific jobs, even "odd jobs" as their predecessors did, instead of concerning themselves with training and educating youths and satisfying their legitimate aspirations. From the standpoint of scale, integration has only been achieved on the central level and in some provinces and municipalities. In the wards, precincts and districts and at basic units, in general, things are still at the level of ordinary coordination of work. Even on the central, provincial and municipal levels, integration does not encompass all aspects of youth work in the new situation. The major weakness at this time is that there are no specific policies and procedures in the integration and coordination between the Youth Union and the various ministries and sectors

to uphold the right of ownership of youths and create good conditions for the Youth Union to operate. Integration has not gone beyond a number of specific jobs, a number of programs of action, joint conferences, joint resolutions and so forth. Integration leans heavily toward motivational propaganda and has not reached the point of working together to formulate new policies and regulations in the nature of laws to lay the groundwork for and give focus to each activity and to hold youths accountable. As a result, the integration and coordination between the Youth Union and the sectors of the state still have not developed the full combined strength desired by our party.

Some comrades maintain that formulating policies and procedures is part of the function and responsibility of state agencies. The Youth Union integrates and coordinates with state agencies only for the purpose of mobilizing the masses to implement these policies. Such thinking, while not entirely incorrect, is not consistent with new thinking, with the times in which we are living. In the words of Lenin, the period in which we are living is not a period in which "the masses are still submerged in historical ignorance" (that is, when nothing had been prepared with which to build a new society) but a period of "creating new history." At this point in time, "we do not need frenzied zeal. What we need is the rhythmic marching of strong as iron armies of the proletariat." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, Volume 36, p 256) What is this rhythmic marching? Clearly, it is knowing how to think and act in accordance with laws.

To help the broad masses act in accordance with laws, state management agencies have the responsibility of concretizing the line of the party. They must formulate policies, procedures and regulations that are consistent with the objective laws that are exerting an impact in the period of transition, consistent with the realities of building socialism and defending the fatherland, consistent with the standards and aspirations of the people. That is, they must issue decisions that are "carefully considered" and which calculate returns—correct decisions.

To achieve this correctness, policy-makers and decision-makers cannot be subjective, cannot always remain at their desks. Rather, they must gain practical experience, think carefully, conduct pilot projects and survey the opinions of many persons, especially those sections of the broad masses upon whom their policies will exert an impact. As a result, the mass organizations, rather than being the ones who passively implement the policies and decisions of state agencies, must take the initiative and actively participate in the process of shaping policies and decisions. Participation by such mass organizations as the trade unions, the Youth Union, the Women's Union and the Association of Collective Farmers in the process of shaping the policies of the state is an objective demand arising from the development of the new life. This demand is consistent with the need for change,

democratization and openness. It does not reduce the prestige or the authority of state agencies. To the contrary, it will constantly increase their prestige and authority because the policies, procedures and decisions they promulgate will be increasingly correct and conform with laws. The Sixth National Congress of the Party pointed out: "We must rid ourselves of the mistaken concept that mass work is only a measure employed to organize and mobilize the people to implement positions and policies. Party committees or administration agencies must solicit the opinions of the people before deciding upon positions that directly relate to the life of the people nationwide, within the localities or within a basic unit." (Footnote 3) (The Proceedings of the 6th Congress, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1987, pp 111-112)

In youth work today, a combined strength can only be truly achieved when specific and well coordinated policies are formulated. Political Bureau Resolution 26 defines the important views, goals and measures regarding youth work. We must quickly give the thinking embodied in this resolution expression in the form of laws, in the form of specific policies and decisions of state agencies. Herein lies our problem. Now that Council of Ministers' Resolution 62A with its general provisions on upholding the right of ownership of youths has been issued, we need very much to have a Youth Law in order to clearly define the obligations of youths to society and the responsibilities of society to youths. But the ways that we make and adopt laws have not been changed and improved. They still take a very long time. To solve the pressing problems of youths today, such as the needs for jobs, education and cultural activities, we need to have specific policies and specific regulations issued by dozens of ministries and general departments, by the State Planning Commission and the Council of Ministers. But integration and coordination among state agencies in performing this work are still weak and very little is being done by the Youth Union to coordinate with state agencies and related social organizations to solve this problem.

Consider, for example, the problems of providing jobs to workers, in general, and youths, in particular. The resolution of the Sixth Party Congress defined this as the socio-economic task of foremost importance in the years ahead. But the formulation of plans and the promulgation of labor laws and policies that will enable workers to create legitimate jobs for themselves are still proceeding slowly. Our country currently has 32 million workers. But only 25 million are actually working. The other 7 million are studying in or outside schools. Each year, about 1 million youths reach work age, roughly one-half of whom want to get a job immediately. Facts show that in order to create one job at the Da River Hydroelectric Power Plant construction site, for example, the state must invest 3 million dong. In other industrial zones, it must invest roughly 5,000 dong. A manual job, such as making bricks and tiles in Thu Duc, requires an investment of as much as 70,000 dong. (Footnote 4) (These

data were reported by the Ministry of Labor and War Invalids-Social Welfare to the Youth, Teenagers and Children Committee of the National Assembly on 28 July 1987) Thus, the state does not have enough capital to create new jobs for 4 to 5 million persons at once. In the years ahead, the ability to absorb labor into the state sector will continue to be very limited. Therefore, correct policies must be adopted (particularly on investments, taxes, prices and the distribution of profits) to encourage activism on the part of worker collectives and workers. On the other hand, a series of well-coordinated policies must be enacted to encourage the development of the small industry and handicraft trades and the services within the cooperative and household sectors in order to provide local, stable jobs for millions of unemployed persons. We currently lack many coordinated policies to encourage the development of these trades and have, as a result, been unable to provide many jobs in these sectors. Some places, although they have managed to create local jobs within subwards, as has been done in Haiphong, have subsequently encountered difficulties and obstacles because their efforts have not been supported by policies. The youths within the small industry and handicraft sector are very interested in policies that bring social fairness to workers who are not employed by the state, such as policies which enable them to raise their level of education and improve their occupational standards while they are still young, social insurance policies for when they become old, etc. Our present policies do not satisfy these legitimate aspirations.

Another field which also demands much by way of a well coordinated impact of correct policies is education. Our country currently has some 15 million students. This number is equal to the population of many of the developed countries in the world. Our economy, however, is underdeveloped. Therefore, while we are excited over the large number of students, we cannot conceal our concern over the lack of balance between education and the economy, between the need to train persons and our ability to utilize them, between education and practice nor can we please parents and a large number of adult students. The Political Bureau resolution on the reform of education and the resolutions of the Fifth and Sixth Congresses of the Party set the general guidelines for resolving these problems as closely tying education to practice, establishing close ties between the school and society, providing increased occupational counseling to general school students, applying scientific research projects in production at schools, etc. These guidelines are very correct. However, to be put into practice, they must be concretized in the form of very many policies, procedures and regulations of state agencies, from the Council of Ministers to the Planning Commission, from the ministries and general departments to the people's committees of the provinces and municipalities.

As regards launching spirited movements to study and train among today's students and pupils, we must employ more than just general words of encouragement

or emulation titles, embroidered banners, letters of commendation, emblems and so forth. These items still play a certain role but they cannot take the place of the decisive impact of correct policies, such as a correct policy on student recruiting, scholarships and tuition, correct programs of study and correct ways of organizing instruction, particularly correct policies on the utilization of graduates and trainees after graduation. If the policies, procedures and regulations of state management agencies concerning these matters are not coordinated, are incompatible with objective realities, are unfair or incorrect, there is no motivation for launching strong and lasting emulation movements among students to study and train.

These few examples have been presented to show that, under current conditions, in order for the party's mobilization of youths to produce high results, it is absolutely necessary for us to adopt correct policies and establish integration and coordination of work between state agencies and Youth Union organizations and between Youth Union organizations and state agencies.

As a socio-political organization that represents the right of collective ownership of youths, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has the responsibility of correctly and quickly ascertaining the pressing problems being faced in the lives of youths and proposing to the party and state ways to resolve these general problems as well as specific procedures and policies related to the life and the movement of youths and teenagers nationwide so that state agencies can study and promulgate these policies and procedures. The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union should also propose that state agencies display the spirit of Political Bureau Resolution 26 and coordinate with it in re-examining and revising old policies that are no longer appropriate and in researching, formulating and promulgating new policies related to youths that are consistent with the adoption of the new economic management mechanism, with the demands of revolutionary tasks in the current stage.

Such coordination will surely bring a new vitality to the Fifth National Congress of the Youth Union, bring a new force to the youth movement and bring the party's mobilization of youth to a new and higher level of development.

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Socialist Realism Develops Straight From Its Basic Principle—Its Communist Party Character
42100004c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 14-17, 31

[Article by Professor Phuong Luu]

[Text] Socialist realism is not only a matter of "expanding the rules of prose," but always develops straight from its basic principle, its communist party chapter. Comparing the works from "River of Steel" to "And One Day

Longer Than a Century." Soviet researching V. Dime-
triev asserted: "Party character remains party character
but its historical content...is richer." (Footnote 1) (LIT-
ERARY ISSUES Journal, No 10-1983, p 13, in Russian)
In fact, gradually, as history has developed, literature has
not only changed from the standpoint of its social
content, but has also evolved in its characteristics and
functions, its nature, attributes and laws. The party
character of literature has developed, not only from the
standpoint of its specific socio-historical content, but
also in terms of its general structure and concept, which
have been accurately drawn from practice.

Over the past several decades, modern literary theory
has increasingly come to realize that party character is
not simply an ideological-political category applied in
literature. Our party, as Truong Chinh said at the Third
National Literature and Art Congress, views party char-
acter as existing on the three planes of consciousness,
knowledge and the rules of prose—which encompass
ideological content, honesty and artistic expression.
Thus, in literature, party character has become an ideo-
logical-aesthetic category.

Applying the systems view, party character is a structure
consisting of factors and planes that are organically tied
to one another. The elimination of one factor leads to the
destruction of the entire system. A work which deals with
a line or policy of the party that does not go beyond
concepts, weighs both sides of the question or is illusory,
that does not honestly reflect the broad spectrum of life
or only expresses its subject on a low level of art is not a
work with party character and might not even be a work
of art at all. Conversely, when a work honestly reflects
life through highly refined artistic skills, the lines and
policies of the party are expressed more thoroughly,
expressed in a more interesting manner and deeply
penetrate the heart of the reader.

Viewing party character as a system, as an ideological-
aesthetic category is a step forward. But this is not all
that there is to this issue. Because its factors are always
developing, a system is never static. Our concepts of
ideological content, honesty and artistic expression
steadily become more comprehensive and accurate.

Ideology in literary works is poems and songs, is zeal, is
thinking and emotions. It is not just reason, but reason
combined with feelings. A literary work is an explana-
tion, a suggestion, an observation or the revelation of a
truth by the writer. But all these things must truly be felt
in the heart, must overflow the heart before being
expressed on the outside. A vague attitude, superficial
repetition and the inability to make the great truths
specifically and uniquely one's own do not give a work
ideological content. The tension between wit and intel-
lect and the profusion of emotions felt when he achieves
balance will inspire artistic thinking by the writer and
lead him to diverse goals by paths that are virtually
intuitive and instinctive.

A work is not only a document but a process as well. It
originates in objective reality and reaches the public
through the subjective being of the writer. The honesty of
a work must be examined in all elements of this process.
Most importantly, honesty requires that the work cor-
rectly reflect the character or a few aspects of the
character of objective reality. But reflections in literature
are also expressions of the subjective world of the writer,
which encompass his views, stand, method of thinking,
personality, preferences, etc. This is what they mean
when they say that literature is subjective images of the
objective world. But the objective and the subjective are
not simply added to each other, rather, they interact. In
the final analysis, the subjective stems from the objec-
tive. Every specific creative intention of the writer
originates, in one way or another, in the objective. This
is entirely proper and must always be steadfastly defend-
ed. On the other hand, however, we must realize that the
objective does not go into a work directly, but through
the subjective. Thoroughly attacking the idealist stand
and drawing a clear line between their stand and it,
Marxist theorists of today are deeply examining this
principle of the subjective in works. And, one chain
reaction effect of this principle of the subjective is that
reflections in literature must go hand in hand with
creativity. Creativity in literature is the rendering of
dreams and ideals as the objective by many linguistic
means and in the abstract form employed by the artist.
Because, when discussing literature and art, we are
talking about ideals, about beauty, about things that
occur in practice in accordance with certain principles.
Therefore, it is very wrong to view the truth in literary
works as representing the whole truth in life and to
demand that the artist always be accurate in reflecting
reality. The truth in literature is only related to, not
synonymous with, the truth in life. A literary work is an
expression of intimate feelings, is an aesthetic message.
It must be accepted by the public before it becomes a
social product. Otherwise, it is a letter without an
address. Then, the things spoken about by the work, even
though with honesty, even sincerity to the point of being
excessive, are thrown back to the writer, either because
they are too old or too far ahead of the times, and the
work relegates itself to obscurity and becomes a defective
spiritual product, something worth less than even the
waste products of material production.

The aesthetic character of a work is an exceedingly
complex matter, not just a matter of artistic form. But let
us begin with artistic form. Even here we see that it is not
a static concept. With each day that passes, a fuller and
better concept is emerging. They say that it is through
form that we discover content and, therefore, if the form
is good, the contents will also be good. Actually, such is
not the case. There is no form that is good or poor in and
of itself, only good or poor relevancy between the form
and contents. Therefore, only those forms which embody
the character of the contents are truly artistic. And, such
forms constitute a system within the body of a work.
They are not the sum of separate factors. But if, within
the body of a work, the contents are presented in many

different parts, on many different planes or to many different degrees, forms must do the same if they are to embody the character of these contents. This means that there is a dialectical unity between form and content that must be expressed in the overall work as well as in each of its parts, on each of its planes and to each of its degrees. What we instantly see in experienced writers is that art form is not something that exists before the work is written, but something discovered with each work.

In summary, it was a step forward that brought the concept of the party character of literature from a political category to an ideological-aesthetic category. And, now that we conceive of it as an ideological-aesthetic category, we see that it exists on many different planes, each of which is today being viewed in a brand new way.

But the matter does not stop here, either. If party character is a system consisting of many different factors, then it is also a factor of a larger system. In this larger system, each factor asserts itself and is also further defined through its relationship with other concepts. When summarizing Hegel's "Lessons of the History of Philosophy," Lenin wrote: "The concepts of man...mutate from one thing to another, spread from one thing to another. Such is not the case. They do not reflect real life. Analyzing concepts, researching them and the 'art of applying them' (Engels) always demands researching...the relationships among them, the interaction among them." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981, Volume 29, p 267) Party character is the central and most important concept of Marxist literary theory. But if it is explained by itself, regardless of how full the effort made might be, one cannot gain a comprehensive understanding of its essence. At the very least, it must be placed within the system of categories and concepts that relate to the socio-aesthetic nature and functions of literature. This we have also done. But the point that must be made here is that, over the past several decades, the related concepts mentioned above, such as class character, popular character, national character, the functions of literature and so forth, have been explained from many perspectives that are brand new, thus, party character itself is not a static concept and can and must be further developed. We cannot and need not describe the process of development of these related concepts but we must at least discuss the development of the concept of class character because it is the basis of party character. As Lenin said: "Strict party character is the fellow traveler and the product of a highly developed class struggle. Conversely, a strict party character must be developed in the interests of a public and widespread class struggle." (Footnote 3) (V.I. Lenin: "Lenin on Culture, Literature," Van Hoc Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, p 81)

Thus, described in mathematical terms, party character is a "function" of class character. When the concept of class character develops, party character cannot help but "mutate" accordingly. In previous years, due to the

influence of "segmentism," class character was explained in a metaphysical, isolated and static manner. Today, it is increasingly viewed in a dialectical manner.

There is no immutable character common to all humans. But this does not mean that there is not some degree of similarity among a number of classes within a given set of historical circumstances. Since the time that society divided into classes, many very complex changes have occurred. But one problem has persisted: one segment of society oppressing another. As a result, classes which occupy similar social positions, such as the bourgeoisie and landowners, necessarily share certain similarities, even though their ideologies are very different and they at one time had nothing in common. Conversely, classes that are oppressed must struggle. This is what workers and peasants have in common. This is what brings them together in a solid alliance, even though the thinking of peasants is in some respects the opposite of genuine proletarian thinking. There is even a convergence of thinking and consciousness among certain segments even within the ruling class and the class being ruled. Attention must also be given to the changes in class character that occur in each stage of the historic destiny of each class. We cannot ignore history and say that each literary work of the exploiting ruling classes in each stage of history is behind the times and reactionary.

With this dialectical concept of class character, it can be immediately seen that in each period of history, the ranks of the people not only include oppressed and exploited laboring classes, but also progressive social forces, including the ascending ruling class, which even includes a segment of the descending ruling class. And, within the scope of each country, these are the forces that represent, to one degree or another, genuine national qualities. The times change but the genuine qualities of the people and the nation are carried on into subsequent ages. Today, the most progressive force among the people, the working class, is steadily adopting all these qualities. And, as the vanguard unit of the working class, the communist party is developing upon these qualities, the very best qualities handed down by history, in a more conscious manner with each day that passes.

This dialectical view of class character also exerts a wide-ranging impact upon the development of our concept of communist party character. For example, does party communist character encompass humanism? But this question is not raised solely for the purpose of weighing pros and cons from the perspective of pure logic. Are there not places at which, in the name of communist party character, humanism has been rejected in favor of authoritarianism? While we have objected to this, have we not also long been very reluctant to talk about humanism?

On the basis of the true and genuine class view, communists do not deny that a "super class" humanism will exist in the future, when the classes have been abolished. Nor do they deny that the tribes that emerged in the past,

during the period of primitive communism when man first emerged from ignorance and began living together, were filled with humanism. And, even in a society divided into classes, although they definitely must reject "super class" humanism, communists still practice a humanism that embodies the character of the progressive class and is part of the genuine qualities of the people and the nation mentioned above. By carrying on the humanism that emerged in the struggles of the people, including the bourgeoisie during the early period, communists brandished the banner of humanism on the basis that was totally new from the perspective of its goals and methods. The vanguard unit of the proletariat is clearly conscious of the fact that its class is only truly liberated when each oppressed and enslaved class and nation is totally liberated. Clearly, the proletarian revolution is a revolution for the sake of people, for the sake of each and every person who will live in the future and for the sake of the vast majority of the persons now oppressed and enslaved. It is well known that building a classless society was first advanced by the Utopian socialists. But their method was class reconciliation. Therefore, their humanist ideal, although very lofty, was still nothing more than an illusion. Communists advocate a struggle to eliminate each oppressed and exploited class. This is the path that is most scientific and practical. For this reason, Marx and Engels called communism real humanism. A literature which possesses communist party character absolutely must brandish the banner of this real humanism.

This communist party character incorporates, embraces and enhances humanism. This fact is becoming more fully and widely recognized with each passing day. It is also an aspect of the progress made in explaining the principle of party character as a principle stemming from socialist realism.

In the final analysis, the above mentioned advances regarding communist party character have been and are the underlying cause of the development of each factor, from the contents to the rules of socialist realism.

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The 70th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution

The Revolution Is Continuing in the Land of the Soviets

42100004d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 18-26

[Article by S. Khizhniakov written especially for TAP CHI CONG SAN in accordance with a plan signed by TAP CHI CONG SAN and KOMMUNIST]

[Text] Seventy years ago, the revolutionary energies of the Russian working masses exploded, shattering the foundation of the old world and unleashing a truly great assault force for the advance of an historical age. Under

the impact of the October Revolution and within a very brief span of time compared to the history of the world, the socio-political face of our planet changed beyond recognition: more than one-third of mankind threw off the chains of capitalist exploitation; socialism was established and developed into a world system; dozens of young, sovereign states emerged to take the place of former imperialist colonies; the forces of the international working class, their interests being represented by communists and worker parties, became many times stronger; democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-war movements were launched and became mass movements. And, it is not without reason that the working people of the entire world celebrate the anniversary of the great October Revolution as an enormous and memorable event, an event that called for struggle for greater progress by mankind.

The 70th anniversary of the great October Revolution has been greeted with special enthusiasm in the motherland of the revolution, in the Land of the Soviets, where a major restructuring campaign is now under way with the aims of opening the self-powered "engine" of socialism to full throttle, utilizing the creative potentials of socialism as efficiently as possible and clearly defining each of its capabilities and advantages. Examined from the perspective of the essence of these reforms and the bold nature of stated intentions as well as from the perspective of its socialist humanist tendency, the above mentioned restructuring campaign is truly revolutionary and directly carries on the gains made by the great October Socialist Revolution. On the occasion of this anniversary, the Soviet people are especially aware of the close relationship among the periods in their history, the continuity of revolutionary traditions and the harmony between these traditions and the psycho-spiritual state of being of all people who desire changes.

To the Soviet people, the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution is a pinnacle from which they can look back on the path traveled by the country and evaluate what has been achieved as a result of the victory of the revolution. This victory laid solid foundations for the existence of the society of man that were unprecedented in history: in politics, the power of the working people; in the economy, socialist ownership of the means of production; and in interpersonal relations, collectivism and mutual assistance in the spirit of comradeship. With the victory of the October Revolution, the nationalities of Russia were forever liberated from ethnic exploitation and oppression, unemployment and hunger, acquired guarantees of social security and gained confidence in tomorrow. Remarkable changes occurred in all fields of the national economy: once centuries behind, the country reached significant pinnacles in terms of scientific-technical advances. Large-scale agricultural production in the countryside replaced the economy of disorganized small peasants. The cultural revolution made it possible to wipe out illiteracy among the people in a short amount of time, possible to train new, Soviet intellectuals and establish a full-scale scientific front. During the 70 years

since the victory of the October Revolution, the Soviet Union has completed the construction of the base of socialism, thereby insuring the total and thorough victory of socialism and conquering heights that open the way for a new stage of development of socialist society. Viewed against all standards, these results can only be evaluated as an unprecedented leap forward in the history of the progress of production and cultural forces. This is the summary of the path traveled by the country, a summary of historic and worldwide significance.

From the pinnacle that is the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, we also have a better appreciation of the difficulties and challenges that have been experienced by Soviet people, the people who have blazed the trail in the cause of creating socialism. Socialist construction in the Soviet Union began under exceedingly difficult circumstances: economic chaos and the rubble of war. For nearly 3 decades, the country singlehandedly confronted world capitalism and was constantly pressured and threatened by imperialism. It lost 20 million of its sons and daughters and one-third of its national assets while resisting the aggression of Hitler's fascism. For many years, the Soviet people had to work extremely hard and live without the things they needed the most. But these difficult challenges did not discourage them, did not stop them from transforming society along the revolutionary lines ushered in by the October Revolution. Along the 70-year path traveled by the country of the October Revolution, there have also been difficulties of different types associated with straying from Leninist methods concerning socialist construction; with violations of socialist law and democratic standards within the party and society; and with dogmatism in thinking and inertia in practical actions. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, the rate of economic growth and the social returns from this growth declined. The process of democratizing social life that began following the 20th Congress of the CPSU faltered. Administrative-bureaucratic methods predominated in the leadership of the economy, the culture and science. The management apparatus swelled. The principles of social fairness were violated. The disparity between words and actions became increasingly evident. And, although these negative phenomena did not stem from the character of socialism, did not change its character and did not shake the faith of the Soviet people in the historic path—socialism—chosen by them, they did pose serious obstacles to the further advance of socialism.

Evaluating, in an uncompromising and forthright manner, the situation that had developed and determined to do away with rigid forms, methods and habits in business and leadership, to restore the spirit of serious self-criticism, sincerity and the spirit of responsibility in politics, to comprehensively develop democratic principles and to purify the ethical atmosphere—it was on the basis of these stands that the 27th Congress of the CPSU, with revolutionary determination, issued an appeal to turn the country's situation around and make the whole life of the country more beautiful. On the basis of the

conclusions reached at the April (1985) Plenum of the Central Committee, the congress set forth specific solutions aimed at introducing an appropriate degree of dynamism in economic processes, accelerating socio-economic development and fundamentally restructuring each field of social life.

When performing new tasks, when reaching a fundamental turning point, it is necessary, as V.I. Lenin said shortly before the victory of the October Revolution, to "attach importance to real life, to the precise truth of reality, not continue to cling to the theories of yesterday, theories which, like all theories, only reveal basic, general features, only make a start toward grasping the complexity of life." (Footnote 1) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981, Volume 31, pp 162-163) The Leninist lessons in explaining reality are priceless at this turning point being experienced by Soviet society. While focusing society's attention on making determined efforts to overcome stagnation and scale new heights, the party is endeavoring to fully clarify, from a theoretical standpoint, the concepts related to the processes currently under way and make the points in its theory consistent with conditions, which have changed. The starting point of the CPSU is: "Only on the basis of a scientific and serious analysis of reality and the basis of practical conclusions that are carefully considered, are based on the experience that has been gained and take into consideration the dynamism of life and the special character of new tasks is it possible to accelerate socio-economic development to the degree necessary, successfully carry out the restructuring campaign and move ahead to the future."

A few months after the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin wrote: "We, the Bolshevik Party, have conquered Russia. We have won Russia from the hands of the wealthy in order to turn it over to the poor, from the hands of exploiters in order to turn it over to the working people. Now, we must manage Russia." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, Volume 36, p 209) It was very clear to Lenin, to the Bolshevik Party, that socialism could only achieve victory through measures that fully and fundamentally reformed the economy inherited from the old regime. And, this task was performed successfully. A wealth of experience was gained in leading economic construction. The party considers these experiences and all achievements, excesses and even mistakes to be a school that teaches important lessons for the present as well as the future.

Analyzing the experience of the past, M.S. Gorbachev observed: "For a long time, we sought to lead the economy on the basis of zeal and sometimes through the force of orders. However, we forgot Lenin's instructions that the growth of production can only be guaranteed by personal interests, by material concern based on zeal." The new tasks set by the 27th Congress of the Party

cannot be performed by old methods. And, today, fundamental reform of economic management is of foremost importance, the aim of which is to create the most favorable conditions possible for the basic elements of the economy—the enterprises and worker collectives—to function efficiently. The key to this process is to grant broad rights to enterprises and guarantee them true economic independence on the basis of full economic accounting. One important requirement from the standpoint of principles is to convert the enterprises and federations of enterprises to the policy of financing their own operations and creating their own capital. A new, complete management system is being created, one tasked with giving the economy the necessary degree of dynamism and the necessary quality and insuring that it satisfies the needs of society by making maximum use of scientific-technical advances while insuring a shift away from leadership methods that are largely administrative to ones that are largely economic on each level. As the June (1987) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee stressed, restructuring economic management is "the most important cause of the entire party and all the people, is an inseparable part of the process of restructuring the whole life of the country, is the direct continuation of the cause of the October Revolution."

With the objective of shifting to a complete management system, standing committees of the Soviet Council of Ministers have been established to lead groups of related economic sectors. Those sectors that are directly linked to satisfying the needs of the people—such as the agro-industrial combines, light industry, commerce and the services—have begun to operate on the basis of principles that guarantee broad independence and heighten their spirit of responsibility. After setting the task of developing the machine manufacturing sector, the party assumed the special right to inspect the implementation of a broad program in machine manufacturing, a program which is designed to comprehensively modernize this sector, revamp its production apparatus and accelerate the advancement of science and technology within this sector. It has been decided to fundamentally strengthen the production of industrial robots, flexible, automated production systems, production modules and processing centers. Additional capital is being invested in retooling and redeveloping existing machine manufacturing enterprises.

During the far off days of October 1917, the revolutionary creativity of the broad working masses opened the path into the new world. This creativity is also the source of vitality that has been and is continuing to nurture socialism, giving it great strength and stature. And, as goals become more difficult, greater and more serious, the active participation of the masses in the achievement of these goals becomes more important. Today, within the context of the restructuring campaign, which we can compare to a revolution in the scale of the jobs being undertaken as well as the nature of these jobs, this is a matter of special importance. In the robust creativity of the masses, the party sees the guarantee of the success of its proposed reforms.

Here, achieving broader democracy in production and applying the principle of true self-management in the work of worker collectives are of foremost significance. In the history of socialist constructions, there have been more than a few forms of participation by the working people in the management of production. Some years ago, the role of worker meetings and unit and shop councils was heightened. When shifting Soviet society, as V.I. Lenin said, "to true self-management by the people," one important political measure that must be taken is to grant the plenary meetings and councils of worker collectives the authority to resolve problems related to production work, society and cadres.

Upholding the principle of self-management in the field of production is closely tied to the line on further democratizing the whole of social life. The new laws enacted by the Supreme Soviet, the election of leaders; giving voters the ability to express their attitudes toward a larger number of candidates; authorities working in an atmosphere of openness and submitting reports to and being inspected by the lower level; encouraging criticism; notifying everyone of all matters that concern them—all these things create favorable conditions for heightening the citizen activism and the sense of responsibility of each person. Greater democracy means greater socialism. This is the slogan of the party of Soviet Communists. It is the essence of the party's policy at this turning point in the development of socialism in the land of the October Revolution.

The October Revolution was carried out for the victory of social fairness. And, it was also for this reason that socialism was established and is being developed and perfected. During the years under Soviet power, a full life has come to the families of workers. Free public health services and the care of mothers, children, war veterans, elderly workers and old citizens have become familiar standards of life. The Soviet Union is one of the countries whose people have the highest level of education in the world. However, these most valuable gains of the revolution, of socialism do not mean that the advantages of the socialist way of life have been achieved "automatically."

The 27th Congress of the CPSU made a special point of pointing out that in recent decades, the failure to give appropriate attention to further development in the social field became the cause of many negative phenomena, which were manifested in complying with the principle of only spending surplus funds in this field. The congress called for the implementation of a strong social policy, for stronger socialization of the economy. In keeping with resolutions of the party, new principles on the remuneration of labor within the production sectors were proposed and are being implemented. The line on thoroughly adhering to the socialist principle of distribution in accordance with the quantity and quality of labor is being resolutely enacted. Needless restrictions on private labor have been lifted. In the interest of more

fully satisfying the needs of the people, the establishment of cooperatives in the different fields of production and the services is being encouraged in every way possible.

Social policy is implemented through the activities of the organs of the people's power—the soviets of people's deputies—and born of the revolutionary creativity of the masses. Fully developing the powerful potentials of the soviets, making the most effective use possible of their capabilities, eliminating the conservative factors and formalism that have become entrenched over the years and endeavoring to gain the active participation of the people everywhere in the plans and work of the soviets—this is one of the important tasks of the revolutionary restructuring campaign currently under way.

The victory of the October Revolution marked a sudden turning point in the psychology of the masses. In the process of socialist transformation, new principles—humanism, collectivism and mutual assistance in the spirit of comradeship—were established and took the place of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ethics. However, factors of social decay which emerged in recent decades also influenced the spiritual state of society, causing a decline to some extent in the motivation to work and the concern for social work. This was also evident in the field of literature and art. After deeply analyzing the situation, the January (1987) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee focused the party's attention on making determined efforts to rid society of distortions of socialist ethics, extol honest labor and show constant concern for spiritual wealth, for the culture of each person and all society. And, the results of these efforts were clear: the plenum held in June 1987 observed that there had been a true explosion of spiritual activism among the masses. Public opinion had become much more concerned with the processes taking place in science, literature and art, with speeches in the press, on radio and on television. The people now want to know much more about the country's past, present and future and are paying closer and more detailed attention to the work of society and the state, to matters related to world view and theory-ethics.

The great October Revolution laid the groundwork for the first unified, multi-national socialist state in history. During the years under Soviet power, the economies and cultures of all the republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have been developed. From an economic, social and cultural standpoint, the Soviet Union is developing as a whole and complete entity. But, as is the case in every dynamic undertaking, the relationships among the nationalities are giving rise to new problems. The negative phenomena and deviations against which the party is waging a resolute struggle have also appeared in this field in recent years. This is to say that bigotry, localism, ethnic arrogance and reliance upon others have been restored at one place or another.

As V.I. Lenin wrote, our experience clearly shows that only by giving full attention to the interests of the different nationalities is it possible to abolish the base of

conflicts and mutual distress. Always following the instructions of Lenin and developing them in a creative manner with full attention to adherence to the principles that apply in the different nationalities—our party considers this a condition of progress by the multi-nationality socialist system. The experience of socialism and the realities of the restructuring campaign show that only through socialism can we effectively combat the widespread phenomena associated with nationalism.

Seventy years ago, the party of the Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin, brandished the victorious banner of the October Revolution in the country. All the pages in Soviet history, all the victories and achievements along the path of the trail blazers of socialism have been closely associated with the party. Not ignoring its mistakes and shortcomings and drawing uncompromising lessons from the dynamic realities of building the new society, the party has always shown itself to be capable of finding correct solutions in order to further the advance of socialism. And, today, to provide political leadership and define the prospects for the common development of Soviet society, the CPSU has presented the main tasks confronting us in the socio-economic and spiritual fields and solved the most important problems in providing organizational and ideological support of the restructuring campaign that has been launched.

As the nucleus of the political system of Soviet society, of the organizations of the state and society, the party has the duty of setting a truly democratic example. With this in mind, the 27th Congress of the CPSU pointed out the need to create within all party organizations a wholesome, practical, forthright and distinctly open atmosphere, one marked by a genuine spirit of comradeship within the party and a high spirit of responsibility and demands upon one another among communists.

At present, Soviet communists are experiencing their main test in the economy. "The reform that has begun—the June (1987) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee stressed—touches all floors of our economic house. And, it is exceedingly necessary for the organizations of the party and the party committees to give their constant and unceasing attention to the large and varied jobs that must be performed to restructure the economic mechanism on all levels of the national economy. The view that they bring to this fundamental restructuring of economic management must be a political view, a national view."

With the worker collectives having been granted much more independence and the principles of self-management being more widely applied, the role of the basic organizations of the party has been heightened. Of importance is the need for every basic organization of the party to operate in a dynamic and determined manner with clear purpose and to show, in practical terms, that it is truly the political nucleus of the worker collective. The core cadres of the party have the task of setting an example in the process of the overall restructuring campaign. They must encourage new thinking and

cultivate new views. In the final analysis, the activism of the working masses and the scale and depth of the creativity of the people depend upon how the organizations of the party operate.

While searching in the experience of the revolution and the experience of Bolshevism for models of the Leninist work style, models of restructuring and changing leadership methods to suit new conditions, the party is giving special attention to cadre policy to insure that all components in the fields of its material and spiritual activities have cadres who are well versed in their profession and display initiative and have persons who view their work in the new way. Establishing, by every means possible, a conscious attitude toward labor, a sense of personal discipline, the social and ethical principles of socialism and the noble thinking of patriotism and socialist internationalism is the essence of the educational-ideological work of the CPSU today.

As it carries on the cause of the cause of the October Revolution or, in the words of Lenin, "completes and remakes" the Soviet system, the party is also giving special attention to studying the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries and attention to tightening its relations of friendship and cooperation with the people's of these countries. The CPSU is always interested in and truly respects the work being performed by the socialist countries to find ways to perform complex economic and social tasks. Taking a hard look at collective experiences, seeing the strengths and weaknesses of these experiences and making full use of one of the advantages of socialism—the ability to learn from these experiences—these are the mandates of the current policy of the CPSU in its relations with the socialist countries.

As life has shown, the comprehensive exchange of experiences, the broad cooperation and the increasingly active coordination among the socialist countries produce results that do not simply add the potentials of these countries together, but multiply them and are a catalyst that strongly stimulates common progress. The fate of peace and social progress across the entire planet is now more closely tied than ever before to the dynamism of economic and political development of the world socialist system.

The celebration of the 70th anniversary of the great October Revolution is taking place under circumstances in which, due to the forces of imperialism, the danger of a nuclear holocaust threatens our planet, in which the survival of mankind itself is in question. The issues of eliminating the danger of war and liberating mankind from the arsenals of weapons of mass murder that have been accumulated are more acute than ever before. The Soviet Union has put all its political prestige and international influence into the struggle for peace and the security of nations, the struggle to end the arms race and thereby continue the great mission of humanism of the October Revolution—"the first victory in the cause of

abolishing war," as V.I. Lenin called it. (Footnote 3) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Volume 44, p 187)

In the Decree on Peace, one of the first documents of the victorious October Revolution, the Soviet state called for the establishment of a world order in which close neighborly friendship and cooperation benefiting all nations prevail, not military strength. Throughout its 70 year history, the land of the Soviets has consistently sought to assert these principles and make them the standards of international relations. The 27th Congress of the CPSU stressed the continuity of this policy, a policy now enhanced by new political thinking, by new views that take into consideration the actual circumstances of the nuclear age.

One expression of the highest possible spirit of responsibility for the fate of civilization was the 15 January 1986 statement made by the general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, which set forth a program for the phased and total elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass murder by the year 2000. This program has been augmented and given additional weight by the proposal to make large-scale reductions in the armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe, which was advanced by the Soviet Union together with its allies within the Warsaw Pact; by proposals in the field of banning chemical weapons, by the program to build "peace in the stars" presented by the Soviet Union at the United Nations as a substitute to the "Star Wars" plan of the United States; the Reykjavik initiative; by proposals aimed at solving the problem of nuclear missiles in Europe; and by subsequent steps of the Soviet Union in this direction.

The inclusion by the Soviet Union of Asia-Pacific in the common process of building a comprehensive international security system is of special significance. Many persons know about the proposals of the Soviet Union presented in the speech by the general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in Vladivostok, the thrust of which is as follows: resolving regional conflicts and preventing the proliferation and build-up of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific; starting negotiations on reducing the size of military fleets in the Pacific, beginning with ships armed with nuclear weapons; resuming negotiations on turning the Indian Ocean into a region of peace; starting work on fundamentally reducing, in phases and stages, the armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe to a reasonable and rational level; and bringing the discussion of reliable measures that do not involve the use of armed force within the region into the realm of the practical.

In June 1987, the Soviet Union proposed a major new initiative, the aim of which is the total elimination of medium-range missiles not only in Europe, but in Asia as well. The Soviet Union is ready to destroy all of its

medium-range missiles in the Asian region of the country, that is, to drop the issue of maintaining 100 warheads on medium-range missiles, provided that the United States does the same. Both strategic and tactical missiles will be destroyed.

Thus, under its "global 00" concept, the Soviet Union does not divide the principles of its international policy into principles that only apply to Europe, to Asia or to other places. The Soviet Union's premise is: in today's mutually dependent world, the nations on all continents share common concerns and hopes. The appeal of the CPSU Central Committee to the Soviet people on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the great October Revolution stated: "Life under the conditions of security, independence and progress can and must be guaranteed by all nations. Here, not everything depends on us—on the Soviet Union, on socialism. But we will do and do fully that which does depend upon us."

Carrying on and developing upon the principles of the great October Socialist Revolution, the land of the Soviets has closely tied its peace-loving foreign policy to the performance of creative domestic tasks. The more effective and productive the restructuring campaign and the acceleration of socio-economic development are, the more the international prestige and influence of the country and its contributions to the maintenance of peace throughout the world will rise. Socialism and peace are indivisible. The more powerful socialism is, the more lasting peace will be.

The very great revolution that began in Russia 70 years ago in response to the appeal and under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party is continuing. It is continuing in the development of the world revolution, in the achievements of the socialist countries and in the struggle for peace and the security of nations. The revolution is continuing in the immense and complete restructuring campaign, in the acceleration of the development of socialism in the land of the Soviets—the country put on the path of trail blazer by the October Revolution.

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The October Revolution Ushered in a New Age in the History of the World

42100004e Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 10, Oct 87 pp 27-31

[Article by Trinh Ngoc Thai, deputy director of the Foreign Relations Department of the Party Central Committee]

[Text] The victorious October Socialist Revolution ushered in the age of the transition from capitalism to socialism and communism on a worldwide scale. With the development of real socialism, mankind began the advance to a new society by a path never traveled before. But the difficulties encountered along the path of building socialism were further complicated by the influence

of a host of factors: socialism had won victory in a region that was not the most highly developed economically and much had to be done to overcome the country's socio-economic backwardness and build the material-technical base of a new society. And, during its very first days, socialism endured the ravages of the bloody war against domestic counter-revolutionaries and foreign interventionists. Then, it fought fascism—the spearhead of world counter-revolutionary powers. The urgent rebuilding of the country took place against the background of continuous economic, military, political and psychological pressure being exerted by imperialism. These serious challenges proved that nothing can stop a new society free of oppression and exploitation from existing and developing. The program of the CPSU adopted at the 27th Congress states: "The experience of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries has eloquently proven the indisputable economic, social, political, ideological and spiritual superiority of the new society as a higher stage of development than capitalism in the progress of mankind." (Footnote 1) (The Program and Statutes of the CPSU, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1986, p 14)

Socialist society is a highly dynamic society. It is characterized not only by evolutionary changes, but also by substantive changes and revolutionary reforms. The line on accelerating socio-economic development is a strategy for revolutionary changes. By the end of this century, the national income of the Soviet Union will double, the value of its industrial output will double and labor productivity will increase 2.3-2.5 time. Achieving these targets is a brand new task, one in which the main and decisive element is social labor productivity. The increasing dynamism of socialist society proves that socialism is and has been finding the best answers to the questions of life in the face of the challenges of our times and in the intense rivalry with capitalism.

The international influence of socialism is also steadily growing because socialist society, in the logic of its objective development, is approaching the threshold of fundamental reforms. Within it have emerged new forces struggling for the higher goals toward which real socialism is moving. Capitalism has no future but it still possesses significant vitality. It is adapting and changing direction as the situation demands and trying by economic, political, social, spiritual and ideological means to resist the trend of history and prolong its existence. Capitalism differs from the exploitative socio-economic forms that preceded it in that it possesses huge production forces and a strong mechanism with which to maintain its existence. Consequently, replacing capitalism with socialism on a worldwide scale will be a long and complex process.

The strategy of accelerated development of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries will take from capitalism its final claim to superiority, its "upper hand" in new technology and labor productivity. Socialism is

truly the main force in the process of the world revolution. Its role is seen in building the new society, in proving, in practical terms, the superiority of socialism over capitalism. This has heightened the international prestige of socialism, strengthened socialism as a factor of peace, thwarted the schemes of aggression of imperialism and helped other nations to choose the correct path of development. Imperialism still possesses the means to commit aggression and intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, such as Grenada, Nicaragua and Afghanistan, and still employs brazen terror, as was the case in the bombing of Tripoli (Libya). However, the objective laws of social progress, the balance of military-strategic forces, the change in comparison of socio-political forces and the will of nations to determine their own destinies have made it increasingly difficult for imperialism to be the international gendarme.

The October Revolution ushered in the age of the proletarian revolution and the national liberation revolution throughout the world. The October Revolution created very favorable conditions for the liberation struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial nations. Having thrown off the chains of colonialism, these newly independent countries, although their levels of economic-social development, their political systems and their national traditions differ, are closely bound by common characteristics and interests. These are their colonial past; the need to overcome the vestiges of colonialism and the acute contradiction between political independence and economic dependence upon the developed capitalist countries; and their desire to achieve worthy positions within the world political system. The world of these former colonies and semi-colonies is a very diverse and complex picture of profound political, economic and social changes. To varying degrees, these countries are forces opposing imperialism to defend their political independence and the path of development they have chosen. Recent decades have witnessed the growth and independence of the developing countries in the world's political life. The growth in size and quality of the working class in the developing countries is a matter of historic significance. In the early 1980's the proletariat in these countries numbered 180 million persons with 57 communist parties and 40 democratic revolutionary parties. The worker movement has taken another long stride forward.

However, there are still many problems caused by the colonial past of these countries that have yet to be resolved, such as the position and role of these countries within the world economy and the widening gap in economic development between the developing countries and the developed capitalist countries. The foreign debt of these countries exceeds 1 billion dollars, thus forcing many developing countries into economic dependence and dependency for credit and grain upon the developed capitalist countries.

The neo-colonialist policy of imperialism is the main cause of what are called regional conflicts. Fighting

neo-colonialism is the urgent task of the newly independent countries. It is a task related to their historic destinies. In the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, many developing countries are becoming "tinderboxes" filled with anti-imperialist sentiment. Just one spark is all they need to ignite, incinerate the ambitions of the imperialists and take back their "stolen gains." The struggle against imperialism by the oppressed nations has opened a path for performing the pressing tasks of these countries. It is to achieve economic independence, complete and strengthen their national independence and achieve social fairness and progress. The voice supporting peace, disarmament and national independence of the non-aligned movement is of important international significance.

The October Revolution also ushered in the age of a new foreign policy, a policy of peace and friendship among nations. In late 1917, when Finland and the Ukraine demanded to secede from Russia, Lenin pointed out that "we should never worry about this" because the proletariat does not need a state that is based on tying nations together by force. The proletariat will "reconquer" the oppressed nations of Russia, not as the capitalists and the greedy imperialists did, but by giving them the right to "be totally free to align with us or with other countries. We guarantee that they will totally support the working people of each nation in struggling against the bourgeoisie of all countries." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Volume 35, pp 138-139) Lenin expressed the deep confidence that "only the socialist alliance of the working people of all countries can eliminate each cause of oppression and discord of a national nature." (Footnote 3) (Ibid.) Through its actions, the Soviet government proved its desire to establish close relations with neighboring countries.

In the first document of the Soviet state—the Decree on Peace—the principle of peaceful coexistence were proclaimed and imperialist war was called "the greatest crime against mankind." The wars of imperialism have inflicted untold suffering and pain upon workers and peasants, upon the masses. The socialist state, therefore, is resolutely opposed to war. It pursues a policy of peace and loyalty in international relations, broader economic relations with the nations under different social systems, the establishment of close, dependable neighborly relations and mutual understanding and cooperation with other countries. The economic relations between capitalism and socialism are the material base of the principle of peaceful coexistence. But, imperialism continues to pursue its base global interests, ready to trample upon the destinies of scores of nations. Here and there in the world, the U.S. imperialists and their military allies are sowing the seeds of armed conflicts and making the atmosphere tense. Against this background, solidarity and consensus between socialism and all peace-loving and progressive forces are more necessary than ever before. In the lead in this struggle for peace, this struggle

to eliminate the threat of world war is the world socialist system, the nucleus of which is the world socialist community.

The existence and continuous development of the world socialist system has had a positive influence upon international relations. Among the socialist countries, a new style of international relations, new from the standpoint of the nation, the people and the state, has formed. Socialism has abolished national oppression, changed the relations of enmity and distrust among nations, eliminated antagonistic contradictions and put an end to the conflicts and wars identified with capitalism. In their place are relations of total equality, comradely cooperation and fraternal mutual assistance. The socialist countries resolutely thwart each manifestation of hegemony, chauvinism and nationalism. The people-oriented foreign policy advanced by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M.S. Gorbachev satisfies the most basic interests of mankind. This policy has the objective of maintaining favorable external conditions so that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries can perform their construction tasks. At the same time, this policy is also aimed at resolving the global problems of maintaining a lasting peace and protecting the sacred right of man—the right to life. These are the most urgent, important and pressing problems today.

In our age, an age in which the peril of mankind being annihilated in the flames of a nuclear war has reached terrifying proportions, the intelligence of man and the policies of nations must focus on the struggle against this peril. Mankind is in a stage in history when it must choose between life and self-destruction. The 27th Congress of the CPSU reached a sound conclusion: regardless of how great the threat to the existence of civilization caused by the policy of the imperialists might become, the forces of peace are fully capable of blocking the forces of war. This conclusion is based on a scientific analysis of the groups of contradictions of our times: the relations between the social systems; the contradictions between one imperialist power and another; the struggle against imperialism by the world of newly independent countries; and such global contradictions as the issue of war and peace, the environmental crisis, the energy crisis, the food crisis and so forth, which relate to the very foundation of the existence of man's civilization. Resolving these global contradictions demands that all forces and all types of nations in the world coordinate their actions and join together to find the most effective solutions.

In the modern world, the tasks related to social progress and the maintenance of peace and the goals of the class and all the people are closely tied together. Continuing the class struggle between the two opposing social systems does not mean rejecting cooperation and the coordination of action between the two systems in the process of development of the world. The nuclear era has made the issue of war and peace the issue of foremost importance. Peace is the most precious value of mankind. To exist, mankind must intensify the struggle

against the bellicose policy of imperialism. The factors determining the development of the world are the dynamic development of the world socialist system and the strengthening of the potentials for peace on our planet. Therefore, the revolutionary restructuring campaign currently under way in the Soviet Union is of major significance not only to Soviet society, but also to socialism, in general, to the entire world. The urgent daily labor of the Soviet people and each solid step taken down the path of accelerating the socio-economic development of the Soviet Union will give greater weight to this peaceful foreign policy. This campaign is the continuation of the great October cause.

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Round Table Discussion on Thinking and the Adoption of New Thinking

Some Matters Concerning Thinking and the Adoption of New Thinking in Our Country Today
42100004f Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 32-36

[Article by Ho Van Thong, professor of philosophy]

[Text] Editorial Note: recently, we organized a round table discussion on thinking and the adoption of new thinking with the aim of clarifying a number of basic theoretical views that serve to lay a foundation and set a direction in keeping with the spirit of the Sixth Party Congress.

Below are the main presentations of the comrades participating in the discussion.

The round table discussion will continue to discuss the current state of thinking of our cadres and people and the basic directions and practical measures to be taken in the adoption of new thinking in our country.

Thinking exhibits the following main characteristics:

—To begin with, thinking is conscious reflection on a high level by means of generalizing and delving deeply into recognizing the essence and laws of the object of thought.

—Thinking is the process of perceiving and applying concepts and categories in accordance with strict principles of logic with the aim of arriving at the truth. This is the process of translating objective logic into subjective logic, translating the essence of reality into a law of reason.

—Thinking is the process of recreating reality in a spiritual form. Thinking is discovering and proposing in the direction of continuously supplementing and improving upon what we recognized or are recognizing. The law of thinking is the law of developing and discovering the new.

—Thinking has no objective in and of itself but must relate to reality in order to be realized. The function of thinking is to convert thoughts into actions, to find ways to translate creativity in the mind into creativity in practice.

In the thinking that each person does, the above mentioned characteristics are not always achieved because this thinking is development replete with contradictions based on subjective reflections. But if we view thinking as a process, as common to the nature of man in the realities of society, it expresses itself as a tendency in the direction of the above mentioned characteristics.

And, in light of these characteristics, thinking can be viewed as the process of recognizing and applying objective laws in the conscious activities of man for the purposes of transforming and changing reality and himself.

Ultimately, each activity of man must be subjected to thinking. The results achieved under specific circumstances depend upon one's ability to think. Thinking forms through practice and in response to practical needs. When practice changes and makes different demands, thinking must change accordingly. This change depends mainly upon the level of perception and the class character of persons who, in their relationship with social realities are thinking.

Viewed from these perspectives, our adoption of new thinking is a process of shifting away from activities controlled by empiricism to activities based on recognizing and applying objectives laws; away from convenient, subjective thinking to thinking in accordance with the demands of objective laws; away from the habit of taking the same old path to discovering, proposing and creating; away from inconsistency to consistency between what we say and what we do and to discovering new ways to take action. In other words, our adoption of new thinking today is the adoption of new ways of understanding and applying Marxism-Leninism, particularly the laws on the socialist revolution and scientific communism. We are pursuing an ideal based on recognizing and applying objective laws. We are not the followers of a religion or some abstract school of ethics. There is, therefore, nothing to prevent us from supplementing and enriching our existing theory in light of the new conditions of our times. But are the mistakes we have made the result of not knowing how to supplement the theories of Marx, Engels and Lenin or are they primarily due to the fact that our cadres do not truly exhibit a thorough understanding of scientific socialism in their thinking and actions? Clearly, they are the result of the latter. Many of our cadres have only skimmed the surface of Marxist thinking. They do not correctly understand socialism in many of its very basic and fundamental elements. Yet, this is the knowledge they use as the basis of their thinking and their guidance of the actions of others. This causes situations to arise that should not exist.

For example, if thinking is based on principles such as "socialism is only the abolition of exploitation," "there is no commodity production under socialism" and so forth and if models and measures for building socialism are developed on the basis of this thinking, the result is unavoidable mistakes in practice. Our adoption of new thinking must focus first and primarily on changing incorrect views concerning scientific socialism in order to arrive at a correct and thorough understanding of it in our concept of socialist construction. It is only on this basis that we can talk about adding and introducing things that we need today but which our classical authors did not touch upon.

Of course, our adoption of new thinking cannot stop at only achieving a correct grasp of the essence of the universal laws that have been discovered. If we stop at the universal and view the universal as absolute, we will become dogmatic, allow ourselves to be controlled by feelings and abstract ethics and not be in touch with life at all times and places. In thinking, the universal, the general principles, the most basic features that control everything still are not the only factors. Thinking must unite the universal and the non-universal, the expected and the unexpected, the general and the particular, the long-range and the immediate... If we focus exclusively on the universal, we cannot help but be dogmatic in our thinking and talk at great length about correct general principles on combating exploitation, on socialist ownership and on democracy, but only say things that are abstract and cannot be translated into reality. Dogmatism, the phenomenon of the universal, is rather deeply ingrained in the thinking of our cadres. It is an area in which important changes must be made in our adoption of new thinking.

In addition, all the factors mentioned above exert their impact and infiltrate the way our cadres think and work through the psychology of the small-scale producer, the psychology of the petty bourgeoisie. The tendency displayed here is the tendency to "emotionalize" Marxism-Leninism, to rely more upon passive confidence than on developing one's ability to engage in independent thinking. It is the tendency to hate all that is associated with the exploiting classes while not knowing how to apply these things in accordance with the requirements of developing production. It is egalitarianism, the fear of change, being satisfied with one's past and not daring to bring one's outlook abreast of the times... If these factors are allowed to control the thinking of our cadres, they will surely distort socialist construction in practice.

Are not empiricism, dogmatism and the psychology of the small-scale producer factors that have combined to stagnate our thinking and which we must now be determined to change?

In our country today, the adoption of new thinking must be oriented toward solving the problems raised by the Sixth Party Congress. To do this, we must concentrate on quickly changing a number of basic, original views in

order to give direction to and lay a foundation in logic for the process of adopting new thinking, thinking that is different from the deviations that existed among us in years past.

—To begin with, some very basic and true changes must be made in our concept of man. From man, for man and working together with man—these are the very basic elements of our social system. In the case of previous social systems that also cultivated the human factor to maintain their existence, the loss of this factor signaled their demise. Socialism was born to liberate man from exploitative relations and highly develop the human factor for the sake of man. Moreover, each law of socialist life is expressed and applied through the inquisitiveness and creativity of man. In other words, under socialism, social necessity is achieved through the creativity of man. From the perspective of the practical character of man as well as the perspective of the objective demands of the laws of society, the mechanism of social activity in socialism must be a mechanism that vigorously taps the initiative and creativity of each unit and individual, not a rigid apparatus that ties the hands, the feet and even the thinking of man. Under socialism, there is no basis for thwarting nor can any action be taken in the name of anything to thwart the creative freedom of man. The centralized leadership and guidance provided by our party and state have been established in response to the demands of democracy and for the sake of democracy. To understand otherwise is to not think correctly.

On the other hand, each social system is organized to implement the right of the owners of the means of production to be the masters of each social activity. Otherwise, no system can, from an organizational standpoint, come into being and exist. In our system, the owners of the means of production are the working people. Consequently, they must be the true masters of social life. This right must necessarily take the form of a social system. When the working people lose their right to be the masters, there can be no true socialism. For years, many of our cadres, while knowing that the masses are of decisive importance, have usually leaned more toward viewing them as the force that implements, as the strength of the majority than as universal creativity and the masters of social life.

When talking about man, about the working people in our society, we are basically talking about the working person's initiative, creativity and right to be the master of society. It is also on the basis of these three factors that we say that the people are the base. If we think and act not on the basis of bureaucratic behavior, but on the basis of the fundamental and vital requirement of our system that we vigorously tap the initiative and creativity of the people and uphold their right to be the masters, reality will clearly be very different.

—Next, we must fundamentally change the understanding that socialism is simply a matter of abolishing exploitation and private ownership. It is also a matter of

developing production forces. The non-exploitative relations of socialism are superior to the exploitative relations of capitalism because it is through these non-exploitative relations that economic forms come into being which strongly develop production forces. In the final analysis, the superiority of socialism must be measured in terms of the development of production forces. Anything that impedes the development of production and production forces is contrary to the laws that govern the formation and development of socialism. It can be said that this is the most important starting point, one in the nature of a foundation, in thinking correctly about socialism. Clearly, the major mistakes we have made regarding investments, transformation and management have been due to the fact that our thinking has not been oriented toward solving economic and political problems in accordance with the requirement of truly developing production and production forces. And, as a result, incorrect thinking has spread from one field to another. From the economy to politics and ideology, from feelings and ethics to theoretical activities, from the standardization of cadres to the evaluation of personnel, from policies to organization and management...everything has seemingly lost its soul which lies in production and the development of production forces. When thinking loses its economic necessity, it is clearly no longer capable of discovering and creating in a manner closely linked to real life.

Another matter of no less importance is our concept concerning the moving forces behind the activities of man under socialism. Here, we would like to confine our remarks to the matter of interests. All social laws embody, either directly or indirectly, relations among interests and are implemented through struggles for specific interests, particularly the basic economic laws of social systems. Anything that affects interests affects the contents and the moving forces behind the implementation of social laws. In our society, the interests of the state are the basic and most decisive interests because they are the fundamental prerequisite to guaranteeing that the interests of the collective and the interests of the individual are satisfied in the best possible manner. They orient each separate activity toward the realization of the interest of the state. It is in this way that separate interests are realized. The more common interests are served, the more separate interests are realized. From an objective standpoint, common interests cannot be used to nullify separate interests or vice versa. Common interests are determined on the basis of the whole whereas personal interests are the direct moving force behind the actions taken by each person. This is the relationship that must exist within our system. It cannot be otherwise. Organizing and managing socio-economic life within our system are essentially a matter of applying the relationships among interests to encourage initiative and creativity on the part of each unit and individual.

If our thinking excludes the category of interests and the application of the relationships among interests it will

turn every value upside-down, cause chaos in the activities of the people and thus make it impossible to mold new, socialist men and women.

To adopt new thinking aimed at resolving the pressing problems we face today, it is, at the very least, necessary for us to quickly change our basic views (which we have understood incorrectly) concerning man, the working people, the needs to develop production and production forces and interests in the formation and development of socialism. We maintain that this is not all that needs to be done. These, however, are areas in which we have made major mistakes, mistakes that have controlled all our other thoughts and actions. If we do not truly adopt new thinking beginning in these areas, our thinking will continue to take the same old path and real life will remain stagnant and unable to move ahead.

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New Directions in Thinking

42100004g Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 36-39

[Article by Le Thi, professor of philosophy]

[Text] I. The Weaknesses of Theoretical Thinking in Our Country and Their Causes

The inadequacy and backwardness of our theory in recent years stem from weaknesses in the way that we think, namely, simplistic empiricism compounded by subjective voluntarism, passive dogmatism, adhering strictly to textbooks and automatically following the experiences of foreign countries or, it can be said, from the maladies of being far removed from the realities of the country and practicing metaphysical idealism.

Dogmatism, adhering strictly to textbooks and restricting ourselves to the framework of the classics, of the experience of foreign countries while automatically thinking in accordance with the opinions of the upper level and speaking, writing and illustrating in accordance with existing views and thinking without personal independent thinking...have the following underlying causes:

—The influences of the ideologies of feudalism, Confucius, Buddha and Lao Tse and the influences of living for many years in a backward agricultural society and many years of war.

—Our country has not experienced the stage of capitalist development. This means that, from the standpoint of thinking, we have not experienced the stage of development of scientific theoretical thinking. Our thinking is primarily at a low level of experience and generalization. It leans more toward sentiment than reason. Our thinking is general in content and lacking a scientific basis.

As we advance to socialism from a low starting point, we not only lack material-technical bases, but also lack much scientific knowledge and much information in necessary fields in order to form, teach and cultivate the ability to think independently and creatively.

—Our theoretical activities (from studies to research and instruction) are still unscientific and undemocratic. They lack freedom of thinking and substitute the personal opinions of the leader for the thinking of the collective. They lack respect for the opinions of others, of the lower level.

—There is the thinking of being satisfied with the level of knowledge achieved. Following the large victory of the resistance against the United States for national salvation, there emerged among our cadres and people the phenomena of being subjective, being satisfied and thinking that they had achieved the pinnacle of the times, the pinnacles of revolutionary theory and the social sciences. Therefore, for a long time, we have done little by way of studying the experiences of fraternal countries and learning from the world. Conversely, when we have studied the experiences of fraternal countries, we have applied them mechanically without analyzing or criticizing them.

—From an objective standpoint, socialism is the process of developing from a low to a high level, from the incomplete to the complete. Consequently, our perception of it must also evolve. Our mistakes and backwardness in the theory as well as practice of socialist construction in our country in recent years demand that we actively study real socialism and continue to adopt new thinking concerning every aspect of socio-economic life on the basis of our new views on real socialism.

II. Opening New Directions in Thinking and New Approaches to Real Socialism

Establishing a system of correct views on building real socialism in our country in the period of transition is the basic requirement in the adoption of new thinking today. It demands:

—A firm grasp of the laws of scientific thinking:

—A change in the direction of thinking and the adoption of new approaches in research.

1. To arrive at scientific theoretical thinking, we must recognize and correct the weaknesses and the causes of these weaknesses in our theoretical thinking.

2. Of importance is the need for us to develop and strengthen the thinking of the material dialectic, which is the only tool that can help us to recognize objective reality, delve deeply into its essence and discover the

laws governing its internal movement. Without a revolution in examining things and phenomena in accordance with the creative, material dialectic, there can be nothing new in the theoretical conclusions we draw or the practical solutions proposed to solve problems.

To begin with, we should not consider the principles of Marxism-Leninism to be fixed and rigid principles with which our thinking absolutely must comply. Rather, we must consider them methodological tools, consider them guidelines that evoke the creativity of thinking.

The character of Marxism-Leninism is revolutionary and scientific. This character encompasses the ability to change in keeping with the times. In the process of establishing and developing the theory on scientific communism, Marx and Engels set forth general principles based on the social realities existing in their time. Consequently, along with the general and the universal, there are peculiar characteristics associated with the locality, the region and the times. Therefore, we must clearly define which things are universal and which principles reflect the essence of scientific communism. At the same time, attention must be given to the special conditions surrounding the formation and development of this theory under different historical circumstances. For example, Marx and Engels formulated the theory of scientific communism from the pinnacle of developed capitalism in England and France in the 19th Century and pointed out that the inevitability of the proletarian revolution was the result of the objective need to resolve the contradiction between highly socialized production relations and capitalist private ownership relations. Therefore, they stressed the need to socialize the means of production when embarking on the period of transition in order to achieve compatibility between production forces and production relations and shift from capitalist commodity production to planned socialist production. Thus, in Vietnam, what is the objective need to make the transition to socialism when the economy is still not developed?

Today, in the period of transition in our country, production forces are still at a very low level from the standpoint of both their development and their socialization. Small-scale, private production and ownership are still widespread. Production is largely subsistent in nature. Thus, what is the correct way to resolve the contradiction between production forces and production relations?

Within the social structure in the highly developed capitalist countries, the two basic opposing classes are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The class structure in our country as we embark on the period of transition is much more complex. Therefore, when addressing the problems of class struggle and class alliance and resolving the social contradictions of the period of transition, these peculiarities of Vietnamese society must be taken into consideration.

As regards the issue of the state and democracy, following the victory of the proletarian revolution in the developed capitalist countries, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be established and the transition must be made from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. In Vietnam, there has never been a bourgeois democracy. In addition, having lived for many years under the colonial and feudal system and experienced several decades of fierce war, our people have not enjoyed the full or widespread conditions needed to practice democracy. More correctly stated, they must now "study" democracy and work together to build a system of socialist democracy. Therefore, what is the best way for us to establish and develop socialist democracy.

As regards ideology and culture, Marx and Engels emphasized the conflict between proletarian ideology and bourgeois ideology on entering the period of transition to socialism. In Vietnam, is there only this conflict or should we not also take into consideration the strength of feudal and petty bourgeois ideology?

These few examples have been cited in order for us to think about the following: the view that we take when researching classical theory must be that of updating this theory in order to creatively and correctly apply it to our country.

Thus, the very important factors which control everything we do in the adoption of new theoretical thinking is to view every matter from an historical perspective, to base our thinking on the realities of Vietnam and the conditions of our time. We must not pattern what we do after any other country.

Analyzing the positive and negative products of history, analyzing the starting point of our country's advance to socialism and making this the practical basis of our thinking and the application of the theory of scientific communism in Vietnam, these are the keys to the adoption of new theoretical thinking. Because, Vietnamese society is developing in its own historical continuity. We cannot easily separate ourselves from our past and take leaps forward as we desire with no regard for objective capabilities. This is the correct understanding of the dialectic between the continuity and the stages of social history.

Here, it is also necessary to define the dialectical relationship between the general and the particular, the universal and the special along each country's path to socialism. Everything that is general, universal and essential only exists within and as a result of the special, the particular and the unique. Therefore, the most universal laws of socio-economic forms as well as the common laws of the communist socio-economic form only exist through the special and the particular of a specific society (the unique). Consequently, no specific model can be used as the common model for socialist

construction in all countries (unless this model is understood as being a universal abstraction). Every country advances to socialism by a separate path, by separate measures and forms. It is through these special things that the essence of socialism and common laws are expressed.

One other important methodological view that must be thoroughly understood is the view concerning the unity and struggle between opposites—which are the moving forces behind the development of nature, society and thinking. This view demands that we see the contradictions which exist during the period of transition to socialism not only as contradictions that are remnants of the old society which must be resolved, but also as contradictions arising within socialism, as inherent contradictions of socialism in the process of its movement and development (due to the existence of various strata, classes and population groups whose standards, occupations, interests and aspirations still differ and due to the fact that true social fairness is not achieved under socialism). To resolve the contradictions of these types, appropriate forms and measures must be adopted.

The above are a few methodological views to which, in my opinion, attention must be given if we want to adopt new theoretical thinking, want to establish a system of scientific theoretical views on the building of real socialism in our country in the period of transition.

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New Directions in Thinking

The Relationship Between Adopting New Thinking and Adopting New Methods of Thinking
42100004h Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 39-42

[Article by Nguyen Dang Quang, assistant editor-in-chief of GIAO DUC LY LUAN Journal]

[Text] The theoretical thinking of each age is an historical product that assumes very different forms from one age to the next. At the same time, it differs very much in content. These differences in content and form of thinking create different patterns of thinking in history. The process of man's spiritual growth (the birth of concepts, ideas, views, theories and so forth) is exhibited in these patterns of thinking.

Each pattern of thinking can be divided into at least two parts. One is the system of concepts concerning an established object, which gives thinking its content. The other is the movement, or the logic, of these concepts, which creates the method of thinking. This distinction is only relative because these two parts are closely tied to and define each other in the process of thinking.

To adopt new thinking that goes beyond traditional patterns of thinking, it is usually necessary to begin by adopting a new method of thinking. By beginning to adopt a new method of thinking, we can see and criticize backward and mistaken aspects of old thinking, present new concepts and conclusions and gradually develop them into new thinking. The new method together with the new contents create a new pattern of thinking to take the place of the old.

For example, due to an incorrect method of thinking, the conclusion was reached that the socialist economy is not a commodity economy. This incorrect concept led to incorrectly dealing with a host of other matters, such as planning, planned pricing, the function and authority of basic economic units, the overseas economy, etc.

To lay the basis for criticizing classical bourgeois political economics, Marx had to begin by creating for himself a new method—the material dialectic. Engels compared this discovery to the discovery of the historical dialectic.

The process of adopting a new method of thinking usually begins with criticizing the old method of thinking. In the face of the pressure of "stubborn" truths that contradict the old way of thinking, in the face of new information that goes beyond current thinking, we begin to criticize the old approach to matters being examined, even re-examine the basis of the old world view and methodology of thinking. We also examine the use of the new approaches being taken in the sciences or propose an approach that is totally new in principle. On this basis, the new method of thinking comes into being.

In summary, it is by daring and knowing how to raise old matters in a new way and on a new basis that we arrive at new ideas concerning them. This is a turning point in thinking. With it, a new style of spiritual growth evolves.

We can clarify the arguments presented above through an analysis of our "thinking on socialism" over the past seven decades.

Today, all countries within the socialist community recognize that our "thinking on socialism" has been rather simplistic and, in many respects, incorrect. Why, when our starting point was the principles of scientific communism, did we arrive at a number of concepts and formula concerning socialism that are incorrect? One of the foremost and immediate reasons was mistakes in our method of thinking. That is, we strayed far from and, in some cases, even contradicted the truly scientific Marxist method of thinking. Some examples of this are the following:

First, the method of abstract opposites of capitalism was used to define some of the basic features of socialism. For example, if, on one side, there was a classic commodity economy, the other side had to be a product economy. And so it continued: free competition—no competition; material incentives—material incentives

corrupt man; extolling the individual—extolling the collective and downplaying the individual, private labor—private labor is the enemy of socialism, etc. When presenting the economic laws of socialism, the same kind of thinking was employed. The formulas described above were considered to have been proven. Life had to fit within them. Within the framework of such thinking, it was difficult to avoid subjectivism and convenience in the method of thinking. For example, there was the tendency to not recognize or make selective use of the achievements of capitalism, the tendency to deny the existence of personal interests and personal talents and the tendency toward egalitarianism.

Second, we sought to resolve the specific practical problems of socialism simply by the logical extension of a common truth concerning socialism. For example, the truth that "socialism is the abolition of exploitation" was extended to planning the abolition of each and every form of exploitation during the very first years of the period of transition, regardless of the level of development of production forces and social production. From the argument "the communist can summarize his theory in one formula: abolishing private ownership," transformation policies were formulated to rapidly achieve a pure society of 100 percent public ownership, regardless of specific socio-economic circumstances. A society of "pure public ownership" can only be the product of metaphysical thinking, be it in the natural realm or in society, nothing is or can be "pure." The concept of a pure socialist society that bears none of the signs of the old society that gave it birth and in which bourgeois jurisprudence no longer exists is a concept that is foreign to the Marxist method of thinking as well as to scientific communism.

Third, the method of metaphysical thinking and simple evolution has usually been applied to analyze the movement of socialism. Under this method of thinking, socialism is a society without inherent contradictions or conflicts. Within it, every factor is "automatically" compatible and harmonious. There are compatibility and harmony between production relations and production forces, between the base and the superstructure, between the economy and society, among the different types of interests and so forth. According to this method of thinking, socialist society advances only by the path of simple evolution through consolidation and improvement but does not need revolutionary turning points to bring the development of society to qualitatively new stages. The more socialist society advances, the more homogeneous and simple it becomes, the less diverse it becomes!

Using this incorrect method of thinking, scores of policies and regulations were formulated that changed the shape of socialism: from dynamic and creative to stagnant and conservative. Objective contradictions, which were not recognized or promptly resolved, accumulated and caused society and man to show symptoms of decay

and degeneration. The slowness with which society has reached a turning point is reducing the strength of socialism in the struggle to resolve the question "who triumphs over whom."

Fourth, our concept has been that the universal gives birth to the special and the unique. This concept is a manifestation of idealist, hesitant thinking. As a result, socialist construction in each country was envisioned as nothing more than a matter of applying the laws of socialism (the known universal) plus national characteristics (the special and the unique). Moreover, the so called "universal laws" that all countries had to follow were only drawn from the experience of a number of countries within rather special historical circumstances and over a short period of time. This experience was a low level of development and did not fully reflect the universal.

This method of thinking led to the use of dogmatic formulas in socialist construction, thus causing harm to many socialist countries. It has circumscribed thinking and thwarted creativity in the building of the new society. It has also led to authoritarianism, arbitrariness and big country chauvinism in socialist international relations.

This method of thinking is alien to the dialectic. Because, as Marx envisioned it, "communism is not a state that must be created, is not an ideal with which reality must conform. What we call communism is a real movement. It abolishes the current state of being. The prerequisites to this movement are the results of existing premises." (Footnote 1) (K. Marx and F. Engels: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Volume 1, p 297)

In summary, the mistakes in the method of thinking have led to unscientific concepts of socialism. To adopt new thinking on socialism, we must begin by adopting a new method of thinking. Only a truly dialectical and scientific method of thinking is capable of analyzing and eliminating simplistic, backward and mistaken concepts regarding socialism.

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The Basic Features of the Scientific Method of Thinking

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[Article by Nguyen Quang Thong, assistant director of the Philosophy Department, the College of Philosophy]

[Text] Each field of science has its own theory and method. The term method comes from the Greek word "matados," which means "path," "direction" and "way." The method of thinking, in philosophical terms, is a system of principles and categories applied by thinking to reflect, to recognize the objective world. To

correctly recognize the objective world, a person must practice the scientific method of thinking. The scientific method of thinking cannot be formulated in any manner that suits convenience. Rather, it is drawn from correctly reflecting the objective laws that govern the object being studied, drawn from a scientific world view. Of course, objective laws themselves are not methods of thinking. They must be recognized and used by man as tools of thinking along with specific categories, other laws and standards in order to become a method of thinking. Therefore, in the scientific method of thinking, recognized objective laws become the laws, rules, standards and categories of thinking. The scientific method of thinking plays a very important role in the process of recognition. This role is seen in the ability to reflect, to correctly recreate the essence and laws governing the movement of the object of study in thinking. Without a correct method of thinking, correct recognition is impossible.

An integral part of each different field of science, methods of thinking are of many different types. There is the special method of thinking of each specific field of science and also a general, universal method of thinking applied to many different fields and sectors of science (for example, mathematics are not only applied in mathematics, but also in physics, chemistry, economics and so forth). At the same time, there is also the most general, most universal method of thinking applied to each field of recognition, to each sector of science. It is the material dialectic, that is, the method of thinking of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The material dialectic is a system of laws and categories that correctly reflect the essence and the most common and universal laws governing the movement of nature, society and the thinking of man and the correct laws, categories and rules of thinking itself. The material dialectic is the most universal, the most common method of thinking. It is truly scientific and necessary for each and every field of science and each person who wants to correctly recognize objective reality and effectively transform it. Once it came into being, the material dialectic became an effective tool of recognition of mankind, especially the working class. V.I. Lenin wrote: "The philosophy of Marx is perfect philosophical materialism. It supplies mankind and particularly the working class with great tools of recognition." (Footnote 1) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1972, Volume 19, p 16)

The method of thinking of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the method of thinking of the specific fields of science, although different in content, characteristics, the degree to which they are universal and the scope of their application, share a dialectical relationship. They exert an impact and influence upon one another, with the dialectical method of thinking playing the role of compass guiding all fields of science, the role as the most general methodology.

From the dialectical relationship between the most general laws of the real objective world and the special laws that the specific sciences study and from the dialectical

relationship between the material dialectic as the most general methodology and the special methods of thinking of the specific fields of science, we can see that each person, regardless of his special field, must grasp not only the method of thinking particular to his field, but also the most universal and general method of scientific thinking, the material dialectic. Only in this way can our thinking arrive at the truth, can our activities be oriented in the correct direction. Only in this way can we achieve better results in increasing our knowledge and use of the method of thinking of our sector or field. Consequently, intensifying training in the material dialectic must be considered one of the most necessary prerequisites to the adoption of new thinking.

Below are the fundamental features of the material dialectic as the most general and most universal method of scientific thinking.

1. Objectivity in how things are examined is one of the most basic features of the scientific method of thinking. It can be said that a method of thinking can only become scientific when it is objective, that is, when the contents it reflects are consistent with the object under study, consistent with objective reality. However, it must be understood that consistency between the contents reflected by the scientific method of thinking and the object of recognition is not a static, simple or natural consistency that can be achieved in an instant. Rather, it is a dialectical consistency. Achieving this consistency is a process of thinking that gradually arrives at the truth. To achieve this consistency, the material dialectic demands that the recognizing, thinking subject apply the method of analyzing contradictions, constantly keep abreast of practice, of the object being studied and continuously discover and correctly resolve the contradictions arising in the relationship between what is recognized and the object of recognition, between the recognizing subject and the objective reality. Thus, objectivity is a basic feature and a demand of the scientific method of thinking upon the recognizing subject. The process of achieving this objectivity is also the process of the recognizing subject steadfastly and actively making every possible subjective effort to keep abreast of the object of recognition and apply the scientific method of thinking to gradually delve into the essence and the law of the movement of things, generalize them as concepts, categories and laws in thinking, promptly correct mistakes and shortcomings in reflection, etc. The constant emergence and resolution of contradictions between what is recognized and the object of recognition are also a law and a force in the development of man's thinking.

Recently, in socialist construction, particularly on the economic front, we made the mistakes of voluntarism, of being subjective, impetuous, superficial and simplistic, of not grasping economic laws, etc. These are manifestations of not being thoroughly objective as required by the material dialectic. The fact that we have been slow to recognize and rectify the mistakes that were made also

proves that we failed to meet the demands of the scientific method of thinking upon the recognizing subject, that is, to constantly keep abreast of practice and promptly discover and resolve contradictions and mistakes in the relationship between what is recognized and the object of recognition.

2. Examining things in a comprehensive manner and from a specific historical perspective.

Things and phenomena, endless in their variety, do not exist in isolation, separate from one another. Rather, they are an entity in which the various aspects of a thing, one thing and another, a thing and its environment and one thing and the things that preceded and follow it are related and tied to one another. They exert an impact and influence upon one another. Of the relationships among this endless variety of phenomena, some are direct while others are indirect, some are internal while others are external, some are natural while others are accidental, etc. These relationships play different roles in the existence, movement and development of each thing.

The material dialectic generalizes these varied relationships among things as the principle of the universal relationship of things. This principle has become one of the very important principles of the scientific method of thinking. This principle is the theoretical base that leads to examining things in a comprehensive manner and from a specific historical perspective, that is, examining things in all their aspects and specific relationships, under specific circumstances, from the perspective of a specific place and point in time and examining both their past and future. In particular, it is necessary to recognize and correctly evaluate the role and position of each aspect and each relationship, to determine which are essential and basic, which are accidental and not basic and which determine the trend of development of the thing. V.I. Lenin wrote: "To truly understand a thing, it is necessary to take a comprehensive view and study all the aspects, all the relationships and the 'intermediate aspects' of this thing. We can never do this entirely but the need to examine each and every aspect will prevent us from making mistakes and being rigid." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, Volume 32, pp 115-116)

In their work, our cadres and party members say that they must examine matters in a comprehensive and detailed manner. Yet, recent realities have shown that we are still making many mistakes, including the mistakes of being one-sided, of seeing one aspect but not another, of doing one job while ignoring another. An example is the mistakes recently made concerning the problems of prices, wages and money. It will be a long time before the consequences of these mistakes are overcome.

3. Examining things from the perspective that they are always developing.

In the objective world, no thing or phenomenon stands still or remains unchanged. Rather, things and phenomena constantly move, change and evolve from one state to another. The movement and change of things take many different directions. Some movement and change are from the simple to the complex, from a low to a high level of development in a forward direction. Conversely, some movement and change lead to decline, regression, disintegration and destruction. The concept "movement" and the concept "development" are closely related but not synonymous. Movement is change, in general. Development is movement in a forward direction. Development is the universal direction of movement of things and phenomena, is an objective process. Every thing undergoes a process of birth and growth and then disappears. When the old disappears, the new is born. The new takes the place of the old. The new and the progressive triumph over the old and the backward. This is the process of inevitable development, is the law of the universal development of things.

On the basis of the above, the material dialectic is generalized as the principle on the development of things. This principle is the theoretical basis of the viewpoint of the scientific method of thinking that things be examined from the perspective that they are always developing. This view helps man to correctly recognize things in the process of their continuous movement. Mistakes such as conservatism, stagnation, backwardness and so forth are manifestations of the failure to adopt this view.

4. Consistency between logic and history.

The requirement of recognizing something is to grasp the law of the movement or logic of a thing. At the same time, we must know the history of this thing, must know the process of its birth and development. To meet this requirement, thinking must apply logic and the historical methods besides the other methods. Each thing and phenomenon in nature and society has its own process of birth, development and death. This process, which occurs in real life with all its concrete aspects, follows a winding and complicated path and encompasses the necessary and the accidental along with the specific circumstances and wide variety of forms of life itself. This process is the history of a thing. The characteristic of history is the continuity of changes over time in all their aspects, both necessary and accidental.

The historical method is a scientific method of thinking that reflects in one's recognition the entire process of the specific history of a thing. The historical method demands that thinking keep abreast of, observe and reflect each step in the movement, development and change of a thing over time.

But the process of the historical development of a thing, regardless of how rich, complex and varied it might be, is controlled by the necessary, the general, the laws and the internal logic of this process. The general, the essential,

the necessary and the objective law of the development of a thing are the objective logic of the history of a thing. The logic of thinking is the reflection of this objective logic in the perception of man. Logic is the method of thinking that reflects the essential, the necessary and the laws of the movement and development of a thing in the form of abstract theory and generalization. Logic is superior to the historical method in that it not only reflects the underlying logic in the development of things, but also reflects the history of a thing in its most general form along with the milestones and primary stages in this development. The historical method and logic are two different methods of thinking but they share a dialectical relationship and supplement each other. One of the differences between these two methods is that the historical method begins with the history of a thing while logic must recreate the objective logic embodied in the historical development of the thing. For this reason, logic demands that the study of a thing begin with its form, with its relatively complete and full stage of development, not with the start of the history of this thing's development or at any point in this development which suits convenience.

The material dialectic demands that logic be closely tied to history, not divorced from history. Logic divorced from history can lead to subjectivism, to incorrectly reflecting the logic of a thing. Conversely, history (the reflection of objective history in recognition) must be closely tied to logic. Only in this way can our reflection of history be correct and deep. Only in this way can we avoid describing history in a superficial manner divorced from the internal laws of the objective movement and development of a thing.

The material dialectic demands consistency between logic and history in the examination of things. Consistency between logic and history demands that thinking combine both logic and the historical method when examining things.

5. Progressing from the Abstract to the Concrete in Thinking.

This is one of the most basic features of the scientific method of thinking. From the concrete to the abstract and then from the abstract to the concrete—this is the path of development of man's thinking in the process of reflecting things.

The first of the two concrete is the objective thing itself. Thus, it is the starting point of thinking based on the material dialectic.

The second is the concrete in one's thinking, is the result of the process of thinking. The concrete in thinking is expressed in a system of concepts, categories and laws reflecting the objective concrete. In other words, the concrete in thinking is the reflection of the objective concrete in the thinking of man. It is the combination of

many definitions, many premises and relationships. The concrete in thinking gives man a deep, correct and relatively full knowledge of the objective thing.

The abstract, on the other hand, is only another aspect, only one level of recognition in the process of movement from the objective concrete to the concrete in thinking. The abstract is also the result of the process of recognition. It, however, is the correct reflection and knowledge of the essence and the law of movement of each aspect, each property and each relationship of the thing.

In the scientific method of thinking, the abstract is considered parts of the concrete in thinking. Thinking combines and generalizes many abstract parts into the concrete in thinking. Compared to the abstract, the concrete in thinking is a deeper, more correct, fuller and more comprehensive reflection. However, the line between the abstract and the concrete in thinking is only relative because, in the process of the development of recognition, the abstract and the concrete in thinking can become each other. The concrete in thinking becomes the abstract when thinking continues to move and develop and reaches the concrete in thinking that is higher and richer. In this way, thinking moves and develops continuously from the abstract to the concrete and then from this concrete to a concrete that is higher, more profound, fuller and richer.

This is also a method of thinking that is of special importance in summarizing and generalizing experience as theory and formulating new theory.

Our socialist revolution is raising many brand new problems which demand that we summarize the experiences gained in our work in all fields, particularly the economic field, and generalize them in theories in order to adopt guidelines and measures that enable us to correctly and effectively resolve problems encountered in practical activities.

Intensifying training in the material dialectic must be considered one of the necessary, essential prerequisites to the adoption of new thinking. Only in this way can the small-scale producer way of thinking, the characteristics of which are thinking that is one-sided, fragmentary, disorganized, shallow, not based in theory, empirical, conservative and stagnant, be relegated to the past.

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The Ability To Engage in Theoretical Thinking in the Process of Adopting New Thinking
42100004j Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 47-51

[Article by Nguyen Ngoc Long, MA in philosophy]

[Text] Our cadres and people, having learned many practical lessons of life, are conscious of the urgent need for change. In practice, however, it is clear that change,

in general, and the adoption of new thinking, in particular, are proceeding slowly and with difficulty. Some persons are even talking about a state of affairs they call "changes in the wrong direction" again. But in a situation in which the concept is clear, the direction being taken is correct and the level of determination is high, the results of work depend upon ability, in general, and the ability to think, in particular.

1. Some persons understand the adoption of new thinking as only or primarily a matter of abandoning or revising mistaken concepts and adopting new ones. Such a simplistic understanding of what is involved in adopting new thinking can lead to mistakes. First, it reflects a lack of appreciation of the revolutionary nature of the process of adopting new thinking and does not closely tie the adoption of new thinking to taking a new approach in organizational and cadre work, to the struggle against negative phenomena in society. Second, the measures involved here are not aimed at changing the process of thinking, but at changing the product of thinking—intelligence.

The awareness of people and mankind, in general, continuously move from no knowledge to some knowledge, from little knowledge to much knowledge. In this process, each additional piece of knowledge is tested and rejected or supplemented in order to become increasingly new. The adoption of the new that we are discussing and carrying out can only be achieved when the old limit of awareness has been shattered, when a familiar "way of thinking" or "pattern of thinking" is no longer able to meet the requirements of awareness as it applies to new objects. Then, only by abandoning the old pattern of thinking is it possible to develop greater awareness. But, a way or pattern of thinking that has formed and been compatible with a specific stage in the history of thinking possesses relative stability and is difficult to change. Moreover, "abandoning patterns of thinking cannot but affect people" (M.S. Gorbachev). Therefore, adopting new thinking is a process of revolutionary change. It is also a leap forward in the process of continuous development of man's ability to think.

Our country is in the period of transition to socialism. That is, in the process of carrying out socialist transformation and socialist construction in all fields of social life. The old is being abolished. The new is taking shape but is still not clearly defined or stable. The old and the new are intertwined in a very complex manner. In some cases, the old still overpowers the new. This characteristic must be given attention when examining the ability to think with a view toward clearly understanding requirements and specifics and taking appropriate measures and steps when performing the tasks of adopting a new approach, in general, and adopting new thinking, in particular.

2. The thinking of man, as Engels said, is both supreme and not supreme. Examined from the perspective of its nature and capacity, man's thinking is superior and

unlimited. From the perspective of practice, it is limited and not supreme. The concept "ability to think" denotes differences in the ability to think among individuals and social communities. The ability to think is the combination of intellectual qualities that meet the requirements of recognizing the objective world and man himself, thus insuring that actions are creative. It is expressed in the direction of our awareness and actions, in the results of the processing of information and particularly in the results of actions. Different approaches to problems are manifestations of different levels of the ability to think.

The ability to think has its natural basis in the functions of man's nervous system. However, its primary and most decisive basis is social factors, among which accepting the spiritual cultural values of society and actively and consciously testing them are the factors that directly create and develop the ability to think.

Thinking is usually divided into empirical thinking or theoretical thinking depending upon the level of development of the ability to think, in general. Each of these goes through different levels of development, which are reflected in characteristic styles of thinking.

Ability, in general, and the ability to think, in particular, must be examined in relationship to activities. Consequently, the special features of the ability to think in the different fields of activity must be taken into consideration. Only in this way is it possible to chart a correct direction to take in cultivating and developing the ability to think, developing the aptitudes of the individual. Without the ability to think in terms of artistic imagery, literature and art cannot be created. The characteristics of the ability to engage in abstract thinking are different in mathematics, in philosophy, etc.

3. Theoretical thinking is the high level of development of man's ability to think. Theory plays the role of the methodology of scientific recognition and practical activities. Theory is the summarizing of the practical experiences of the masses. But theory is only formed through the theoretical thinking of representatives of a specific ideology as a result of their adopting, in a relatively general manner, achievements in the intellectual storehouse created by mankind. This explains why the ability to engage in theoretical thinking only formed when the division of labor between mental labor and manual labor occurred in history. And, only when that occurred did the thinking mankind develop as a relatively independent historical process.

Theoretical thinking has played an increasingly important role in the development of the sciences and social realities. The development of the sciences continues to be based on these realities but their dependency upon realities is becoming increasingly complex and their reciprocal impact upon these realities is becoming

increasingly effective and large. Mankind as well as each nation can only advance rapidly, as Engels pointed out one century ago, when they reach the level of theoretical thinking.

The Sixth Congress of our party pointed out that theory being behind the times is one reason for the slowness with which lines have been developed and concretized and stressed: "Importance must be attached to theoretical work with a view toward giving scientific content to the adoption of new thinking."

The underlying reason for theory being behind the times stems from the limitations upon our ability to think caused by history. It was a way of thinking based mainly on emotional empiricism and marked by a poor ability to reason or engage in abstract thinking, a way of thinking suited to the small-scale producers' subsistent way of living. This way of thinking prevailed for many centuries until we began carrying out the socialist revolution and socialist construction. Action is the origin and the factor that forges ability. Acting on the basis of experience, particularly when this action was repeated to the point where it became a habit, reduced nervous strain but also reduced the stimulation of the intellect. As a result, the factor of reasoning and the ability to engage in abstract thinking also developed slowly. The feudal system, which existed for many years under the strong influence of Confucist thinking, and colonialism, which impeded everything in our country, were clearly major obstacles to the formation and development of the ability to engage in scientific thinking. It was only when our party brought the light of Marxism-Leninism to our people that they acquired the basic conditions needed to rapidly reach the level of theoretical thinking of the times. However, it is also necessary to recognize the very large difficulties and impediments to accepting the theory of Marxism-Leninism in a colonial and semi-feudal country back then.

It would be a mistake to consider the limitation imposed by history upon our ability to think to be a fate from which we cannot save ourselves. The gap between the development of social consciousness and social existence provides room for the creative freedom of the subjective factor of man to exert its role. But freedom is first a matter of recognizing the necessary. The existing limit of awareness is the starting point in going beyond this limit, going "beyond oneself." For many years, our thinking has not gone beyond emotional empiricism so that we could rethink who and what we are. The concept that politics is synonymous with theory has made us unconscious of the weaknesses in our thinking. Therefore, appropriate attention has not been given to cultivating the ability to engage in theoretical thinking. Urgent and positive measures have never been taken to correct these weaknesses.

In studying the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries, the limitations upon our ability to engage in theoretical thinking easily leads to dogmatism and automatically copying what they do. This, in turn, can lead to

other mistakes, such as attaching sole importance to national characteristics and "not believing in the need to study theory, study the experience of the fraternal countries..." (Footnote 1) (Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Volume 2, p 72) Both of these extremes have prevented us from raising our level of theoretical thinking.

A democratic atmosphere in the life of society, in general, and in theoretical research, in particular, is an environment which stimulates and cultivates the ability to engage in scientific thinking. For many years, this environment, it must be said, has been polluted by vestiges of feudal thinking and even by petty bourgeois attitudes. In this atmosphere, it is difficult to develop the ability to engage in scientific thinking and convenient thinking finds a "place to put its talents to use." It is regrettable that products of unscientific thinking, often highly eclectic, are described in Marxist terms and sometimes called "the creativity of Marxism-Leninism" or "the theory of our party." Therefore, among the broad masses and more than a few of our cadres and party members, there is the mistaken impression that we are strong in theory and only weak in application. Meanwhile, many specific practical problems cannot be solved because we lack the theory needed to scientifically set the direction to be taken. Cases in which it has been difficult to reach agreement simply because our way of thinking is not logical or consistent have not been rare.

4. Man's thinking is a product of social history. Cultivating the ability to think must be a constant requirement of the entire party, of each person and must become a conscious process. The need to develop the ability to think must transcend everything from educating the young generation to the work of training cadres, from educational activities (within the school and in life) to the improvement of the work and organization of the agencies engaged in scientific research, theoretical work and so forth. The question that arises is: what can and must be done to actively and urgently improve the ability to think in this campaign to adopt new thinking?

History only confronts man with tasks when the conditions needed to perform these tasks exist or, at the very least, are forming. Adopting new thinking becomes an objective demand when the basis exists for thinking to change. The growth of knowledge demands that the way of thinking be changed in order to shatter the narrow constraints of existing awareness and create the ability to develop a stronger awareness. This also proves that the development of the ability to think stands at the "edge" of bringing about substantive change.

The realities of our country, particularly the realities of socialist construction over the past 10 years and more, together with the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries show that change often begins with creative actions of the masses, not with a resolution of the party. To develop the self-awareness and activism of the subjective factor, overcome obstacles and create favorable

conditions for "liberating" the ability to think and stimulate creative thinking by the masses, it is first of all necessary for the vanguard unit of the working class and its leaders to express the need to bring about a substantive change in the intellectual capacity of the masses.

Secondly, democratization must be achieved in social life, in scientific and theoretical research and in searching for and defending the truth. This is not only an environment that stimulates creativity, it is also a way to cultivate the ability to think. We must be objective and loyal and must respect the truth when summarizing experience. In the search for truth, proof that something should be rejected has the same scientific value as proof that something is right. Summarizing experience on the basis of pre-existing formats solely with the aim of confirming the correctness of a certain policy is a practice that is partly due to unscientific thinking but mainly due to an undemocratic atmosphere.

The conditions needed for democratization must be given even greater attention in a country in which the remnants of feudal thinking are still entrenched, particularly at places and within collectives where the ability of leaders to think is limited.

Thirdly, because the social sciences, in general, and Marxist-Leninist theory, in particular, have not been given appropriate attention or viewed with a scientific attitude for a rather long time, there are many pressing problems that need to be solved in the training and utilization of the corps of social scientists, particularly the theoretical cadres of the party.

In addition, it must also be said that cultivating the ability to think, in general, and the ability to engage in theoretical thinking, in particular, cannot be divorced from building revolutionary zeal, teaching ethical qualities and molding the character of the new socialist man.

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Research-Exchange of Opinions on the Product Contracts in Agriculture

Some Thoughts on Evaluating and Setting Guidelines for Perfecting the Product Contract Mechanism Within Agriculture

42100004k Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 52-55

[Article by Dao Xuan Som, professor of economics]

[Text] Having read a number of articles carried in the "Research-Exchange of Opinions" section of issues number 7 and 8, 1987, of TAP CHI CONG SAN, I was struck most by the fact that these articles contained thinking and explanations that are not in line with, and in some cases, even contrary to, the system of economic views of the Sixth Congress. Therefore, to evaluate and

to set guidelines for perfecting the current product contract mechanism within agriculture, it is necessary to make the economic views set forth by the Sixth Congress our starting point. This being my thinking, allow me to elaborate on the following two matters:

1. Examining the contract mechanism within agriculture as a specific and characteristic form of the new management mechanism.

The mechanism of final product contracts with individuals, families and sections and units of workers has been applied in practice in practically all of the sectors of the national economy in many socialist countries. In our country, final product contracts with groups of laborers and individual laborers have been applied in recent years in many different forms, each depending upon the specific circumstances of each region and area of the country. However, behind this diversity of forms, we see that this contract mechanism essentially embodies all the features of economic accounting (socialist business accounting). Of course, this form of economic accounting does not stop at the enterprise or cooperative level, but is also applied to individuals, families and production sections and units. Therefore, in principle, the new contract mechanism in our country's agriculture differs from the mechanism characterized by bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies in the following three ways:

—The new contract mechanism affords greater independence to the individual, the household and the section or unit on the basis of establishing the following relationships well: authority closely tied to accountability, obligations closely linked to interests. Therefore, it unleashes a new force behind development, one based on dynamic, creative activities of individuals, sections and units in place of acting irresponsibly and passively implementing excessively detailed quotas issued by the management apparatus on the upper level.

—The new contract mechanism demands that management methods be used which employ economic impact in place of the old management methods, which mainly entailed the use of orders. The relationship between the level assigning the contract and the person accepting the contract is established by means of a written contract in which interests and responsibilities are equal on both sides.

—On the basis of the two factors cited above, the new contract mechanism encourages each individual, family, section and unit to concern themselves with economic returns and guarantee the interests of the collective and all society for the sake of their own interests.

Thus, to determine whether the new contract mechanism is correct or incorrect, it must be examined from the perspective of its nature as a form of economic accounting by the individual, the family or the worker section and unit.

Many questions are being raised concerning the product contracts currently in use in agriculture: until when will they still be suitable? How much "life" do they have left? Have they fulfilled their role?...

Here, there are two aspects that need to be examined: first, from the perspective of their specific forms, the product contracts in use in agriculture are very diverse and dynamic.

The practical experience that has been gained concerning product contracts in agriculture, even within countries that have advanced to developed socialism (and even in modern industry) does not show that there comes a time when contracts are no longer let out to individuals and families and everything must be contracted to collectives.

Second, examined from the perspective of its content, a contract mechanism with the characteristics described above will "live" as long as socialist business accounting exists. On the other hand, the contract mechanism within agriculture as well as the economic accounting mechanism can be applied to individuals

Refining the Product Contracts in Agriculture
421000041 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 56-58

[Article by Phan Thoan]

[Text] In recent years, the implementation of product contracts with groups of laborers and individual laborers has helped our country's agriculture to develop significantly. In particular, there has been a rather large increase in the yield and output of rice. With production having developed, contributions to the state have increased by a large amount and the living conditions of the vast majority of farmers have been improved. This proves that the product contracts with groups of laborers and individual laborers are a transitional form consistent with the very weak state of development of the production forces within our country's agriculture. In other words, there is compatibility between production relations and the nature and level of development of production forces.

However, compared to the early years, the incentive provided by this contract mechanism has been gradually declining since 1984 and farmers have been increasingly less enthusiastic. In the countryside, new problems have emerged which demand our attention. These can be summarized as follows:

—Returning fields accepted under contract to the collective is a growing trend.

—The excess product among cooperative members has steadily grown and become an increasingly widespread problem.

—The various funds of cooperatives have been slowly shrinking in size and are not being used in a rational manner. Cooperatives are unable to form capital in order to carry out expanded reproduction.

The real income of cooperative members from the collective economy (from the mandays worked for the cooperative) is an insignificant and increasingly small part of their total income.

—Some farm families are encountering difficulties in their everyday lives (especially those eligible under policies—the policies on families of war invalids, war dead, troops, cadres away on assignment...). In the countryside, high interest loans of many forms are becoming increasingly widespread.

—The number of cooperatives complying with the spirit and content of Party Secretariat Directive 100 is insignificant. The use of "non-specific" contracts has become a widespread practice.

If the situation described above is allowed to persist, it will surely affect the development of production, making it impossible to strengthen production forces or strengthen socialist production relations in the countryside.

This situation is due to many causes, both objective and subjective. Some direct causes are:

While we acknowledge that the product contracts are the first step in adopting a new management mechanism in agriculture and are an appropriate transitional form that has exerted a certain impact, this impact has been limited to the framework of a small-scale production economy and has been strongly influenced by the management mechanism characterized by bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies. Therefore, we should not consider these contracts to be an "all-purpose" "golden key" as many persons now do.

The material-technical bases within agriculture, although they have begun to be strengthened, are still weak and inadequate. Investments are not concentrated in certain areas or well coordinated. For example, the supply of electricity to agriculture is irregular. Farmland water conservancy and irrigation projects are not complete or effective. The stockpiles of technical materials for agriculture on the central, local and basic levels, such as fertilizers, pesticides, fuel, spare parts and so forth, are very thin. As a result, collectives cannot control the five jobs and, thus, are unable to meet the requirements of intensive cultivation. This has led to the use of non-specific contracts in many cooperatives.

The agricultural management apparatus is cumbersome and ineffective. A considerable number of management cadres has become degenerate and deviant. Widespread corruption has affected production and caused the

income of the collective economy to gradually decline. The interests of the laborer are being seriously violated and this has harmed the confidence that the masses have in the party.

With the aim of perfecting the new contract mechanism, efforts must be focused in the months ahead on resolving the following several basic problems:

Adopting a new economic management mechanism, in general, and a new management mechanism within agriculture, in particular, must be considered the premise to perfecting product contracts. This is a very complex matter, one which demands that we study and resolve a host of problems, such as adjusting the structure of the economy and the structure of investments; strengthening the material-technical bases of agriculture; redeploying and reorganizing production; and establishing a system of economic leverage policies with the aim of stimulating the development of agricultural production.

If we consider the adoption of a new management mechanism to be the premise, it thus follows that strengthening material-technical bases is a very important factor in perfecting the product contracts. Very weak material-technical bases are the immediate cause of the use of "non-specific" contracts at cooperatives today. In recent years, facts have shown that the failure to provide a full and timely supply of technical materials combined with the small and limited economic potentials of families and the inability of cooperative members to exceed their contracts have caused a gradual erosion of the stimulative effect of the new contracts. Interest in these contracts is not what it was during the initial period. It must be realized that farmers are returning land accepted under contract to their collectives because they do not have the capital to invest in intensive cultivation in order to exceed their contracts. Therefore, to quickly raise agricultural output and correct the use of "non-specific" contracts, continuously strengthening the material-technical bases of agriculture is a matter of basic importance.

To begin with, we must organize and strengthen such service corporations as the Agricultural Technical Services Corporation, the Crop and Livestock Services Corporation (plowing, pest control and so forth) and strengthen the specialized units and sections within cooperatives with a view toward making effective use of existing material-technical bases.

The dismantling of specialized sections and units was a mistake. It led to the disruption of the allocation of crops that had formed at many places over a period of many years. Many water conservancy projects have fallen into disrepair as a result of competing with one another for water sources. Buffalo and cattle have been used to the point of exhaustion (at many cooperatives, the collective has virtually no draft buffalo or cattle left). Efforts to detect and control pests are not timely or well focused.

Consequently, these efforts are ineffective. In summary, strengthening the material-technical bases of cooperatives will meet the requirements of production and also provide an important prerequisite to combating the use of "non-specific" contracts, thereby insuring that collectives can regain control of the basic jobs in the production process.

One other problem that has arisen is the need to select appropriate forms of product contracts. The product contract is the most progressive form of organization of labor. Therefore, it is not only suited to today, but will also be suitable over the long-range. The basic question concerns the methods of contracting employed. In my opinion, as long as our country remains in the initial stage of the period of transition, in which production is largely small-scale and the economy consists of many different segments, the uneven development among cooperatives and among areas does not permit us to apply a set "model." At those places which have such conditions as a rather high level of planning, rather well developed material-technical bases, rational economic-technical quotas, strong production units and a competent corps of cadres who possess good qualities, product contracts with collectives should mainly be applied. Here, the policy of 100 percent in-kind bonuses and penalties currently applied to farm households should be applied. Of course, the number of cooperatives that have the conditions needed to apply this method of contracting does not constitute a very large percentage of the total number. However, this method must be maintained because it is consistent with perfecting the product contracts at some point in the future.

The majority of cooperatives are average. In this case, in my opinion, the form of product contract now applied to farm households should be widely applied with certain appropriate improvements, such as having the cooperative directly sign contracts with farm households and provide technical materials and services to these households (through production units). In the case of cooperatives that are weak and deficient as a result of their limited ability to supply technical materials and their poor organizational and managerial skills, the cooperative can contract directly with cooperative member households to have them obtain the materials they need for the fields they agree to work under contract. They, in turn, would primarily have the obligation of paying agricultural taxes to the state. In these ways, we could avoid the current problem of collectives making no or little impact upon the various jobs involved in the production process while farmers are still forced to deliver all the output required under their contracts.

Improving the management mechanism, strengthening material-technical bases, strengthening organization and the corps of cadres and developing appropriate forms of contracts are complex, difficult problems that are closely interrelated in the process of perfecting the agricultural product contracts.

Sufficient time has passed and enough practical experience has been gained to conduct an objective and unbiased review of the cooperativization movement, in general, and the product contracts in agriculture, in particular. From this review, we will learn useful lessons that will help us to perfect production relations and stimulate the development of production forces within agriculture.

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Some Thoughts on Perfecting the Final Product Contracts With Households at Agricultural Cooperatives

42100004m Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 10, Oct 87 pp 59-61

[Article by Nguyen Anh Bac, instructor at the Advanced Military Academy]

[Text] Born in an extremely difficult situation, the final product contracts with individual cooperative member households have produced positive results and exerted a positive impact in many areas.

1. The implementation of product contracts created a spirited and strong atmosphere of conscientious labor among tens of millions of farmers.

2. The land, tools, equipment and liquid capital of cooperatives and each cooperative member household have been put into production to a much greater degree and are being utilized better. In 1981, in Ha Nam Ninh Province, cooperatives restored more than 2,500 hectares of farmland to production as a result of implementing product contracts. In 1981 and 1982, the quantity of materials supplied by the state to cooperatives equalled only 60 to 70 percent of the quantity supplied during the years from 1976 to 1980. Nevertheless, the majority of households that accepted contracts exceeded the limits of their cooperatives' contracts (which were higher than the quotas existing during the period from 1976 to 1980) by 10 to 15 percent.

3. To exceed their contracts, cooperative members have not only invested additional materials and labor, but have also given very much attention to applying scientific-technical advances in production. According to an investigation conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1982 among 2,315 cooperative member households that exceeded their contract quotas, cooperative members in Hai Hung Province invested 100 percent more fertilizer per hectare than required under their contracts, cooperative members in Ha Nam Ninh Province invested 107.9 percent more and cooperative members in Thanh Hoa invested 119 percent more. The additional labor invested within the provinces mentioned above was 27.5, 25.7 and 32 mandays respectively.

4. Due to the requirements of the new contracts, cooperatives have had to change their management methods. In the organization and management of production, both cooperatives and cooperative members have had to take into consideration the specific economic interests of each side and practice economic accounting in each job on the basis of the returns from production.

Today, the positive factors described above continue to exert an impact upon production as well as the other aspects of cooperatives and agricultural production collectives. However, besides these positive impacts, limiting factors have been and are arising within cooperatives:

1. When accepting product contracts, cooperative members always try to exceed their contracts in order to increase their income. In recent years, however, agricultural production in the North has encountered many difficulties as a result of natural disasters and unusual weather changes. Because the supply of materials, particularly fertilizers, pesticides and draft power, to cooperatives has been steadily decreasing, cooperative members have had to buy these materials on the free market at unstable prices that are much higher than the state prices. As a result, the output produced over and above contracts does not compensate for production costs and this has led to many cooperative members returning fields accepted under contract. The division among farmers is widening. Farm households that have plentiful financial resources and work tools are earning a high income. The phenomena of high interest loans and hiring manpower to work contract field have emerged.

2. The income per workday of cooperatives is very low, only about 1 kilogram of paddy. At some places, it is still much lower. The output produced over and above contracts is not large. Many cooperative member households do not deliver the correct quantity required under their contract to the cooperative. The excess product at cooperatives is steadily growing. As of 1985, there were 47,000 tons of excess product at the cooperatives in Thanh Hoa Province and 37,000 tons at the cooperatives in Thai Binh Province. Some cooperatives, such as the Hai Minh Cooperative in Hai Hau District, had as many as 70 tons of excess product during the 1983 and 1984 10th-month season.

3. The number of cooperatives that do not have the conditions or the ability to manage production jobs and simply assign land to each cooperative member household and supply them with a very small amount of draft power and technical materials while still collecting all the product required under contracts is steadily increasing.

4. At some cooperatives, cooperative members are assigned good and poor fields, nearby and far away fields. As a result, the fields they work are decentralized and this poses difficulties to efforts to improve fields and apply scientific-technical advances.

On the basis of the changes that have occurred in the implementation of final product contracts with individual cooperative member households over the past 6 years and on the basis of the results that have been achieved, there is every basis to state: the final product contracts with individual cooperative member households are a form of organization and management of production at cooperatives and agricultural production collectives that is well suited to the specific conditions of our country. At the same time, they are an important force stimulating the development of production in a manner closely tied to strengthening and improving the new production relations within agriculture. The above mentioned shortcomings and negative phenomena at some cooperatives and production collectives do not stem from the new contract mechanism, but are due to the fact that the methods of organization, management and coordination of cooperatives do not meet the objective requirements of the new contract mechanism. The price policy, the policy on the supplying of materials to cooperatives and production collectives and the relations between the state and cooperatives are still based on the management mechanism characterized by bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies. This mechanism is not consistent with the need to adopt a new management mechanism, in general, and a new management mechanism in agriculture, in particular.

To perfect the new contract mechanism, we suggest:

1. It is necessary to reach a full and common understanding of the new contract mechanism within cooperatives and agricultural production collectives and among the sectors and agencies directly related to agriculture. The realities of recent years have shown: the final product contracts with individual cooperative member households, above everything else, are a form of organization of production that combines the strengths of collective labor with the strengths of each cooperative member household (family labor) in the different jobs of the production process with the aim of achieving the highest possible economic returns. At the same time, the final product contracts are an economic form that makes a direct impact upon economic interests and, to establish a rational relationship among interests, it is necessary to practice economic accounting in accordance with the principle of earning sufficient revenues to cover costs and earn a profit at each cooperative, at each production unit and by each producer. To do this, the various levels and sectors must concern themselves with providing material and technical assistance to cooperatives and quickly eliminate unfair trade between state agencies and cooperatives and the practice of forcing cooperatives to "subsidize" the state in many different ways, thus harming the interests of the collective and the individual laborer.

2. The resolution of the Sixth Congress and the resolution of the recent Sixth Plenum of the Party Central Committee stated: we definitely must dismantle the mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state

subsidies and shift entirely to planning that is based on economic accounting and socialist business and complies with the principle of democratic centralism. With the aim of moving in this direction, many cooperatives and production collectives tapped the spirit of dynamism and creativity and widely implemented the contract mechanism with laborers under suitable forms. Recently, at some places, marketing, credit and handicraft cooperatives have begun to merge with agricultural production cooperatives to form one industrial-agricultural-commercial-credit cooperative. By means of economic contract relations, joint businesses, integration and procurements and sales organized with state-operated commerce organizations, production units and other businesses, industrial-agricultural-commercial-credit cooperatives have been providing the materials needed for production and organizing the procurement of agricultural products from cooperative members and the sale of agricultural supplies and industrial goods to them, thereby limiting the activities of private merchants and stimulating the development of production.

These are forms of organization that are well suited to a basic production and agricultural business unit practicing socialist business accounting in our country today. Of course, these new forms of organization must be studied further and experience must be gained concerning them so that they can eventually be perfected.

3. Strengthening the basic production units: the basic production unit is the organization that directly coordinates each job in the production process in accordance with technical standards and economic-technical quotas. The unit accepts a contract for a certain amount of land and output from the cooperative, signs contracts with the specialized units and assigns final product contracts to cooperative member households (for plowing, planting, cultivating and harvesting). In addition to the materials provided by the cooperative, the unit can procure additional materials or mobilize capital of cooperative members to procure additional materials in order to provide the amount necessary for intensive cultivation. The unit has the responsibilities of distributing materials to each cooperative member and supervising and coordinating their use in accordance with production standards. If the unit mobilizes fertilizer, tools, draft power or capital of cooperative members into production with the aim of insuring that the contract quota assigned to the unit by the cooperative is met, it must do so on the basis of the principle of buying or borrowing them equally from each member in a way that benefits both sides.

The corn growing cooperatives of Dan Phuong District have achieved high yields largely as a result of raising the level of organization and coordination of production units to meet production standards and technical requirements. Cooperative member households must comply with the management decisions of the unit. On the other hand, they have the right to demand that the unit provide all the conditions needed to fulfill the contracts they accept. Only in this way is it possible to

tap the strength of the labor of each family and tap the experience and skills of cooperative members. Facts have shown that the most important step in perfecting the new contract mechanism is to improve the ability of the management board and production units to organize and coordinate production in all aspects of the production process. Here, the general guideline is: the coordination and management of production by the cooperative and production units must be based on and fully meet the demands of producers, must tap the initiative, activism and concern of the producer for the final product with the aim of achieving the highest possible yield and efficiency. In my opinion, this is an important aspect to which full attention must be given in the effort to perfect the new contract mechanism.

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Research-Exchange of Opinions on the Issue of Inflation

Concerning Inflation in Our Country

42100004n Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No. 10, Oct 87 pp 62-66

[Article by Nguyen Dinh, professor of economics]

[Text] Inflation in our country is an issue that has been discussed at great length at conferences and in the press. To this day, however, it remains a controversial issue. Many persons maintain that there is inflation in our country and that the rate of inflation is high. A number of others maintain that there is no inflation in our country or that the inflation which exists is good because the state is currently experiencing a serious shortage of cash and would pose obstacles to production and everyday life if it did not continue to issue money. Thus, what is inflation in our country?

1. The Inflation Situation and the Characteristics of Inflation in Our Country

Inflation has existed in our country for many years, from the years of the resistance against France and the resistance against the United States until today. The nature and the rate of this inflation have been different in each period.

Following the August Revolution (1945), we inherited a crippled financial system from the French colonialists. In the war of resistance against the French colonialists, increasingly large expenditures on national defense and economic construction had to be made from the state budget. In the war of resistance against the United States, state budget expenditures on national defense rose sharply, which caused the need for cash to rapidly increase. This, in turn, led to a cash deficit (the size of which varied from one period to the next).

Since the reunification of the country, the monetary situation has been marked by large changes and increasing imbalance. The cash deficit has steadily grown. In 1979, the volume of money in circulation increased by approximately 30 percent compared to early 1978 when money was exchanged. Since 1980, the monetary situation in our country has visibly worsened. The rate at which money has been issued and the volume of money in circulation have risen very rapidly. However, the gross social product, national income and retail sales on the social market have risen very slowly. For example, during the period from 1981 to 1985, the volume of money issued grew at the average annual rate of 83.7 percent but the gross social product only grew at the rate of 8.7 percent, national income at the rate of 6.4 percent and total retail sales at the rate of 11.9 percent. This led to soaring prices and rapid devaluation of the dong. Following the money exchange in September 1985, the volume of money issued and in circulation rose sharply again. In 1985, the volume of money issues increased by 10 percent per month, thus causing prices on the social market to rise by an average of 20 percent and the purchasing power of the dong to decline by 16 to 18 percent.

Another characteristic of inflation is that at the same time these large amounts of money have been put into circulation, agencies and enterprises have been experiencing a serious shortage of cash and have not had sufficient cash to pay wages, buy materials and goods or promptly pay for other expenditures. Thus, why is it that the state, although issuing much money, receives very little by way of revenues? Clearly, the answer is because the state controls very few of the goods in society. On the other hand, many localities, agencies and enterprises do not make their payments through the bank (in actuality, it is easier to buy and sell in cash on the social market).

On the basis of this characteristic, two different opinions have emerged. One is that although the volume of money issued has been large, it has not reached the point of inflation because the consumer needs of the economy are not being met. Therefore, money should continue to be issued. The other opinion is that inflation has reached a very high level and, therefore, it is necessary to closely manage the circulation of money and not continue to issue money. In my opinion, neither of these assessments of this characteristic is right. If we maintain that we do not have real inflation, this means we will continue to issue money at a higher rate and, as a result, prices will rise even more quickly and the dong will be devalued even more seriously. If we maintain that inflation has already reached a very high level and we must immediately put a stop to the issuance of money at a time when effective measures have not been taken to accomplish this, the state will lack money to spend. In such a situation, it is necessary to more deeply analyze the causes of inflation and develop appropriate transitional measures for gradually bringing inflation under control. This matter will be addressed in the following section of this article.

The third characteristic of inflation in our country is that it is not purely a monetary phenomenon, but is also a real socio-economic phenomenon. The high rate and broad scale of inflation today have caused prices to soar and the dong to rapidly lose value, thereby acutely affecting the economy, living conditions and the mood of society. The loss of confidence in prices and the dong has exacerbated negative social phenomena. On the other hand, many unfavorable socio-economic factors have caused inflation to become more serious (the war, the large increase in and rapid growth of the population and rising consumer needs and tastes).

II. The Causes of Inflation

Inflation in our country stems from a combination of causes. In my opinion, however, there are three causes that must be given special attention.

I. Production.

The weak economy and the facts that production has developed slowly, is unstable and fails to meet the needs of production and consumption are the underlying cause of our prolonged and increasingly serious inflation.

During the past 11 years, production in our country has grown at a slow and unstable rate. During the period from 1975 to 1980, the gross social product and national income only grew at the average annual rate of 1.4 percent and 0.4 percent respectively. During the period from 1981 to 1985, growth was higher—7.3 percent and 6.4 percent respectively. But, in 1985 and 1986, growth declined to 4.3 percent and 4.2 percent respectively. The year 1985 was a year of rather high economic development but per capita production remained at a very low level: electricity: 87 kwh; steel: 0.9 kg; mineral fertilizers: 6.5 kg; cement: 24 kg; coal: 88 kg; cloth: 6.2 meters; grain: 304 kg; sugar: 6.5 kg; and soap: 0.5 kg. (Footnote 1) (Per capita production was dozens of times lower than in the developed socialist countries. Our country's per capita production was even much lower than Cuba's, which produced 1,208 kwh of electricity, 30.9 kg of steel, 21.5 kg of mineral fertilizers, 345 kg of cement and 17.6 meters of cloth.) These low levels have made it necessary for us to import steel, much grain and food and many consumer goods and means of production for many years to meet the needs of production and consumption. During the period from 1981 to 1985, a period during which production developed rather well, exports only paid for 36 percent of our imports and the trade deficit remained large. This trade deficit cannot help but play an important role in the budget deficit.

The incorrect restructuring of the economy has led to uniform, decentralized investments being made in many projects, to many construction projects not being completed or to projects being abandoned as soon as they are completed, which have caused the economic returns from investments in capital construction to be very low (investments in capital construction account for 25 to 30

percent of total budget expenditures). On the other hand, many enterprises that have gone into production are only utilizing about 51 percent of their capacity. Some are only utilizing 20 to 30 percent. These situations in production and capital construction have caused our economy to be unable to carry out simple reproduction, unable to carry out capital formation for many years. This has also played a role in the deficit and inflation.

2. The finance, credit and money circulation management mechanism.

The violation of numerous principles in finance, credit activities and the circulation of money is also an important cause of inflation. Inflation and the budget deficit are as closely related as a form and its shadow. That a budget deficit leads to inflation is inevitable.

A budget deficit is the combination of many factors that cause revenues to increase very slowly and expenditures to rise very quickly. Maintaining state subsidies for too long in order to compensate for prices and losses has caused the state to spend a large amount of money. Shortfalls in the collection of taxes, especially industrial and commercial taxes, have been rather large (due to low tax rates, tax evasion, tax cheating and the practice of localities and basic units of retaining tax revenues and not submitting them for inclusion in the central budget). Shortfalls in the collection of social insurance funds supporting production and everyday life have also been very large. Meanwhile, natural disasters, drought, fires, pest infestations and accidents have occurred with regularity and the state has had to spend very large amounts of money to compensate for the losses caused by them. The failure to encourage overseas Vietnamese and cadres working in foreign countries to send money, goods, materials and equipment back to the country is a major obstacle to increasing our foreign currency revenues and providing more goods for the country. Competition in procurements and sales of goods to be exported have also caused prices on the domestic market to soar and caused a shortfall in foreign currency revenues as a result of prices being suppressed on the international market. Expenditures on the management apparatus of the state (wages and other administrative costs) that are too large and have rapidly risen each year have also led to the budget deficit.

Among the causes of the budget deficit that has led to inflation is the very rapid rise in the growth of credit. The total credit extended by the State Bank to meet budget expenditure needs of the state in 1985 equalled 40 percent of the credit available nationwide. This caused the bank to experience a serious shortage of credit capital. This, in turn, limited the bank's ability to support production and resulted in much more cash being put into circulation. Agencies and enterprises have been retaining a rather large amount of cash in order to make payments without transferring funds through the bank. To compensate for the shortage of cash, the state raised the interest on savings deposits. These interest

rates, however, were too low compared to the rate at which prices were increasing and, in the end, did not encourage many persons to deposit savings in the bank. The mistakes made in money exchange in September 1985 and the subsequent adjustment of prices and wages exacerbated inflation. The production situation in 1985 was relatively good and there was not much of a difference in the volume of goods and products available to society before and after the money exchange. However, the volume of money put onto the social market was too large and far exceeded the quantity of goods available in society. In addition to this, many principles and procedures were violated in the money exchange. Speculators threw money onto the market to buy up goods before the money exchange. Following the exchange, they threw the goods they bought back onto the market at high prices. After many cycles of such buying and selling, they gained control of a large quantity of goods and money of society. The state now controls even fewer goods and less money at a time when much money is needed to buy agricultural products and materials at high prices and to pay manual workers and civil servants. The issuance of money to fund rising budget expenditures has caused prices to rise. However, to meet expenditure needs, it has been necessary to continue to issue money at an increasingly rapid rate.

Goods and materials encountering obstacles in circulation and being backlogged at warehouses, stores and enterprises due to transportation problems, a mechanism that prohibits trade, unreasonable prices, the practice of waiting for new prices, speculation and hoarding have made the scarcity of goods and the imbalance between money and goods increasingly serious.

3. Population and labor.

In countries where the population is small and growing slowly, population is not an important factor in inflation. However, in our country, which has a population of 62 million and ranks 13th in population among the world's 204 countries and second in population among the CEMA member countries, this population has created a large consumer market for grain, food products and consumer goods. The very high rate of population growth, from 2.1 to 2.2 percent per year (which requires an increase of 7 to 8 percent in gross national income to maintain the minimum standard of living) has created tremendous consumer pressure in society. At the same time, our current knowledge tells us that our land and mineral resources are not large. The average amount of agricultural land per capita is very small, about 0.1 hectare. Solving the grain problem is very difficult. Although we have many types of minerals, reserves are not large (except in the cases of bauxite, rare earth metals and building materials). Although the labor force is large, a very large number of persons lack work or are unemployed (about 11 million) and this is becoming a heavy burden to society.

The very large and rapidly growing population, the fact that many persons lack work or are unemployed and the fact that production is increasing slowly have put us in a situation in which we are consuming far more than we produce (even though the standard of living is still low). This means that we are not yet producing the necessary product, not to mention producing a surplus product or accumulating capital. The budget deficit will continue if we do not establish balance between the population and the volume of products produced in society. Therefore, limiting the rate of population growth, providing jobs and making efficient use of labor have become a major socio-economic issue.

III. The Guidelines for Solving the Problem of Inflation in Our Country

To curb and gradually eliminate inflation in our country, we suggest that a combination of measures that take the following three directions be studied and applied:

1. All forces must be focused on accelerating production in accordance with the economic mechanism set forth by the Sixth Party Congress. To begin with, we must restructure and adjust the economy in a rational manner. The investment of capital, technical materials and labor must be aimed at successfully implementing this new economic structure. Current efforts to adjust the structure of the economy have not produced clear changes. The sectors and localities are still expanding capital construction in a haphazard fashion, decentralizing investment capital and technical materials. More highly centralized guidance by the state is required. We must be determined to abandon unnecessary projects, limit the allocation of capital to poorly run enterprises and give priority to supplying capital and materials to enterprises that are truly efficient. Only in this way can we rapidly increase product output, raise income and cut costs. In agriculture, steadfast efforts should be made to shift away from the monoculture of rice, promote intensive cultivation and develop a diversified agriculture centered around the production of grain and food products. At the same time, we must step up the production of agricultural products of high export value.

2. A rational finance, credit and circulation-distribution mechanism must be implemented with a view toward encouraging each person and each basic unit to give attention to developing production, practicing frugality, increasing revenues and reducing costs in order to gradually carry out capital formation within the national economy and give the state control over goods and money and the ability to manage the economic activities and life of society. Sensible economic policies must be adopted to expand the sources of revenues (through taxes, fees, frugality, insurance, savings funds, lotteries and so forth) and reduce expenditures. We should begin making payments through the bank. Making payment in

cash should be held to a minimum. Credit should be used correctly, that is, to loan money for the development of production, not as a substitute for the function of finance.

Prices must be stabilized at levels which cover reasonable costs and provide a profit to the producer. Wages must be sufficient to replenish the energies expended in labor and help to raise labor productivity. The circulation of goods and materials must be unimpeded. Goods and materials must be delivered directly to producers and consumers. The number of intermediary levels must be reduced to the maximum extent possible. We must prevent the flow of goods and materials from being obstructed, prevent goods and materials from "leaking out," and being lost or damaged and prevent prices from rising as goods and materials pass through each of many different echelons.

3. Effective measures and policies must be adopted to reduce the rate of population growth and make full and efficient use of our abundant sources of labor in order to create material wealth for society. These policies and measures must take the following directions:

—Organizing the rational distribution and utilization of labor within the country; reducing the size of the staff of the state apparatus to the maximum extent possible; reorganizing and reassigning the labor that becomes surplus labor at worksites and enterprises due to the need to readjust the structure of the economy; expanding the use of contract labor and reducing the use of labor employed by the state; and attaching importance to making good use of the labor of the other segments of the economy (household, self-employed and private) in order to develop production.

—Expanding the investment of capital, finished materials, technology and raw materials by foreign countries in our country as contractors, with priority given to the socialist countries. This is an important direction to take in providing jobs, increasing the material-technical bases of our country and increasing the supply of grain, food products and consumer goods to society.

—Expanding our labor cooperation with foreign countries in order to utilize our abundant labor, economize on grain, food products and consumer goods for society, generate increased foreign currency revenues for the country and help to improve the domestic standard of living while learning the production experiences and the science and technology of other countries.

Implementing the above guidelines well will help to increase the output of products, raise income, cut costs and gradually reduce the deficit and inflation in our country.

Inflation and the Possibilities for Reducing Inflation in Our Country

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[Article by Cao Cu Boi, professor, MS in Economics]

[Text] Inflation is a chronic phenomenon of capitalism. It has become increasingly serious and is worldwide in scope.

In the socialist countries there have also been periods of rampant inflation. In the Soviet Union in the 1920's, when the new economic policy was being implemented, typical inflation occurred. The war was usually cited as the cause. For a long time, the term "inflation" was avoided in theoretical work. In practice, however, inflation did not come about "unconsciously" in the socialist countries. In the late 1960's and particularly since the 1970's, many economists have maintained that inflation has taken two forms in the socialist countries: "invisible inflation" (or inflationary deficits incurred in the process of reproduction) and "visible inflation." Many authors cite the primary causes as very high demand (which includes investment needs) and management and planning skills that do not correspond to this demand, as a result of which prices slowly rise and cannot be stabilized.

We maintain that be it "invisible" or "visible," all inflation stems from imbalanced internal movement in the process of reproduction and that its ultimate expression is needs that can be met (the volume of money functioning as the means of circulation, the means of payment and the means of allocating and accumulating capital) being larger than the supply capabilities of the national economy. In other words, it is manifested in a surplus of money in circulation as defined in the classic concept of inflation. Of course, the way that this problem is solved depends upon the specific circumstances and conditions of each country. For example, in the case of "invisible inflation," price control measures are not always effective. The best policy is to find solutions that involve improving the quality of the products supplied to the market.

The Characteristics and Causes of Inflation in Our Country

Vietnam's monetary system, which came into existence on the day that the people's government led by the Vietnam Communist Party was established, reflects an historical process of revolutionary struggle filled with hardships and did not become a unified national monetary system until 33 years later (1978). To this day, bank money is still not a complete credit currency. To the contrary, it is still in the nature of paper money used to finance state budget deficits. Vietnam's monetary history has been the history of continuous budget deficits closely associated with war, revolution and a backward

economy. Even during the war, despite aid funds (including U.S. aid in the South), the economy remained in recession. This was a sign of inflation. Since the liberation of the South and the reunification of the country, we have exchanged money on three different occasions. But these exchanges never eliminated the consequences of several decades of inflation and, to some extent, made the rate of inflation worse.

What can be said about the rate of inflation when we have not developed an effective method for determining how much surplus money is in circulation?

a. Through continuous budget deficits, the state has put an increasingly large volume of money into circulation, especially during the years of the adjustments to prices, wages and money (1981-1985), thus generating strong pressure in circulation.

b. Through the mechanism by which the bank issues money, a continuous cash deficit has occurred. This deficit-funded cash has remained in circulation year after year, generating increasing pressure that has helped to push prices upward. The annual rate of growth of the volume of money in circulation was 23.6 percent from 1976 to 1980 and 83.7 percent from 1981 to 1987 (of course, the cash deficit includes the issuance of money to fund the budget deficit, to make credit available and for a number of other items). In actuality, our credit system has been issuing very much money in place of the budget for many years.

c. The price scale has risen 33 times compared to 1976 since the two major price adjustments (1981 and 1985) at a time when the gross social product and national income have not risen significantly. In the face of inflationary pressures, the tendency in the psychology of the consumer to chase after goods is unavoidable. As a result, the rate at which money circulates can increase rapidly (due to money being passed from one person to another) or, at the very least, remain the same. If the increase in the volume of money in circulation is commensurate with the number of times by which the price index rises, inflationary pressure is still exerted. Clearly, there has been a volume of surplus money in circulation and working within its own separate orb, an orb filled with negative phenomena and chaos outside the control of the state. Examined from the perspective of the realities of the price index and other consequences in the redistribution of national income, what we have had since 1986 has been rampant inflation in its second stage—its last stage.

d. Examined from the perspective of the relationship between goods and money, the actual value represented by paper money as compared to gold on the social market following a 10-year decline (1976-1986) is now less than 1 xu per dong.

Thus, the value of money has declined by more than 99 percent. Less than 1 percent of its value remains. Is it reasonable to assume that we can maintain this 1 percent in the years ahead?

Inflation in our country is rampant and exhibits the following characteristics:

First, inflation in our country is unique in that the relationship between goods and money has not been fully established or strengthened nationwide. Consequently, inflation in product form is seen to different degrees in each area and within each stratum of the population:

—Persons who have a high income (particularly in commerce) hoard gold and high quality articles.

—Laborers who have a low income hoard grain, building materials or articles made of wood and so forth.

The domestic market is still fragmented and has not been thoroughly unified.

This characteristic is cited to show that every policy aimed at controlling inflation must help to expand and strengthen the relationship between goods and money nationwide. This is the most effective way to combat inflation.

Second, inflation in our country is characterized by inflation of needs (investment needs and consumer needs). Following the several decades of war, each unit, individual, enterprise, sector and locality wants to receive investments, to be built and to consume at a time when supply capabilities are very limited. The state has spent too much money to meet all sorts of needs that are not pressing. We have wasted very much money in many fields, most importantly in the field of capital construction, particularly capital construction in the non-production sectors (on meeting halls, offices, etc.).

As a result, inflationary pressures have become increasingly strong. In addition, the population is growing rapidly, thus creating additional demand pressure.

Third, inflation in our country is also characterized by surpluses and shortages. The cause of this is the two characteristics described above. On the other hand, because the management mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies has been with us for many years, both "voluntarism" and laxity have been exhibited in economic management. In a display of "voluntarism," the state adjusted prices twice, thus stimulating inflation, if not actually causing it. This has led to the following consequences:

—"Money starvation" among persons with a stable income.

—"Capital starvation" at basic production and business units.

—Much money in the hands of manipulators and speculators and the constant conversion of money into "commercial capital" or "gold."

—There is probably also much money in the hands of some agencies and enterprises that have degraded into guild-style organizations and in the hands of some other degenerate elements. Surplus money has become a trade tool to profit by the price differential at a time when there is a shortage of money to produce material wealth and create a supply of goods.

Fourth, inflation in our country has been occurring within the context of an economy that consists of many different segments, an economy which is at the low level of technological development of the initial stage in the period of transition and is mainly agricultural (natural disasters and unforeseen problems regularly occur). Because our country's economy consists of many different segments and to the extent that the state-operated economy has not been playing the dominant role, it is very difficult to overcome the negative aspects of inflation (difficult to control goods, money, foreign currency and precious metals).

Fifth, our country's inflation exists against the background of not exporting enough goods to import what we need. Our country is always in debt to foreign countries and repaying this debt is difficult. Consequently, acquiring "input" for the economy is also not easy.

Sixth, the state budget is carrying the heavy burden of the large staff of the administrative apparatus. On top of this, the national defense budget, although it has been reduced, is still a very large burden in view of the current inflation.

Seventh, our country has expanded credit to the point where outstanding loans are growing at a faster rate than the gross social product and national income. The expansion of loans makes up an important part of the structure of the cash deficit at a time when there is no corresponding supply of materials.

Eight, from the standpoint of a money management profession and material base, our country is still encountering many difficulties.

—Our country does not have adequate printing equipment, transportation equipment, warehouses and so forth to support a flexible and dynamic mechanism for the issuance and management of money.

—Our country also has not accurately established important inter-sector balance sheets to support the planning and regulation of the circulation of money. Most important among these is a unified financial balance sheet for the national economy, followed by a population monetary revenues-expenditures plan balance sheet.

The above characteristics and causes permit us to reach one conclusion: we can only make gradual progress against inflation, not eliminate it immediately. For the foreseeable future, this path can only be the path of reducing the rate of inflation in accordance with the four inflation-cutting requirements set forth by the party at the Second Plenum.

A Few Solutions That Must Be Implemented Immediately with the Aim of Reducing the Rate of Inflation

A. Some directions:

1. In the present situation, inflation poses a "state of emergency." Therefore, the best mode to select is "deflation." Any mode that increases the rate at which money is put into circulation will "pour oil on the fire" and cause immeasurable harm.

2. In the process of implementing solutions aimed at reducing the rate of inflation, it is necessary to help expand and strengthen the relationship between goods and money nationwide. We must make thorough use of all segments of the economy and tap all production capacity in order to create material wealth with a view toward helping to reduce the rate of inflation. No solution adopted can reduce the incentives to produce in the process of combating inflation.

B. The solutions.

1. To lay the groundwork for fighting inflation and, at the same time, the groundwork for implementing cost accounting and socialist business practices centered around the plan, there must be a relatively accurate measurement of value. We maintain that the best policy here is to establish a standard dong in book entry form for use in payment. The content of this dong could be defined as consisting of the value of four commodities that serve as price standards representative of the national market today: gold, paddy, precious wood and high grade technical goods (possibly electronic goods). On the basis of these four products, the state could periodically (possibly monthly) announce the value of the standard dong compared to the current value of the bank dong. This dong would not be convertible into cash but only exist in the books of enterprises, economic organizations, the budget and the bank. It would be used as an accounting and auditing tool and even as the basis for calculating and paying wages in place of the sliding price coefficient associated with inflation.

2. The state should immediately promulgate a frugality policy. In the immediate future, we must economize on energy, fuels and scarce raw materials and practice frugality in consumption within state agencies in order to allocate the major portion of the supply of consumer goods and services to the population with a view toward returning cash to the bank while reducing state budget expenditures for production costs.

3. With the aim of increasing state budget revenues, efforts must be made to combat shortfalls in the collection of all types of taxes. In particular, we have long had the practice of only collecting the price differential from state enterprises and economic organizations. In the case of the other segments of the economy, particularly the economy of private merchants and small employers, we suggest: a warehouse inventory tax should be imposed in addition to the other taxes in order to collect the major portion of the price differential and return it to the state. It is necessary to impose a point of purchase tax upon consumer assets of the population, particularly a tax on the consumption of high grade consumer goods and a housing tax (in the cities), in order to generate increased budget revenues. An export-import tax should also be introduced (we should also study whether to collect this tax in foreign currency). The insurance fund system must be strengthened and diverse forms of the insurance business must be developed in order to increase revenues. Revenues from fees must be increased in numerous services. The percentage of revenues collected from the state-operated economy for the state budget must be increased.

4. All unnecessary expenditures on capital construction in non-production sectors must be reduced.

In the production sectors, investments in capital construction should only be concentrated in projects which support the production of grain, food products and consumer and export goods (with the stipulation that these investments be investments in intensive development). We must be determined to reduce the size of administrative staffs. At the same time, labor cooperation with foreign countries must be expanded in order to increase the revenues and reduce the difficulties of the economy.

5. The state should promulgate a new budget law on the basis of thoroughly implementing the principle of democratic centralism to insure that the central budget retains its position of relative independence and controls, on the macro scale, local budgets.

6. Preparations should be made for the promulgation of an investment law. We should begin by appealing for small investments from foreign countries and imposing a tax on credit in order to increase the sources of budget revenues and create a supply of goods through the production and business of investors.

7. Stronger measures must be taken for the state and the people to work together on many fronts to cut budget expenditures. On the other hand, every potential among the people to support socio-economic goals must be developed.

8. The state should reduce the rate at which money is issued for the purpose of credit and clearly distinguish between the budget and credit. The bank can grant loans to the extent that these loans are backed by bank capital.

Strict credit discipline must be established. However, the management mechanism must also be dynamic and capable of mobilizing capital, even in the form of material resources. And, interest rates can be raised. In some cases of "hot loans," a per diem interest rate can be set.

9. The state should adopt a policy to mobilize surplus money in circulation and include it in the budget by means of guaranteeing conversion of this money into the standard dong or material resources (including gold).

10. The state should enact a dynamic and attractive exchange rate policy so that it is able to generate large foreign currency revenues.

11. The State Bank should prepare the conditions needed to create a capital market by issuing certificates of investment in production and business units in order to mobilize capital and control the activities of basic units.

12. Cash management and non-cash payment procedures must be revised in a way which provides customers with the most convenient service possible. On this basis, we can reduce the cash deficit, increase the mobilization of capital and make bank services more civilized and diverse.

13. Measures must be taken to control goods in socialist commerce on the basis of making commerce more civilized and not obstructing circulation.

14. We must cooperate with foreign countries, most importantly the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries, in the fields of labor, exports-imports and technical advances. On this basis, we must use capital in the form of foreign currency to support the three programs in order to quickly produce a large volume of goods to support the fight against inflation.

15. As regards prices, price controls must be examined as one of the measures for combating inflation. This measure should not, however, be viewed as the primary measure. For this reason, when imposing price controls, the state should also announce how long they will remain in effect, for example, 2 months, 3 months, 6 months and so forth and take other coordinated financial-monetary measures, commercial measures, etc. As long as inflation remains high, it might also be necessary to maintain two prices and continue to closely tie agricultural product procurement prices to convertible materials.

16. The wage component of every price must be recalculated and paid correctly, paid at the ratio of the standard dong to the inflated dong or paid on the basis of a sliding scale tied to prices with a view toward guaranteeing the real income of laborers on fixed income.

17. Another suggestion that has the effect of combating inflation over the long-range while also laying the groundwork for creating potentials of a strategic nature for the national economy in the initial stage is: the state

should establish a number of super-national corporations to develop, produce and do business in a number of products in agriculture, forestry and fishing (which have the advantage of land rent differential I and possible being shifted to land rent II status) and link together production, processing, storage and marketing (overseas). These corporations would be capable of cooperating with foreign countries, obtaining foreign technology and earning a large amount of foreign currency. They would contribute to the state the foreign currency required to import goods necessary for the fight against inflation.

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Ideological Life

A Painful Fact

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[Article by Trong Nghia]

[Text] In an article entitled "The Tasks of the Moment" carried in NHAN DAN Newspaper on 11 August 1987, Nguyen Van Linh pointed out the penchant of some agencies and cadres working overseas to buy and travel about in Japanese Toyotas, a compact and attractive expensive luxury car equipped with radio cassette and climate control. One of these cars costs from 7,500 to 11,000 dollars, the equivalent of all the foreign currency earned by a district from the exportation of peanuts in an entire year. Today, in all provinces and municipalities of the country and at a time when old cars are still in good condition or can be bought from the Soviet Union at low prices, many agencies and organization heads still purchase the latest model cars from Japan, even the Peugeot 505, in order to show off one's authority, to make an impression... The article called this "a painful fact"!

In life today, countless similarly painful phenomena are to be found.

Many persons who are merchants and have very much money put on airs and spend money like they were "throwing it out the window." They spend hundreds of thousands of dong on the wedding of their child or hold a grand funeral for their mother or father at which people spend several days eating and drinking to their heart's content, consuming several quintals of meat and rice. During the 3 days of Tet, some families set off more than 100 firecrackers.

Other persons, taking advantage of the fact that they receive support from overseas or receive some sort of "god-given" commission, play and drink until late into the night. At the bars and coffee shops, the "influential" and persons "out to have a good time" gather in crowds. They eat and drink nothing but the very best. Their beer must be canned beer. Their liquor must be liquor from

the West. Their cigarettes must be "Ga Lang" or Marlboro cigarettes. A meat pie means nothing to them. The simplest meal they will eat is some hard-to-find "special product." A meal for one person costs several thousand dong.

Living high, eating well, spending lavishly and playing hard are becoming the fashion among more than a few persons. It is the way of life of persons who have much money but persons who have little money are copying them and "learning how to put on airs." They compete with one another, afraid only of gaining the reputation of being shy, of "not wanting to have a good time" or being "timid"!

The malady of putting on airs and having a good time has even spread to a number of state agencies and economic units. More than a few places have stretched their resources thin to build impressive hotels, attractive and fancy stores, spending very much money. But the returns from the use of these structures are very low, everything is seemingly for "show." At a time when the state lacks foreign currency to buy necessary finished materials, raw materials, fertilizer, pesticides and so forth, which are essential in production, some agencies continue to use foreign currency, including strong foreign currencies, to buy high grade consumer goods that are not truly necessary or are luxury items that are not compatible with their conditions or pocketbook. At one point in time, a movement arose to buy Honda Cubs, radio cassettes, color televisions, modern fans... There was even one place that used foreign currency to have calendars printed overseas! In 1985, the Union of Hanoi Import-Export Corporations (UNIMEX) imported 4,612 Hondas (412 more than permitted) and 4,472 color television sets (472 more than permitted). The three districts of Tu Liem, Dong Anh and Phuc Tho in Hanoi used more than 27,000 dollars to buy 64 Cubs for cadres. Tu Liem and Dong Anh used from 70 to 95 percent of foreign currency received as a bonus to buy motorbikes for key cadres. Phuc Tho sold 100 tons of paddy from the district's grain reserve to advance money to key cadres to buy motorbikes.

The phenomenon of using public funds to give gifts or hold banquets and receptions is rather widespread. Some directors, ministers and vice ministers have certain products that they like to receive in each season of the year and are given these items as gifts or presents by subordinates to express their high esteem for them. Tet, holidays, the anniversaries of the establishment of an enterprise or sector, a ceremony to mark the opening of a newly constructed building or project and so forth, all these provide an opportunity to give an expensive gift. In the space of 2 years, the Haiphong Military Command, at the instigation of Nguyen Truong Xuan, gave more than 4,226 dong, 4 radio cassettes and many other valuable goods as "gifts" (in essence, bribes) to individuals and agencies. Within the command, they gave Cubs, color televisions... as "bonuses" and "gifts" (in essence, they distributed them amongst themselves). The Dai Loc

District Commerce Business Station (Quang Nam-Da Nang), which was under the management of an element who possessed little integrity, gave many expensive goods as gifts to leadership cadres in defiance of economic management principles, thus causing the state to lose more than 3 million dong. In the space of 1 and 1/2 years, the district forestry center, which has only a small number of cadres and personnel, spent 650,000 dong on receptions and parties. In June and July 1987, the Vung Tau-Hanoi Joint Exported Marine Products Cultivation, Harvesting and Processing Enterprise spent 456,123 dong on gifts and receptions. The feasting and drinking are almost continuous. On 18 August 1987, NHAN DAN Newspaper reported that during the first 6 months of 1987, the six hotels in Hanoi alone (the Giang Vo, Ga, Dong Loi, Phung Hung, Tran Quy Cap and Long Bien Hotels) held 166 conference banquets costing a total of 13 million dong, or an average of nearly 80,000 dong apiece or nearly 1,000 dong per meal (that is, one meal cost the equivalent of several months' salary of an engineer who has just completed practical training). It is said that these are ordinary, simple "conference meals." At many other places, at other hotels in the South, the meals are fancier and more sumptuous. At some reception dinners, the guests eat and drink their fill and are also entertained by very "sexy" female singers. One bank director who traveled to Hanoi for a conference and stayed at the Thang Long Hotel held a reception at which entertainment was provided by a female "singer" who was his constant companion. If anyone were to take the time to check and determine how many conferences and receptions (for arriving guests, departing guests, guests from the upper level, customers, guests coming to conduct inspections, guests visiting to exchange experiences, guests from the emulation section, guest journalists, domestic guests and guests from overseas) the localities and units hold each year and how many hotels in the country serve such banquets, they would surely be shocked and angered by the very large and painful sums of money spent.

Worth mentioning is the fact that some high ranking cadres have also made the mistake of indulging themselves in luxury and waste. Some have taken to eating, living and traveling about in a fashion that is pretentious, affected and expensive. They live in spacious quarters that far exceed the standards for many cadres and have many different residences. They have many conveniences and everything they buy is luxurious and expensive. After they finish building their own homes, some have also built homes for their children. They have built "additions" or made "miscellaneous repairs" costing hundreds of thousands of dong. They paint their home one color today and change it tomorrow when it no longer suits their taste. Many persons are consuming excessively. They use state electricity wastefully, consuming 4,000 to 5,000 kilowatts per month without ever noticing it. Then, there are their children and relatives. Their children wear nothing but the best. Everything they use is expensive. They eat and drink all sorts of unusual and delicious dishes and beverages and live a

life far better than the aristocratic life of the sons and daughters of the Mandarins of bygone years. Where do they get this wealth, this money? It surely does not come from honest labor. But, regardless of its source, all this wealth, this money represents, in the final analysis, the sweat, the tears and even the flesh and blood of our fellow countrymen and soldiers. Who gave these persons the right to squander money in this way? Can it be that they see themselves as powerful persons who have recorded achievements and thus given themselves permission to squander public property, giving no thought to the sweat and tears of the people and even forgetting what it means to be honest?

The wasteful use of automobiles is also quite serious. According to the 4 September 1987 issue of NHAN DAN Newspaper, there are more than 50,000 cars in the country today. They account for more than 25 percent of the total number of motor vehicles. There are nearly 4,500 cars in Hanoi and 6,650 in Ho Chi Minh City. In many cases, these cars are not used in accordance with regulations. Some organization heads keep a car as though it were their own. Two chiefs from the same agency who live in the same collective housing project are taken to work each day in two separate cars. Some comrades drive public cars to work even though they are not authorized to do so. Many public cars are being used for personal reasons. For example, if one's son is getting married, a Volga must be sent to pick up the bride. Due to this indiscriminate use of automobiles, very much gasoline is consumed. It has been calculated that the unauthorized use of automobiles wastes from 50,000 to 70,000 tons of gasoline each year.

The question can be asked: if this kind of extravagant spending continues, where will it lead? We have sayings which state: "A continuous rain eventually causes a flood" and "once it floods, the entire village is flooded." If an economy, regardless of how stable it might be or how well production is developing, does not practice frugality, if it is characterized by wasteful consumption, the situation is no different than wind blowing through an empty house. In the end, wealth is poured into a hole and the hole becomes an abyss. You start out with nothing and wind up with nothing regardless of how much wealth is created. It is not by accident that in countries where the economy is developed and the standard of living is very high, they still attach very much importance to being frugal. To them, frugality is always a national policy. Yet, in our country, a country which has suffered the serious consequences of several decades of ruinous war, a country which must now build many things and faces many difficulties, how can we forget to be frugal, how can we spend lavishly? Persons who squander their money at a time when the country is still poor and experiencing many difficulties betray the trust placed in them and are deserving of criticism. Persons who lavishly spend money of the state or the collective on themselves must be harshly criticized and, depending upon the case, appropriately punished.

We are not opposed to eating and dressing well, to living in comfortable quarters complete with conveniences, to traveling from one place to another easily and conveniently. Nor do we reject a sumptuous and grand life that is the result of a legitimate income earned through the labor of a person. We are not envious of persons who are prosperous. To the contrary, living a full and happy life in fairness to all is the goal of socialism. The sole purpose of our struggle and our sacrifices is to make the life of each person and each family fuller and happier. However, we cannot endorse ways of living that are exceedingly pretentious, are completely different and alien to the common life shared by each working person and inconsistent with the current circumstances of the country. At the same time, we resolutely denounce the behavior of abusing one's authority by embezzling and stealing public property, thus causing a serious waste of property of the state or collective, in order to live a life of luxury and indulgence. Wasteful and extravagant spending never enhances the reputation of an agency or individual. To the contrary, it causes untold amounts of money to be lost, affects our country's financial economy, creates an unwholesome way of life within our society, corrupts many cadres and party members and helps to create a gap between cadres and the masses and reduce the confidence that the masses have in the party.

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Letter to the Editorial Board

The Minh Hai Forests Cry Out for Help

42100004q Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 76-77

[Letter from Pham Van Hoai, Minh Hai Province]

[Text] Minh Hai is the province that has the largest mangrove forests in the country. This is a special ecosystem of economic and scientific value. The diverse and rich products of the forests, such as boa constrictors and other snakes, turtles, bees' honey, birds, wild animals and so forth are precious.

According to data compiled by the Minh Hai Provincial Forestry Service, the province has a total of 200,100 hectares of land devoted to forestry. Meanwhile, there are only 137,718 hectares of land (68.8 percent) currently covered with forests.

The quality of the forests in Minh Hai has also seriously declined. Ngoc Hien District only has a little more than 12,000 hectares of forests that can be harvested. The balance of its forest land lies in newly planted forests and young second-growth forests. Cai Nuoc District, Dam Doi District and the coastal districts have virtually no forests of harvesting age. In the U Minh cajuput forests, only about 3,000 to 4,000 hectares have reached harvesting age. The rest is young forests.

Due to poor management, the destruction of forests and forest fires in Minh Hai have been rather serious in recent years. This situation has caused forest resources to be depleted and very adversely affected the environment.

It can be said that our way of looking at and assessing things has been one-sided and our policies and measures have not been well coordinated for many years. Minh Hai has allowed the forests to reach an alarming stage of depletion.

It is necessary to quickly protect, restore and develop the forests. This is the urgent task that faces Minh Hai today. To perform this task, we suggest:

1. We must adopt an integrated and scientific view of the forests. In Minh Hai, the three strengths of agriculture, fishing and forestry are organically linked. One strength is the premise of another. Difficulties in one sector are the premise for difficulties in another sector. For example, the salt water creates difficulties for agricultural production but it also improves the soil and is a very good environment in which to raise shrimp. It has come time for us to view, assess and develop resources from an ecological perspective and the perspective of efficiency. That is, we must operate an integrated business on a province-wide scale, within each area and at each place if we are to tap all three strengths of the locality, to protect and develop the forests.

2. Capital should be mobilized within the budget of the province and the budgets of the various districts, from the capital accumulated through the sale of marine products and among the people in order to invest in the opening of additional canals and ditches and regulate the forests in order to increase the amount of water surface under the cultivation of marine products, provide additional routes for the transportation of forest products and help to fight forest fires.

3. Young forests must be protected in order to maintain the environment. In young forests, places where the trees are thick should be thinned to insure that the forests can be harvested and can regrow to protect the environment.

4. Districts that have forests should be assigned the responsibility of managing and coordinating the forest business with the assistance of the Forest Service and other services, departments and sectors of the province. The size of state-operated forestry sites should be adjusted. Civilians should be moved into the forests to build forestry-fishing cooperatives. Forest land should be parceled to households to manage in accordance with general technical instructions.

5. We should organize the local harvesting of peat and processing of forest products to lay the groundwork for industry to be introduced in forestry. The variety of

plant life in the forests should be increased by introducing industrial crops of economic value on land planted with cajuput trees in order to produce many products.

6. We should promote the planting of trees at scattered sites, the planting of trees by the people and the planting of shelter belt forests. Districts that do not have forests can establish joint businesses or economic integration with districts that have forests in order to operate an integrated business in accordance with the common plan for the entire area.

7. We should promulgate a series of policies and regulations on the parceling of land and forests, taxes, the management and marketing of products and investments and policies concerning the forests and forestry labor. The science committee and the economic, technical and social sectors of the province must conduct research in order to supply the necessary information on the current state of the forests and forecast future matters in need of attention so that the party and state can promptly adopt policies.

In order to implement the solutions presented above to the extent permitted by natural conditions and the structure of natural resources, Minh Hai must, in my opinion, quickly establish forestry-fishing-industrial production federations within the various areas of mangrove forests in order to establish integrated businesses, closely tie the economy to national defense, production to everyday life and the economy to society and establish the role and responsibility of the agencies that manage local territory. This form of organization is a compatible one. It is capable of making the breakthrough needed to implement economic-technical solutions and well coordinated, comprehensive policies concerning the forests.

The forests are a precious resource. They are always changing in accordance with the laws of nature. The harvesting of forest resources is the harvesting of a biological yield, is to affect the laws of nature and the ecological balance. To keep pace with the momentum of change, it is incumbent upon us to adopt a new view concerning the forests, to establish a new organization for managing the forests. Only in this way can Minh Hai restore and regenerate forest resources.

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Letter to the Editorial Board

42100004r Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 p 78

[Letter from Pham Ngoc, Hanoi]

[Text] Dear Editorial Board,

Nearly 2 decades ago, the son of a high-ranking cadre committed a very serious crime. To save this cadre from embarrassment, we did not harshly punish his son. But this rightist "crack" grew and widened and from it there

subsequently emerged a swarm of "undisciplined soldiers," all the children of distinguished families, who have done countless things that are wrong. Representative of this stratum is the person who committed the very brutal crime in Vinh Ho (Hanoi) just before Tet 1985. He is the son-in-law of a very distinguished cadre.

A clear-sighted leader is a person who not only sees an isolated event, but who also foresees a whole string of events and serious consequences from seemingly insignificant phenomena. In fact, the event in Vinh Ho should be studied from many different perspectives: education, psychology, sociology, civilization, culture, ethics, criminology and so forth. From this, necessary lessons must be learned. But we have not done this. Today, even in Hanoi, armed robbery is no longer uncommon.

Recently, the press brought to light the Dong Tien case in Hai Hung. Clearly, this is not just the problem of one village in our country. The Dong Tien case gives citizens the right to ask:

—Are the administrations in many of our villages and hamlets still revolutionary administrations?

—Are the party organizations in many of our rural areas still worthy of being the nucleus of the proletariat?

—Is the alliance of workers and farmers in a state of emergency?

During the war of resistance against France, when Tran Du Chau, a high-ranking cadre, committed a crime, President Ho said roughly the following: enforcement of the law must be strict. This crime is like a disease. And, a disease must be promptly stopped and not allowed to spread.

I suggest that the Party Central Committee give special attention to maintaining the discipline of our party and state.

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From the Books and Newspapers of the Fraternal Countries

Strengthening the Restructuring Campaign Through Practical Actions

42100004s Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 79-83, 88

[Report by Phan Quynh Anh on an article in SOVIET CULTURE Newspaper (the Soviet Union) on 16 July 1987; Subtitles in the report have been provided by TAP CHI CONG SAN]

[Text] Following the June 1987 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, a meeting took place between General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev and the leaders of the mass media and associations of writers and artists in the Soviet Union.

In addition to expressing general thoughts on the basic themes of the June plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, Gorbachev raised and discussed many important and practical questions with the comrades who bear the main responsibility on the information, press, literature and art fronts. He stated: "Today, the main questions of strategy have been completely answered and we have laid the premises for the restructuring campaign to be expanded on a new base: political, ideological, ethical, economic and legal." "A new situation has formed." And now, an exceedingly important stage will begin—the stage of applying all matters of theory in life and turning them into reality. Millions, tens of millions of persons will participate in this great undertaking.

A True Revolution with Only One Standard: Socialism. The Need To Avoid Being Shallow and One-sided when Evaluating the Past.

Speaking about the steps being taken today in the restructuring campaign, Gorbachev asserted: "This is a true revolution...a revolution in the mind, in thinking, in the approaches to work. And, as we know, Lenin warned that we should not joke at revolution, should not play revolution." Once embarking on a revolution, it is necessary to do real work, to work with a high sense of responsibility and fully understand that "being slow to put into practice the specific matters set forth in our restructuring program—means death." Everything is occurring at an increasingly fast pace. "The party and the media must constantly 'check their watches.'"

According to him, it is necessary to clearly establish the essence of the new approach, of the restructuring: "There is only one standard, comrades—greater socialism, greater democracy. All the answers to the new questions must be found within the scope of socialism, not outside it." When the Law on State-operated Enterprises was presented to all the people for discussion, "there were also some persons who proposed things that go beyond the bounds of our system. In particular, there were suggestions that we do away with the tool that is the planned economy. We have not and will never do this because it is our intention to strengthen socialism, not replace it with another system."

Gorbachev stressed that "restructuring is not negation or, if it is, it is negation of a dialectical nature. In formulating the line on accelerated development, the line on restructuring, we are not standing on a slippery mound of dirt in a swamp, but on a firm foundation that has formed as a result of the efforts of many preceding generations of Soviet citizens and as a result of the struggle waged by the persons who blazed our path. We have experienced everything: great achievements and, besides them, losses. We have had to overcome stern challenges. I say this because even in your environment I see worries and concerns: will the new period turn into the negation of all that we have, will we forget our history and will things in our current policy distort our assessment of the accomplishment of preceding generations?

To believe that these things will occur is a mistake—comrades." "We are speaking the truth and only the truth." But, it is also necessary to avoid being shallow and one-sided when evaluating the past: "I do not think that we ever can or must pardon or defend what occurred in 1937-1938." But these mistakes "do not diminish the things we have today," things achieved by the party and people despite these challenges. "And, moreover, we have the responsibility of realizing that socialism and our system were strong enough to endure these challenges and that we prevailed in the struggle against Nazism." Also taking the perspective that the view of the past must be comprehensive, C.A. Baruzhdin (editor-in-chief of *FRIENDSHIP AMONG NATIONS REVIEW*) said with some concern: "...occasionally, as editor-in-chief, I feel that when looking back on the past, we only try to find negative things as if nothing positive at all occurred in our 70 years of living in Soviet society. I think that this is something which forces us to do some serious thinking."

It Is Like Going Back to the School of Democracy Again. Openness and Democracy Cannot Be a Vehicle for Achieving Revenge. Openness Is Not a Matter of Denouncing Others.

One of the basic themes in the restructuring campaign is democratization. This process is developing widely throughout Soviet society. However, according to Gorbachev, "it is as though we are going back to the school of democracy again. We are learning. We still do not possess all the political knowledge we need and are still not sufficiently cultured to hold a debate. We even lack respect for our own opinions and those of our comrades." "We still need much more 'meeting' democracy."

The Soviet people are now entering "the stage of building-restructuring" but this does not "mean that criticism is no longer needed." Because, "the ethical health and atmosphere of society directly depend upon openness, upon criticism and self-criticism," upon thorough and broad debate overflowing with the spirit of responsibility and concern for the interests of the people, for the fate of the country. However, it must be clearly established that "this is a matter of searching and debating, not class struggle and antagonism." Therefore, when the rather bitter clash occurred at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Russian Writers' Association, Gorbachev asked a number of comrades to state the following: "We would be very worried if, all of a sudden, instead of strengthening the solidarity of intellectual circles in literature and art, we allowed what amounts to a campaign of name-calling to occur, with the participants scheming to use openness and democracy to seek revenge against any and all criticism. Comrades, this cannot be tolerated, it would be deception of the people, the country and socialism. In no case can we allow this to occur." He pointed out that "openness is also criticism of shortcomings." It is not, however, a matter of denouncing socialism, denouncing our socialist values.

A.A. Belayev, editor-in-chief of SOVIET CULTURE REVIEW, said: "Cultural activists frankly state that they need the clearheaded words of encouragement, need the assistance of the party. They need them because activists among intellectuals want to overcome factional enmity, want to perform useful work, not waste time on futile arguments stemming from personal pride."

The Party and the People—the Main Strengths of the Restructuring Campaign

Reflecting upon the two main ideas in the report at the June plenum concerning the party and the people, Gorbachev stated that these are the main strengths of the renewal and restructuring campaign.

He reconfirmed the position of foremost importance occupied by the party in the revolution over the past 70 years and especially stressed the party's role in the restructuring campaign being conducted throughout the land of the Soviets: "Without the party, a party capable of scientifically understanding practical problems and setting forth appropriate policies and a strategy for solving these problems, we cannot carry out the restructuring campaign. Without the cadres who were trained by the party over the decades and are continuing to be trained, we cannot carry out this campaign." Socialist society needs to have a zealous and strong party "and this party needs to have a spirited life filled with enthusiasm." This means that the party must utilize all its potentials, prestige and capabilities, must always be in the lead in each process that is taking place in society and "avoid operating on the basis of the principles of 'not permitting,' not granting, forbidding, declining or rejecting, etc."

As regards the people, he clearly analyzed the harm caused when we paint life "Red" and cause the people to lose interest in the press and social activities: "Lenin said that the uneducated stand outside politics. Today, all the people are educated. Therefore, actions such as those taken by us in recent years mean that the people are being kept outside politics. This shows a lack of respect for the people." The people clearly see the contradictions between words and actions. It is necessary to answer them through concrete and practical deeds.

The people are "a decisive strength." Therefore, according to Gorbachev, being concerned with the needs of the people is one of the basic qualities of a person today. "Regardless of his position, anyone who loses the ability to sympathize with the needs, the difficulties and the suffering of the people and no longer knows how the citizen lives is behind the times and must be replaced. We do not need such persons." Such indifferent and unfeeling persons cannot be allowed to remain in leadership positions. "This problem was addressed at the June plenum of the Central Committee. I now ask you to equip yourselves with all these ideas and take action."

The Service Performed by the Press and the Problems It Faces: Keeping Abreast of the Times and Deeply Understanding the Economy and the Realities of Life. Literature and Art Must Respond to the Restructuring Campaign but Not Be Dogmatic; Egalitarianism and Demagoguery Must Be Combated.

The general secretary of the CPSU expressed high praise for the timely and proper contributions made by the mass media to the restructuring campaign: "I can even say that if the mass media had not actively joined the restructuring process immediately after the April 1985 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, it is likely that the party would not have achieved the level it has currently achieved in debating all the issues associated with restructuring, issues that are very broad, complex and contradictory." When he talks about the mass media, he "includes reviews...including the literary reviews: political commentaries truly occupy a large position in these reviews." It can be said that Gorbachev confirmed the close relationship between the press and literature-art when evaluating the common service performed by them in supporting the political tasks and the renewal campaign since its inception in April 1985. While presenting a host of pressing problems in the current restructuring process as problems associated with people and economic management, people and their concern for the vital interests of the citizen, people and their work style, people and the attitude with which the past is evaluated and so forth, he stresses that the press as well as literature and art must always keep abreast of the times. "In this stage of building-restructuring, it is very important that they see everything that is occurring in practice. As part of this, comparisons are necessary and important." For example, the dynamism, zeal, new perspective and the specific results of one unit should be compared to the stagnation, conservatism and backwardness that tie the hands of individuals and the collective at another unit. According to him, "this must be the main topic of articles in newspaper, journals and, yes, even literature." While appealing for the standard of concern for the interests of the people to be the basis of actions, General Secretary Gorbachev said: "It is necessary to act in such a way that everyone is concerned with man, with each and every person, concerned with the simplest and most ordinary of things, which must be put to intense and well focused scrutiny, must become the subjects of our press, even persons made of ice who are moved by nothing must become 'characters.'"

He invited journalists, writers and artists to broaden the scope of their subjects and asked them to "give careful thought to how we can speak and write better about our great revolution, about the persons and heroes of the revolution, about workers, about professional revolutionaries and about poets..." Gorbachev criticized the mass media for "saying much about the economy but, regrettably, usually saying nothing with weight or substance and sometimes even being trite and displaying a complete lack of understanding of work." And, as we all know, the economy is an extremely important field in the restructuring campaign.

Accepting the general secretary's criticism, A.A. Ananiev (editor-in-chief of OCTOBER REVIEW), stressed that "among the most important areas of activity of the mass media and press political commentary circles, attention must be given to the matters of developing agriculture and, in particular, to the use of land, the relationship between farmers and the land..."

In light of the opinions expressed by Gorbachev, many writers (who are also journalists) express concern over the current state of literature and art. A.A. Belayev said: "Among critics there is the opinion that in the case of works that were 'put on ice' or left in a desk drawer for many years and only recently put before the public, it is impolite to present critical observations of one of these films or novels, even though some of these works are obviously weak. None of these things serve the interests of art." According to C.A. Baruzhdin, it is very difficult to find truly talented modern works, works which deal with today, with the difficulties being encountered in the restructuring process. Essayists and political commentators have achieved brilliant success in writing about these contemporary issues but, so far, writers, poets and playwrights (persons who seemed to take a leap forward at the opening of the restructuring campaign) have yet to write anything worth mentioning. Today, "Silver Wedding," "Speak Out" and other plays astonish no one because journalists have delved much more deeply into these subjects.

S.V. Makhanov (chairman of the Executive Committee of the Russian Writers' Association) observed that within the context of restructuring, we must also make adjustments, must seek out more profound ethical topics. Some things that were good 10 years ago no longer meet the needs of today. We must now delve more deeply into literature as well as theatrical art.

G.Y. Baklanov (editor-in-chief of BANNER Journal) also stated that it is necessary to delve deeply into ethical topics because the ultimate goal of the restructuring campaign is to mold persons who have a rich and developed spiritual life.

Responding to the concerns of writers and artists regarding the functions and tasks of their sector, Gorbachev pointed out: "If they (writers and artists) begin to respond but do not thoroughly understand the enormous task we have begun and respond with things that are faded and pale, they will be giving us a response we do not need. Let everything blossom, let everything be fresh."

Showing special concern for cadres and intellectuals, Gorbachev very strongly criticized egalitarianism and demagoguery. He said: "If we keep pressing society with an iron, there will not be any talent left or any devoted cadres left." At the same time, he warned that "social demagogues have made their way onto the editorial boards of some newspapers and journals."

He also criticized the lack of democracy that exists when "all the columns of newspapers and pages of journals are taken up by writers from Moscow at a time when these journals and newspapers serve the entire union." He criticized newspapers for "limiting their staff of key writers to 3 or 5 persons. This sometimes leads to factional feelings." And, lastly, he issued an appeal to "make our newspapers more diverse so that all society can participate, so that everyone can participate—through what can be called socialist pluralism—in each publishing agency. This is what we need."

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Concerning the Dialogue Between Marxists and Religious Followers in the Countries of Latin America

42100004t Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 10, Oct 87 pp 84-88

[Article by Tran Anh]

[Text] In recent years, in the majority of the countries of Europe and, especially in the countries of Latin America, where the majority of the people are religious, dialogues and contacts between Marxists and religious followers have developed widely. These activities have had a positive effect and led to closer ties, better understanding and the coordination of actions between them, thereby helping to bring about progress and enormous change in the social life of individual countries and the world.

Recently, ISSUES OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM REVIEW, with the participation of well known scholars in the matters of religion and the church, held an "international round table conference" in Prague on the topic "the dialogue between communists and Catholics under the conditions of the current crisis within the region." Allow us to present the summary of the presentations at the conference prepared by A. Oveido, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Columbia and participant in the conference. (Footnote 1) (His article was carried in the Research-Exchange of Opinions section of ISSUES OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM REVIEW, No 2-1987).

There was a time in the world as well as in Latin America when there was a basis for more than a few persons to ask: can and should a dialogue, contacts and joint actions be organized between Marxists and Catholics? Today, these contacts and this cooperation have become an objective necessity of the cause of revolution, one consistent with the progressive trend in history, with the most pressing aspirations of Catholics as well as communists. However, there are differing opinions concerning the importance of this issue. Some persons maintain that dialogue and cooperation between Marxists and religious followers are necessary but only of a tactical or temporary nature. Conversely, many other persons

maintain that this is a strategic and long-range matter. The author begins his summary of the presentations at this "round table conference" by raising and answering this question.

Before addressing the question, the author proves the importance of dialogue and cooperation in theory and practice. According to the author, the relationship between Marxists and religious followers is not new to communists. Long ago, the classical authors of Marxism-Leninism set forth general principles for resolving this matter. Later, the world communist movement gained more experience, for example, the experience of the dialogue and cooperation associated with the formation of the anti-fascist and anti-war fronts. Communist parties in predominantly Catholic countries have adopted policies coordinating their actions with Catholics and the followers of other religions, in general. The basis of this stand has been laid in joint documents of conferences of communist and worker parties. For example, the Conference of Communist and Worker Parties held in Prague in 1969 confirmed that with economic, political and social contradictions becoming sharper, new prospects have emerged in many countries for establishing a broad alliance with religious masses. The declaration of this conference read in part: communists believe that by means of close contacts and joint struggle, religious masses will become a positive force helping to bring about profound social changes. This conclusion was reaffirmed at the Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Communist Parties in 1975.

This has also been eloquently proven in practical activities in many countries of the world, especially in Latin America, where nearly one-half the world's Catholic population resides. Here, over the past several decades, tens of millions of Catholics have participated in the liberation struggle and sweeping changes have been occurring even within the church. The thinking inspiring them is the thinking of one church standing on the side of the people and rejecting compromise with reactionaries and imperialism.

Giving attention to the special situation of Latin America and the dynamic changes that have been occurring there, all the participants in this round table conference as well as we readily assert that not only should there be dialogue and cooperation with religious followers, but it is also necessary to strengthen and constantly improve the quality of these activities in order to meet immediate and long-range requirements. On the basis of the matters presented above, the author reaches the conclusion, one also shared by Fidel Castro, that establishing an alliance, a dialogue and cooperation with religious followers is not a temporary policy based on tactical considerations, but a long-range strategy in the struggle for peace, social progress, democracy and national independence. At the same time, according to many speakers, joint actions by Marxists and Catholics can become one of the factors in socialist construction on the continent.

In his summary of the materials discussed at the round table conference, the author then presents the new factors that have emerged in Latin America, factors to which the Marxists and communist parties there must give special attention and which serve as the basis for dialogue, alliance and cooperation. They are the changes that have taken place in the awareness, the thinking and the actions of Catholic masses and progressive clergy. Although church leaders continue to maintain their conservative, reformist stand, they have not been able to prevent a wave of new thinking and attitudes from spreading widely among Catholics. More and more religious followers and priests are clearly aware of and understand important political, economic and social events in their country and the world, clearly see the causes of the suffering of the laboring people, including Catholics, and see the threat of nuclear war and the absurdity of the arms race, of the heavy burden of costly military spending forced upon the working people, whose lives are already difficult and tragic.... This has led them to take a stand in the movements and struggles for peace, democracy and social progress. This situation has led to profound changes in the religious activities of Catholics and their organizations in Latin America, to deep divisions within the ranks of church officials. The trend toward democratization and change within the church has been responded to by thousands of priests who have come together within countless organizations and movements of the clergy. Even some representatives of the church hierarchy have not been able to avoid being influenced by wide-ranging movements called "liberation theology." In contrast to the "theology of war," the "theology of predestination" and "national theology," "liberation theology" is progressive in nature. It lays the basis for struggling to achieve social and national liberation, for the church to assume greater responsibility to the poor and for the defiant attitude of conservative church circles.

The state of Latin American society, in general, and the Christian movement, in particular, demands that the Marxists and communist parties there find correct solutions based on the views of Marxism-Leninism to the new phenomena. Finding a common language to speak with the religious, this is the very important task which the communist parties in Latin America must perform in order to draw laborers, the majority of whom are religious, into the revolution, achieve profound social reforms and bring about fundamental changes in the social life of the country and the region. New and gratifying is that the tasks being carried out by the communist parties in Latin America have been and are being concretized in a new way. The fact that correct and appropriate positions, policies and measures have been adopted is the result of thoroughly applying the Marxist dialectic in this field of work. However, these are only initial results achieved in a very complex and difficult process of searching and discovering. In the opinion of the author, the participants in the "round table conference" expressed concern about a certain backwardness in the study of the matters presented for discussion, in

systematizing the experience that has been gained and its new forms and in the practical application of the results that have been achieved. This is a serious shortcoming, one which not only the fraternal parties of Latin America, but also all communist movements are concerned about correcting. We cannot be shackled by the formulas and views of the past when dealing with the most important issues facing the revolution in Latin America. Creative Marxism is alien to all dogmatism, to all stagnation of thinking. It forces communists to keep abreast of the current trends in the process of revolution.

Related to the issues presented above, the author of this summary presents a number of principles, themes, guidelines and measures to be applied in the dialogue and cooperation with Catholics.

The development of cooperative relations and an alliance with Catholics must be based on fully respecting their religious views and doing so in a spirit of honesty and mutual respect. This is consistent in principle with Lenin's famous view: "No book, no propaganda tract can educate the proletariat if they are not also educated through their struggle against the sinister powers of capitalism. To us, unity in this truly revolutionary struggle of the oppressed classes to create a paradise on earth is more important than unity of opinion among the proletariat concerning a paradise in heaven." (Footnote 2) (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, Volume 12, p 174) Thus, atheist propaganda must support the task of intensifying the class struggle of the exploited against the exploiters. According to the author, this approach to the issue is not based on tactical considerations or temporary interests, but on the demand of the material dialectic: focusing efforts on transforming social conditions, which have today become an environment supporting religion. It was for this reason that Lenin issued his appeal to draw into the party even workers who still believed in religion: "...We are definitely opposed to even the slightest insult to their religious beliefs." "We must draw them in so that we can educate them in the spirit of our platform." (Footnote 3) (Ibid., p 520) Concerning this point, Fidel Castro observed: "One can become a Marxist and still be a Catholic and work with communist Marxists to transform the world." (Footnote 4) ("Fidel and Religion," in Spanish, p 33)

However, in the view of the author, the dialogue with Catholics is a form of ideological struggle, which is the antithesis of compromise. But our debate with religious followers—as pointed out in the discussion at the conference—cannot be allowed to make them afraid that it will become a campaign of irreconcilable name-calling in the process of common struggle, rather, it must be aimed at showing that Marxism is a solid doctrine which has been proven by social realities and is consistent with the interests of the proletariat, of each oppressed person, including Catholics. At the same time, communists must openly express the confidence that all the formulas of

every new kind of capitalism in Latin America are worthless and that, from an objective and historical perspective, there is no other way out of the crisis than through revolutionary changes. It is necessary to mobilize them, not impose our views upon them or fall into factionalism. Also in the opinion of the author, concrete realities confront the communist parties with new demands in the fields of both theory and practice. To meet these demands, as stressed in the discussion, it is first necessary to realize that in the process of dialogue, Marxists and Catholics, while not rejecting each other's principles, can find many points in common in their views toward vital ethical values, points that are easily understood by everyone of good will. Moreover, in many Latin American countries, life itself is moving toward unity between Marxists and Catholics within the framework of organizations playing the role of vanguard. This is a completely new phenomenon in the liberation movement today. For example, within the Sandino National Liberation Front, which is in the process of becoming a united party, Catholic activists and priests hold leadership positions.

Under the light of the presentations made at the "round table conference" and in the press in recent years and after citing the need for dialogue and cooperation of a strategic nature between Marxists and the religious and presenting the new issues that have arisen as well as the principles, themes and modes of these activities in Latin America, the author addresses the difficulties associated with this dialogue and the possibilities for it occurring in each of the countries of Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Using the scientific method and the specific historical method, the author examines the characteristics of the specific situation as they relate to the position of religion in each of the different countries of the region, reviews the situation of the church and religious followers and even reviews the attitude of the communist parties there toward the religious and the church. As regards the progress being made in this dialogue and cooperation, the author also points out the difficulties and obstacles posed by bitter opposition forces consisting of U.S. monopolies, pro-U.S. regimes, all lackeys of the United States, and radical, reactionary ruling powers of the state and the church. On the other hand, the article also points out the realistic capabilities, the appropriate and dynamic measures, the good methods and the valuable experiences of the countries of Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean. The changing realities of Latin America are opening considerable prospects that broaden the possibilities for dialogue and cooperation between communists and religious followers and raise these possibilities to a higher level. At the same time, these new possibilities place new demands upon the fraternal parties and the other forces of revolution and democracy struggling for peace, independence and social progress within each country and throughout the world.

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