

JPRS-ATC-89-001
10 JANUARY 1989



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JPRS Report

East Asia

Southeast Asia

Vietnam: TAP CHI CONG SAN

No 5, May; No 6, June; No 7, July; No 8, August 1988

East Asia Southeast Asia

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30 January 1989

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TAP CHI CONG SAN

Implement the Political Bureau's Resolution on the Renovation of Economic Management in Agriculture

421000010a Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 1-6

[Editorial]

[Text] Over the past years, we have achieved important results in the socialist transformation of agriculture, further consolidated the material and technical bases of agriculture and had many good models of intensive cultivation, multicropping and high crop cultivation yield. So far, a number of new factors have emerged from agricultural production and management.

Nevertheless, our agricultural production still remains poor, the production growth rate is slow and many localities are still unable to get rid of autarchy, fragmentation and a one-crop system. Over the past several years, the operations of a number of agricultural production sectors, especially grain production, have slowed down, thus causing our socio-economic situation to change from bad to worse.

The causes leading to the aforementioned situation include, among other things, a poor knowledge of socialism and inconsistency in implementing the party's policies.

For a long time now, in their resolutions, the 5th and 6th Party Congresses and the recent plenums of the Party Central Committee have all emphasized the primary role of agriculture. However, the truth is that various echelons and sectors have not given due attention to this important front yet. Basically, after more than 30 years of socialist construction in the North and more than 12 years of socialist construction in the entire nation, our country's agricultural production system has continued to bear the heavy impact of a one-crop system and still displays an imbalance between cultivation, animal husbandry and job development in agriculture on the one side; and agriculture, forestry and fishery on the other. That system hampers efforts to link agriculture with industry, especially with the manufacturing of production means and the processing of farm produce.

Backward production (extensive cultivation, low yield); small capital allotment for agricultural development (in the past 10 years, the ratio of capital investment in agriculture accounted for only 24-26 percent and has moved up to only 26-28 percent now); and the fact that this capital investment has been used in a scattered, wasteful and ineffective way all have made it difficult for our country's agricultural production to free itself from the one-crop system and autarchy.

Incorrect concepts about the indispensable presence of the various economic components during the transitional period have led to subjectivism and hastiness in

the process of transformation: excessive mobilization of production means, adoption of large-scale production patterns just for form's sake, pressure to force peasants to join cooperatives and serious violations of the principle of voluntarism, mutual interest and democratic management. There still exist prejudices that efforts to promote the participation of the individual and private economic sectors and the signing of direct production contracts with cooperative members may weaken the socialist production relations in the rural area. This has resulted in indecisiveness and hesitancy and even actions that caused difficulties to and hindered the efforts to carry out the renovation of economic management in agriculture, release productive forces and exploit all agricultural potentials to develop production and quickly increase the output of agricultural goods for society. Obviously, these prejudices are totally contrary to the party's viewpoint on the long-term existence and positive effect of the various economic components in the period of transition to socialism and run counter to the policy of ending abuses of the work credit system and unfairness in income distribution (which violates laborers' personal interests) in cooperatives and production collectives.

With regard to the pricing policy and the circulation of materials and goods in agriculture, various party resolutions, especially that of the 6th CPV Central Committee's second plenum, have clearly pointed out: aside from tax, which is an obligatory contribution, all relations of exchange between the state and peasants must conform to the principle of equality and mutual agreement. To date, these correct decisions have still not yet been seriously implemented by various sectors, echelons and localities. Many sectors and localities have even arbitrarily imposed additional "obligations to deliver products" and created additional contributions that hurt the peasants. Trading of agricultural products between the state and the peasants has been carried out unfairly. The use of pressure to arbitrarily determine the grade of products and to set prices and long delays in the state's payments of its debts to the peasants still prevail to a serious extent. The situation of contractual as well as non-contractual procurement of technical materials for agriculture has gradually deteriorated; many state-run materials procurement organs have become indebted to the peasants. On the other hand, many localities have failed to attach due importance to educating the peasants in fulfilling their obligations to the state while the peasants themselves have not yet paid taxes voluntarily and have even procrastinated in paying their debts to the state.

One of the causes of the aforesaid situation is incorrect awareness and the lack of discipline and responsibility in implementing the party's line for agricultural production and building a new countryside.

The basic orientation for renovating economic management in agriculture as pointed out in resolution number 10 of the Political Bureau consists of vigorously shifting economic activities to socialist business accounting, stepping up the application of technological advances, adopting correct policies aimed at encouraging the various economic components to exploit all potentials for production development, harmoniously resolving all relations concerning interests to launch a movement for creative labor and increase economic efficiency and renovate the organization and cadres.

1. With regard to the broadening of state-run economic units' right to autonomy in production and business in agriculture, the resolution of the (sixth) Party Central Committee's third plenum deals with this issue in a comprehensive manner. The Political Bureau resolution lays additional emphasis on the need to consolidate state-run economic units and switch their operation to business accounting, stipulating that "by 1989, those establishments that fail to make such a switch will be either dissolved or placed under another form of ownership." This correct approach once again confirms that production is always the goal while transformation is merely the means. Therefore, if they prosper in their business, state-run enterprises will serve as an example and a driving force for other economic components; and conversely, if they keep running up operational losses and hurt the national economy, this will prove that they themselves are unviable and can no longer exist.

2. On the enforcement of the system of self-management by cooperatives and production collectives:

Cooperatives and production collectives are economic organizations voluntarily set up by peasants under the party's leadership. Directed and assisted by the state, they operate according to the principle of self-management, are responsible for the efficiency of their own production and business activities and fully enjoy the status of a legal entity and equality before the law.

Renovating management in cooperatives and production collectives is aimed first of all at increasing the capability to develop the production of commodities and carry out socialist business accounting in the collectivized economic sector, enhancing the capacity for realizing democratization and openness, developing the true right to mastery of cooperative members and reorganizing the managerial apparatus to make it streamlined and operationally efficient.

The enforcement of the system of self-management by cooperatives and production collectives as outlined in the Political Bureau resolution involves extremely diverse and profoundly practical issues.

First, it reflects the free will of collectivized economic units and their right to decide their own production and business plans; the state, instead of assigning legally binding norms, will control, guide and assist these units through economic incentive policies and the law.

Second, cooperatives and production collectives enjoy total autonomy as concerns finance, credits and assets (they are entitled to purchase, sell and transfer assets except for land, forest land and water surface); material supply and product marketing including export and import (except for their obligation to pay taxes, the relationship involving the purchase and sale of agricultural products, supplies and so forth between cooperatives and state-run organizations is an equal relationship based on economic contracts and the principle of mutual consent); and scientific-technological development and so forth in accordance with the law of the state.

Third, the forms of contracting, labor division and product distribution within the cooperative should be diversified. Given the different levels of development among the various regions, each locality, each cooperative and each branch and trade must apply its own contractual forms. In crop cultivation, contracts should in the main be given out to families or groups of cooperative members (work activities should be flexibly assigned to the collective or cooperative members' families depending on the specific conditions of each cooperative. To do this, cooperatives should readjust the land area contracted out to each family to overcome fragmentation, set the contracted acreage for a duration of 15 years and guarantee that the contracting families will get about 40 percent of the contracted output quota. It is necessary to promote intensive crop cultivation, develop livestock breeding, expand branches and trades and carry out the division of labor along the line of specialization. Cooperative members with specialized skills should be encouraged to engage in branches and trades; those who are well-versed in intensive crop cultivation techniques, fully meet the quota for delivery of products to the cooperative and satisfactorily discharge their tax obligation, should be allocated more land; and those who are lazy or inefficient in intensive crop cultivation should be given less land or transferred to other suitable branches and trades.

Products turned out by cooperatives and production collectives are the results of the use of collective funds and capital borrowed from their members. Therefore, it is necessary to apply suitable forms of distribution. Distribution should be carried out mainly in accordance with labor and the shares contributed by cooperative or production collective members. Efforts must be made to overcome egalitarianism in distribution and the state of widespread subsidy, while applying appropriate policies toward those benefiting from these policies and cadres responsible for party, administrative and mass organization tasks at the village level.

3. The use of various individual and privately owned economic components in agriculture:

The existence of many economic components during the period of transition is an objective necessity. Therefore, correctly using and improving all economic components is a fundamental viewpoint and a long-term policy of our

party and state. The Political Bureau's resolution pointed out: the state acknowledges the long-term existence and positive effect of individual and privately owned economies. It also recognizes legal entity and insures equality in interests and obligations before the law, while creating favorable conditions for these economic components to develop production, processing, services and other branches and trades in agriculture.

It is necessary to eliminate all narrow-minded prejudices and irrational regulations toward individual and privately owned economies and encourage people to invest capital, labor strength, materials and technical equipment in developing production. Localities with favorable conditions can lease or turn over part of the rice fields, forest land and bodies of water to individual or private households for production and exploitation in accordance with the law. (Regarding bodies of water and land for planting food and industrial crops annually, these households can use them from 15 to 20 years and can enjoy the rights of succession and concession during that period of time). Private households and privately owned corporations are allowed to hire laborers according to the demands of production and state law on labor. Besides the part to be used for tax payment and to be sold to various state-run economic organizations under economic contracts, individual and private households are free to sell their products to any locality where they can reap the biggest profits and are permitted to entrust the handling of their export and import activities to various state export-import organizations.

It is necessary to broadly promote joint venture and integration among various economic components in order to develop the production and exchange of goods under numerous forms. This is also a fundamental viewpoint because only by promoting integration can we be able to mobilize the strengths and potentials of various economic components and bring into full play the key and leading role of the state-run economic sector, thereby guiding the production and business activities of all economic components along the orbit of socialism.

Correctly using various economic components in agriculture, forestry and fishery is aimed at making it possible for all economic units belonging to various production and business economic components to insure their efficiency. All economic units belonging to various economic components, which are engaged mainly in the production of goods, are directly responsible for the management of production and business operation while the administrative apparatus at various levels is in charge of state economic management. The task of clearly defining the function of production and business management and the function of state economic management is of amazingly profound practical significance, as it helps alleviate the state of disorder and counter and prevent all acts of arrogant interference from state organs in the business activities of grassroots economic units and other economic organizations and helps make the state apparatus tidy and capable of operating with efficiency.

4. The renovation of agricultural economic policies:

In the process of renovating agricultural economic management, the renovation of economic policies plays a particularly important role. With correct economic policies, we will be able to encourage peasants to engage enthusiastically in production. Meanwhile, erroneous policies will have an effect to the contrary. For this reason, the Political Bureau's resolution pointed out the need to promptly modify a number of principal measures, such as those concerning investment, material supply, taxation and pricing in agriculture.

To develop the production of goods on the basis of reorganizing agricultural production along the line of building a rational agricultural production structure, we must apply suitable investment policies aimed at using investment capital in the right direction with selective targets and practical results. In the immediate future, it is necessary to concentrate on investing adequately and uniformly in agriculture, especially grain and food production, in major localities and other localities producing goods. It is also necessary to concentrate on investing in various industrial sectors that directly serve agriculture, especially those processing agricultural, forestry and marine products or manufacturing work tools and farm machines (including ordinary, semi-mechanical and mechanical tools). At a time when the sources of state investment capital is still limited, all sectors, localities and establishments should, under numerous forms, mobilize all available sources of capital from among the people (including money from overseas Vietnamese) to develop production and increase the number of material and technical bases for agriculture.

At a time when the state's sources of materials are still limited, timely and well-coordinated provision of supplies for agriculture is a decisive factor in increasing crop and livestock yields. The most important thing is that all materials procurement organizations must seriously implement the economic contracts already signed with the peasants. This has been the weakest link so far. Peasants often complain and are angry that breaches of contracts by state organs have driven them into passivity and confusion, thereby affecting planting schedules and crop yields and causing considerable economic losses. For this reason, a severe requirement for the materials procurement sector is to know for sure the amount and types of materials to be available in any given plan year so as to sign materials supply contracts with state, collective and other economic units and, at the same time, to apply several appropriate methods of payment. Both the state and the peasants are dutybound to strictly abide by the contracts already signed. On the other hand, the central government's materials procurement capability should be announced far in advance to give localities and the grassroots enough time to take the initiative in securing additional materials.

We must revamp the organization and work methods of the agricultural materials sector to insure that supplies are delivered to the consumers as quickly as possible, in

the right amount, with the right quality and at stable prices. In addition to the amount of materials supplied in accordance with the state plan, some materials, means of production...should be set aside for use in signing contracts or for sale at business prices to the household economic sector and other economic components.

It is necessary to improve the agricultural tax policy to encourage peasants to produce more, to insure fair contributions to the state and to compel all collectives and individuals to use land sparingly and efficiently. Aside from amending the grain tax, we should readjust the tax policy regarding different crops and domestic animals to increase budget revenues. In the immediate future, we must correctly implement the agricultural tax law to insure full collection of tax at the 10 percent rate imposed by the law. Localities are strictly prohibited from levying other taxes and surcharges not stipulated by state regulations.

In line with the principle insuring complete fulfillment of the tax obligation and implementation of the contracts to sell products signed with the state economic organizations, all cooperatives, production collectives and peasant families have the right to freely circulate and sell grain, foodstuffs and other agricultural products (except a number of products the free circulation of which is prohibited by state regulations).

Concerning pricing, the principle governing price setting requires that it be done in such a way as to enable producers to cover all necessary expenses and to make a profit. This issue has been made clear by the 2nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee, that is, the state will set a reasonable rate of exchange between materials and agricultural products to be applied in contracts, first of all between paddy and nitrate fertilizer, with the aim of encouraging the development of production according to plan. The prices of paddy and other agricultural products in contract or outside contract must also be set in accordance with the principle of mutual agreement to make sure that, under normal production conditions, the peasants can cover all necessary expenses and make a profit. This guideline is very important because it is designed to overcome subjectivism, coercion and the state's practice of setting and reviewing prices and compelling production units of the various economic sectors to buy and set at state-fixed prices.

The Political Bureau's resolution on renovating economic management in agriculture includes a system of policies concerning the development of goods-producing agriculture. These policies will certainly be enthusiastically received by large segments of the peasantry. If this resolution is correctly implemented, our agricultural production will be quickly developed and the cause of building a new countryside will proceed in a concrete direction, thereby laying the foundation for an early stabilization of our country's agriculture.

Distinguishing Between the Functions of Party and State Organizations—The First Prerequisite To Implementing the Law

42100010b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 7-9

[Article by Nguyen Huu Tho]

[Text] Ours is the party in power. This leadership role is absolute and comprehensive. It is not just leadership of the activities of the state, but also leadership of the whole of social life, the entire country. Precisely stated, the ultimate goal of party leadership is to insure that the country develops within the sphere charted by the party in its overall platform and in each specific stage of development. Our party has no requirements simply for requirements sake. The growth and strength, the correctness and incorrectness of the party are manifested in the steps taken by the country, in results seen each day in the socio-economic field, in culture and education, in security and national defense, in foreign affairs.

The party providing leadership when it has become the leader of the government differs in concept from the party providing leadership when we were still in the stage of struggling to win power. The concept of the party providing leadership as the party in power expands this concept to its fullest. It is a phenomenon that has been socialized, one which touches each Vietnamese. In the final analysis, it is the pinnacle of the concept of party leadership and also the most complete challenge to the role and impact of the party. The party leads society through the state (and the organizations which support the state as well as the mass organizations). The significance of this party leadership is manifested first and basically in the nature of the state as codified in the Constitution along with the laws and other legal documents of the state.

The reason why the above mentioned principle is being stressed is because, in practice, there is still a misunderstanding of the concept of leadership by the party. At more than a few places and in more than a few cases, this concept is understood in a simple sense: only when the party organization expresses an opinion concerning a matter can the party be considered as providing leadership. It must be said that this thinking, which has become a habit, is mistaken and frequently leads to the reduction of the leadership role of the party.

At times, we have maintained party affairs sections within a ministry or state agency. Of course, during the period following the August Revolution, we had no choice but to establish separate organizations of the party within the apparatus. The dictatorship of the proletariat had not been firmly established and the political system itself was still not a homogenous system. However, after the two wars of resistance, the total liberation of the South and the advance by the entire country toward socialism confirmed the position of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, confirmed the leadership role

of the communist party. This role does not stop at general ideals, but is embodied in the political system, the Constitution and the law, within the management mechanism and in each change, regardless of how small or large, throughout our territory affecting each circle, each age group, each ethnic minority and the religious as well as the non-religious within the national community. In this case, that is, when the theory and actions of the party have been concretized by means of the system and policies of the state, this unity demands a corresponding consciousness.

Leadership by the party is no longer manifested mainly in a separate organization or individual party members. If a socio-economic installation, even a very important one, is headed by a person who is not a party member, this does not mean that this installation can go outside the leadership of the party. This understanding elevates the leadership role of the party and goes to the heart of the concept of party leadership. Of course, this does not mean that the task of the party organizational system within each unit and sector is less or can be relaxed. Increasing the strength of party organizations is always a pressing need.

Having expressed the few thoughts presented above, I would like to turn to the actual situation today, to talk about the matter of distinguishing between the functions of the party organization and the state within the overall concept of leadership by the party. I will limit the scope of my remarks to operational methods. Permit me to analyze the implementation of the law.

To begin with, the law is a tool by which society is managed. Party consciousness and class consciousness are reflected in the contents and goals of the law. The articles of a code of law ratified by our National Assembly and promulgated by our state are based on the requirements regarding and the importance of leadership by the party, are impregnated with party consciousness. If some articles or even an entire code of law do not stand the test of time, it is a common fault, a common shortcoming, including a fault and shortcoming of the party. Here, I will not delve into the outmoded, immature, incomplete or mistaken aspects of the provisions of laws, but concern myself with the nature of these provisions with the aim of protecting and developing socialism, the aim of bringing back fairness and order in accordance with the socialist spirit of our law. In this respect, the highest value of party leadership is the correctness of the contents of laws. It does not strain credulity when we say that a law which is applied in life and exerts a positive impact is the thinking of the party applied in life. There is nothing that embodies the consciousness of the party more than a law itself within the framework of the field this law regulates. Consider, for example, the Criminal Code. It marks the degree of regulation necessary throughout society as perceived from the perspective of the overall interests of the entire

country and with adherence to the view that we must resolutely protect the safety and freedom of all citizens while being loyal to socialist humanitarianism.

We have the Law on Marriage and the Family, the Foreign Investment Law, the Tax Law, the Military Service Law, the Enterprise Law and so forth and will enact many other laws, such as labor law, a youth law, a law protecting writers and journalists...

The slowness with which we have promulgated various laws to meet the demands of our diverse life is a major shortcoming on our part. This, however, is another subject which we will discuss at another time.

Gradually refining the system of law in conjunction with gradually improving the agencies which implement the law, these are objective demands of a civilized society. All party organizations, from the highest to the lowest levels, must view codes of law as laws of the party, laws of the state and must observe and comply with these laws without exception. A case which is brought to light by a party organization (such as the Inspection Commission, the Organization Department or even a key leadership agency on a particular echelon) that is society-wide in scope and must be prosecuted, absolutely must be handled through a legal agency, must be prosecuted and decided by a legal agency in accordance with the applicable articles of law. The leadership agencies of the party, regardless of their echelon, may not directly decide to detain or release an individual. These matters are the responsibility of functional agencies within the system of law. The party organization can supply information and make proposals, but only proposals, can be heard and can listen. Because, functional legal agencies represent party leadership both spiritually and organizationally. In such matters, it is impossible to say that legal agencies "are not under party leadership." Legal agencies might make mistakes in how they handle specific matters but rectifying these mistakes through democratic debate and in accordance with procedures has become the mode of social management.

There was once a case in which a party committee issued a directive directly to the procuratorate. Public security forces arrested one person and released another. This violation was a violation of principle, the principle being the principle of party leadership. Here, we cannot and should not understand party leadership to simply be the issuing of such directives. This approach leads to upheavals, sometimes serious ones, even to tolerating the abuse of personal authority, and turns the law and legal agencies into passive tools.

We have more than a few examples of this intervention. And, the results are always complicated by the fact that another matter must be taken into consideration when rectifying mistakes: the prestige of the party must be maintained. In practice, the foremost factor in the prestige that must be maintained is that justice must be achieved. This is also the prestige of the party.

The party is the leader who sets the line we follow. The National Assembly and People's Councils are directly elected by the people to manage society in accordance with the party's line. The standards of the leader are not the same as the standards of the organizer and manager. Persons who implement the law have their own standards, both intellectual and professional. These categories must be kept separate.

Our overall mechanism must be scientific in nature and should not include any unnecessary components. In specific activities, however, we find ourselves working against one another and some components play a role in name only and are unnecessary. This is a situation which weakens our country's social system.

The socialist countries have gained a good deal of experience in this area. Some very painful mistakes related to violations of democracy have occurred, one exceedingly important reason for which has been a narrow interpretation of party leadership. Such experiences have also been recorded in our country.

Renovation includes adopting new thinking concerning the management of party work and the management of society. Some matters are entirely party affairs and party agencies are responsible for dealing with them. However, matters which relate to society must be dealt with in accordance with the law and within the state system. If this principle is not closely observed, discipline will immediately become lax.

And, discipline must be strict, beginning within the highest agencies of our party and state.

Creative Marxism—The Origin and Base of Revolutionary Renovation

42100010c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 10-15, 28

[Article by Nguyen Duc Binh, professor and director of the Nguyen Ai Quoc Academy, commemorating the 170th anniversary of the birth of K. Marx (5 May 1818-5 May 1988)]

[Text] The communist and working people on five continents began 1988 by joyously celebrating the 170th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx—the father of the great doctrine of revolution and the brilliant leader of the working men and women of the entire world. In an objective way, time tests each ideology, each doctrine and hypothesis, each great man of history.

Also during this year, "The Communist Manifesto," the first and greatest proclamation of the communist and worker movement throughout the world, will have been in existence for a full 140 years. With this historic manifesto and the famous works they wrote following the manifesto, K. Marx and F. Engels became the persons who laid the foundation of the communist world

view and the ideology-theory of the proletarian movement. The material dialectic, historical materialism, political economics and scientific communism, that is, the entire doctrine of Marx—in its organic wholeness, its revolutionary and scientific nature, its realism and optimism—became the ideological guidelines and compass for the actions of the proletarians of all countries, became the strongest and most effective theoretical weapons used by communists to struggle against reactionary, revisionist and utopian bourgeois doctrines of all types, to transform and build the world, both the subjective and objective worlds. By means of widespread propaganda and organizational activities, Marx and Engels directed the worker movement precisely along the course of revolutionary struggle with the aim of eventually toppling the system of oppression and exploitation. The outstanding discoveries by Marx in the theory of political struggle and in revolutionary strategy and tactics—especially his theories on the proletarian dictatorship, the historic, worldwide mission of the working class, international solidarity among the proletarians of all countries and so forth—are easy to understand today but came into being with great difficulty, after which they brought awareness to workers and unleashed enormous revolutionary power.

It has been 105 years since Karl Marx departed from us. Through the vagaries of history, Marxism has been constantly enriched and applied in real life in a dynamic fashion. The doctrine of Marx was adopted by the communists and revolutionaries of the entire world in order to try to apply it fully under the new circumstance of history. Since V.I. Lenin—the person who first performed the service and the most outstanding example of comprehending and developing Marxism—communists have increasingly come to realize that carrying on Marxism and being loyal to the thinking of Marx do not at all mean following the original statements of Marx word for word and are not simply a matter of repeating everything that Marx advanced under the historical circumstances of his time. To the contrary, grasping Marxism is to grasp the spiritual essence, the backbone, the soul, the methodology of Marx. Engels once offered the following reminder: "The entirety of the views of Marx...are a method. They do not provide us with pre-established tenets or dogma, but with starting points for additional research and the method for conducting this research."¹ This stems mainly from the nature of the process of formation and development of Marxism. This is how Marxism itself was born. And, in turn, Marxism has demanded that it be constantly developed and augmented with new features, be enriched by theories drawn from the latest changes in the world situation, from the varied experiences of the international communist and worker movement. The material dialectic of Marxism does not tolerate any stagnation of thinking, does not tolerate dogmatism and doing things in a mechanical fashion. The feature of foremost importance which gives Marxism its vitality and distinguishes it from every other theory and doctrine is: to be loyal to Marxism, we must constantly develop it in a creative manner. We must

adopt new approaches and be creative in order to be consistent with the constantly changing realities of life. This is the demand of this loyalty itself. Lenin wrote: "We must comprehend the irrefutable truth that the Marxist must attach importance to real life, to the precise facts of reality and should not continue to cling to the theory of yesterday. This as well as every other theory does nothing more than reveal the fundamental, the general aspects, does nothing more than approach a grasp of the complexity of life."² There has never been and never will be a correct formula for each and every case encountered in life. It is difficult to imagine a person calling himself a Marxist who only memorizes each sentence and word of Marx, considering this to be a "magic box."

Marx did not set for himself the ambition of providing specific answers to each separate case. What Marx pursued, the most difficult and the greatest thing Marx did, was, through the study, analysis and evaluation of events, to reveal trends and the objective, universal laws of their movement in order to point out the moving forces behind the surface of phenomena and processes and, on this basis, provide a compass to guide revolutionary thought and action. Regardless of how different the specific historical conditions of the revolutions of countries or periods might be, they do not go beyond the scope of universal laws and principles, which are the basic and essential elements that determine and pervade the varied and constantly changing specifics of life. Lenin revealed this essence of the scientific thinking of Marx. He wrote: "Even at 70, Marx was still not able to embrace in his doctrine the totality of changes. Very often, he discovered the laws behind these changes and revealed the primary and basic aspects of the objective logic of these changes and of their historical development."³ As a result, Marxism, more than any other doctrine, opens a broad avenue for the creative research of each social phenomenon and process. In each new stage of history, the principles of Marxism can be developed in greater detail, can be supplemented and enriched by new aspects, new contents, new meaning. The reciprocal, dialectical relationship between loyalty and creativity, between tradition and renovation is a basic characteristic of Marxism.

One can only achieve a deep understanding of the Marxist dialectic by constantly delving into the realities of our constantly moving and changing life, delving into details, delving deeply until the very essence of things and phenomena is reached and, on the basis of the varied conclusions gleaned from the detailed study of events and processes in all their diversity and complexity, events and processes which are unexpected, transitional and temporary, deducing, generalizing and discovering the new laws of objective movement. If, instead of doing this, we cling to each sentence and word in the books of Marx, we will kill Marxism. "The materialist method will become its opposite—Engels very logically wrote—if it is not viewed as a compass in the study of history, but considered a mold into which we fit the events of history

to suit our desires."⁴ Anyone who attempts to turn one of the arguments advanced by Marx in a different age in history into a time-honored truth "is seeking to use the words of Marxism to go against the spirit of Marxism."⁵ Revamping, developing and even "revising" these specific conclusions reached by Marx, if done in the spirit of the Marxist method, in a manner which does not veer from but correctly and effectively applies the material dialectic—this is the only correct approach which reflects loyalty to and increases the vitality of Marxism.

There is another matter which, if not raised, will prevent us from fully understanding the campaign to adopt new theoretical thinking that has been under way in the fraternal countries over the past several years and cause us to lack the basis needed to refute anti-communist and anti-socialist arguments arising in the West. It is that during the past 70 years, socialism has advanced from theory to reality, has been and is changing the face of the world. The great victory of Marxism-Leninism cannot be denied by anyone. Thus, why have communist parties raised the issue over the past few years of needing to change their perceptions, needing to think in a new way?

It must be stated at the outset that the working class has victoriously carried out the proletarian revolution in a host of countries which have different levels of socio-economic development and that great achievements have been recorded in the work of building and creating the new society. These represent a very large turning point in the history of the world. Some 70 years after the start of the new age, that is, since the great October Revolution, the world has undergone very large and profound changes. This situation has raised countless new problems that did not exist in the time of Marx, problems which not even Lenin experienced. New things and new social realities in the world demand, of course, that the communist parties do everything they can to bring their perceptions abreast of the times, that they find a path and ways to approach and conquer the new. It is normal to grope about, to search and experiment, to try one measure or form after another, to be successful and also to fail. As we know, at their most recent, historic congresses, practically all communist and worker parties acknowledged their backwardness, to one degree or another, in the field of theory and admitted to being dogmatic and simplifying Marxist-Leninist doctrine, as a result of which more than a few formulas fell out of touch with life and failed to withstand the test of time. The Political Report at the 27th Congress of the CPSU faced the issue squarely: "The specific economic and political circumstances under which we are living and the special period in history which Soviet society and the entire world are experiencing demand that the party, that each communist be creative, adopt a new approach and go beyond the framework of familiar concepts that have become outmoded." The fact that socialism dares to openly admit to shortcomings—when the socialist system has experienced a relatively long period of development and recorded real achievements worthy of pride—proves that Marxism-Leninism is regaining its inherent

vitality and also means that raising the issues of change, of restructuring, of thinking in a new way is a step forward for Marxism-Leninism. It proves that socialism dares to squarely face the truth, even though it is sometimes painful, that socialism does not evade or conceal the truth and is not afraid that the enemy might distort the truth. Only Marxism-Leninism gives communists the courage to criticize themselves and the ability to grow and mature, primarily through forthright and serious struggle against their own shortcomings and mistakes. In the space of the past 2 years, many socialist countries have truly withstood, have promptly and effectively adapted to the turning point that is restructuring and renovation. On the basis of analyzing the objective reality that has formed, new contradictions and unresolved problems, analyzing the comparison of forces between the two world systems, the CPSU and a number of other fraternal parties formulated and adopted the strategy of accelerating the socio-economic development of each country and the entire community to create powerful potentials which guarantee that socialism advances to decisive victory in the historic competition with imperialism, to which socialism must not be inferior when the 21st century arrives.

In the final analysis, the new thinking is nothing more than closeness between theory and practice, thus correcting a shortcoming which has existed for many years, the gap between theory and practice, so that theory is abreast of the most recent changes in life and is in line with objective laws, thus making it possible to reach precise political-practical conclusions. In this process, of course, it is unavoidable that many differing opinions will be expressed. Nevertheless, consciously searching for ways and making creative efforts to apply Marxism-Leninism, as effectively as possible, under the conditions of the present age and the circumstances of each country with a full sense of responsibility to one's nation, to the destiny of socialism in the new stage of history and to the fate of mankind continues to be the common purpose that unites the communists of all countries. In this sense, can we not talk about a new stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism? Of course, the creation of theory and the adoption of new thinking can only be successful when they are fully based in science, reflect an objective and thorough analysis of the situation and reflect bold theoretical thinking carried out with a full sense of responsibility, with solid abilities, an alert mind and a cautious approach to and careful consideration of immediate as well as long-range tasks to insure that they are consistent with actual capabilities.

The entirety of this truth sternly refutes the groundless and cunning bourgeois arguments which relegate the value of the thinking of Marx to the time of Marx, thwarts each attempt to erect a wall between Marx and Lenin, between Marxism and Leninism and refutes the fabrication of the so called "crisis," "obsolescence" and unsuitability of Marxism-Leninism under current conditions. These, in fact, are "daydreams." Everyone who has studied Lenin can see that the theoretical premise

from which Lenin never once strayed was the thinking of Marx. As everyone knows, with his genius for theory and unique abilities, Lenin developed and brought the doctrine of Marx to a new pinnacle in the age of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. In the body of Lenin's thoughts, we easily see that the soul, the red thread running through his thinking was Marxism. Even the new conclusions which Lenin added to the heritage of Marx were logical products of Marxist methodology. As a result, Marxism became Marxism-Leninism.

Whereas the realities of history have confirmed the above, they have, at the same time, also provided us with more than a few lessons in the opposite. In the time of Marx, all individuals and movements that went against or did not correctly adopt the thinking of Marx fell into a crisis of theory and played no significant role in history. After Marx and Engels died, countless thinkers and theorists failed to become genuine revolutionaries because, in the final analysis, they did not grasp the essence, the living soul of Marxism and failed to see the vitality of Marxism under the new circumstances of history. With the advance of history, more and more new factors have emerged compared to when Marx was alive and it has become easier to adopt attitudes which differ from Marxism. Besides the mainstream, that is, remaining loyal to and creatively developing our time-tested Marxism-Leninism, there have been tides of opportunism, revisionism and dogmatism of all shades which have abandoned the essence, the living soul and the scientific and revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. Despite these deviations and overcoming all the distortions attempted by the enemy, ever-victorious Marxism-Leninism has continued to live and has become richer and more dynamic with each passing day in the practical and theoretical activities of the Marxist-Leninist parties.

Marxism-Leninism was adopted and brought to Vietnam by Ho Chi Minh at a time when Vietnamese patriots were experiencing a crisis of ideology and theory in their search for the path of national salvation. Beginning with patriotism and as a result of his unparalleled political acumen and strong desire to liberate the nation, liberate the class, he found Marxism-Leninism and immediately recognized it as a "magic bag," as the most genuine, the most sound, the most revolutionary doctrine, as "food and water" to a "thirsty traveler," as the "radiant sun" illuminating the path to national salvation, to the salvation of the people, the path of our nation to socialism. Founded and forged by President Ho Chi Minh, our party, as soon as it came into existence, correctly grasped the revolutionary and scientific essence of Marxism-Leninism. As a result, throughout the people's national, democratic revolution as well as during the period of simultaneously performing the two strategic tasks, the party set forth a correct and highly creative revolutionary line and method and led the people in driving off the imperialists and achieving independence, freedom and reunification of the country. It can be said that the theoretical thinking of our party concerning the

national, democratic revolution and the science and art of providing strategic and tactical guidance in the war reached the level of genuine theoretical thinking. These important achievements in theoretical thinking had their origins in the correct adoption of the spiritual essence of Marxism-Leninism and were the result of skillfully combining the study of the broad experiences of the revolutionary movements of other countries with a creative sense of independence and a high spirit of responsibility to the future of the nation, to the destiny of the people and the revolutionary movement of the world. To map out the line on the socialist revolution for the North during the years from 1954 to 1975 and set forth, only 1 year after the reunification of the country, the general line on the socialist revolution for the entire country—virtually all aspects of which were confirmed by the 6th Congress as being correct—our party made major efforts in the field of theoretical thinking on the basis of the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism.

However, when we truly turned our hands to the socialist revolution and came face to face with difficulties—difficulties which, for one reason or another, had been partly concealed for a time—we clearly saw the limitations in what we had long thought, saw that the level of our theory on socialism, particularly socialism under the conditions of Vietnam, was still exceedingly simple, abstract and divorced from practice and saw that more than a few of our concepts were products of voluntarism. In our long-held understanding of socialism, more than a few of our concepts were backward and outmoded—backward in terms of both perception and our method of thinking, backward compared to the demands of practice, to the theoretical achievements of world socialism, to the demands that are part of the creative nature of Marxism-Leninism. For this reason, the 6th Congress of the Party clearly affirmed the line on renovating all aspects of the activities of the party, beginning by adopting new thinking and changing our perceptions to be consistent with reality and with laws and, on this basis, adopting correct positions and determining appropriate steps and measures to be taken with the aims of developing the potentials of the country better, tapping the creativity of the masses and making full use of international cooperation, thereby bringing the country beyond its difficulties and successfully performing the tasks set forth by the congress.

Adopting new thinking, which mainly entails adopting new theoretical thinking concerning socialism and Vietnam's path to socialism, is an arduous and difficult process and requires that our efforts be correctly oriented. It must always be remembered that creative Marxism-Leninism is the source and the base of all renovation, most importantly of the adoption of new thinking. "To adopt new thinking—as the Political Report at the 6th Congress confirmed—the party must grasp the revolutionary and scientific essence of Marxism-Leninism, carry on the valuable heritage in revolutionary ideology and theory of President Ho Chi Minh, of Le Duan and the other leaders of the party and apply

the new and profound theoretical achievements and experiences of the fraternal parties as well as scientific knowledge of our times."⁶ Intensifying theoretical research; seriously re-evaluating in specific detail the current state of our thinking; finding the objective and subjective causes of our backwardness in theoretical thinking; conducting a systematic review of the experiences gained in socialist construction in past years; supplementing and developing upon the achievements that have been recorded; being determined to rid ourselves of outmoded and wrong concepts; intensifying debate and discussion on the basis of broadening the practice of democracy and supplying accurate and full information; closely tying the adoption of new thinking to self-criticism and criticism, to the adoption of a new style and renovation within the field of organizational and cadre work; and cultivating higher revolutionary qualities and ethics—these are the most important guarantees that our party will reach a turning point and move ahead in its new perceptions and thinking concerning socialism and the socialist revolution under the conditions of Vietnam, thereby insuring that our party continues to be worthy of being a party of creative Marxism-Leninism in the very difficult and challenging undertaking of today.

Footnotes

1. K. Marx and F. Engels: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1984, Volume VI, p 808.
2. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981, Volume 31, pp 162-163.
3. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, Volume 18, pp 402-403.
4. K. Marx and F. Engels: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1984, Volume VI, p 712.
5. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, Volume 25, p 349.
6. The Proceedings of the 6th Congress, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1987, p 125.

Cultivating Higher Revolutionary Ethics in the Example of the Great Uncle Ho

42100010d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 16-21

[Article by Dang Xuan Ky, deputy director of the Marx-Lenin Institute, on the occasion of the 98th anniversary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh]

[Text] Today, more than ever before, the slogan "live, fight, work and study in the example of the great Uncle Ho" must be the slogan of action of the entire party, of each person. This slogan is always the political-ideological theme that gives direction to the thoughts and actions of each person.

To follow the example of Uncle Ho, we must live a life of ideals, learn for the sake of our ideals and work and fight to achieve these ideals. Our ideals are the independence of the fatherland, the freedom of the nation, the happiness of the people. These are also the ideals of socialism and communism. Uncle Ho said: "I have only one desire, one last desire, and that is for our country to be totally independent, our people to be totally free and for each of our countrymen to be well fed, well clothed and educated."¹ These ideals must become the passion, the desire and the ultimate aspiration of each cadre and party member. Being loyal to these lofty ideals is also being loyal to the revolutionary undertaking of the party and people. As Uncle Ho taught, it is the key element of the revolutionary ethics of the cadre and party member.

We can never say too much about ideals because the petty and ordinary things of everyday life cause us to not pay attention to the greatness and beauty of ideals. And, no matter how much we struggle for ideals, it is never enough because the basic, long-range goals of the revolution can only be achieved through sweat and blood, through the soul and intellect of one generation after another. Therefore, steadfastly adhering to ideals, cultivating ideals and being determined to implement ideals on the basis of the stand of the party are a job to which no cadre or party member can ever give light attention.

Not being inspired by ideals, even drifting far from ideals, as some cadres and party members have done in recent years have caused them to degenerate, become deviant, backward and corrupt and no longer stand their ground at their combat position. Although painful, we must also say that these persons have betrayed the many persons who died for their ideals, betrayed the profound gratitude of Uncle Ho and the party and trampled upon the age-old dream of our nation and progressive mankind for a beautiful and perfect society.

Implementing ideals is a process of continuous struggle throughout the life of each cadre and party member, a struggle waged by many successive generations. Whereas we could not immediately achieve independence and freedom in the past, today, we cannot bring comfort and happiness to millions and millions of persons in just one step. Under the leadership of the party, our people won large victories in the struggle against each kind of imperialism and colonialism, both old and new, against every enemy aggressor. However, the problem of stabilizing and improving the standard of living continues to be a problem which torments and troubles our party and each of our cadres and party members. Two party congresses and many plenums of the Party Central Committee have focused on finding ways to solve this problem but we continue to face many complex difficulties. From this, it can be seen that struggling for ideals is an arduous and constant struggle, a struggle to advance from what we have to something better.

To steadfastly defend ideals, we must wage a determined struggle against the influences of petty bourgeois thinking, such as chasing after money, making high income

one's goal in life, placing personal interests above everything else, living a selfish life devoid of affection and being deceptive, all of which can turn honor and conscience into commodities to be sold or traded away.

To implement ideals, we must combat every manifestation of "leftist" and rightist bourgeois thinking, such as being subjective and impetuous, practicing voluntarism, wanting to skip stages and disregarding laws and reality or being conservative and stagnant, stubbornly clinging to outdated perceptions and old experiences, not daring to adopt a new approach and not being willing to adopt a new approach. We must combat instability and vacillation in the face of difficulties, shaken confidence and the problems of forgetting the interests of the whole because of local interests, forgetting the long-range because of the immediate and forgetting the ultimate, lofty goal because of the temporary.

We must actively cultivate the revolutionary-offensive thinking of our party and Uncle Ho, bravely face each challenge, overcome each difficulty and move steadily ahead.

To follow the example of Uncle Ho, our cadres and party members must constantly cultivate and heighten their sense of responsibility in order to make their contribution to the achievement of the ideals of Uncle Ho and the party. In the activities of the party, the position of each person differs. Consequently, the tasks assigned within each sector, level and collective also differ but the sense of responsibility must be the same. This is the spirit of devotion and dedication to revolutionary work. It is wholeheartedly contributing the full measure of one's will, energies and capabilities to the common cause with the highest possible productivity, quality and efficiency.

In the spirit of Uncle Ho, the difference between noble and vile, between deserving respect or deserving contempt does not depend upon whether the position of a job is high or low, but upon whether or not responsibilities are fulfilled. We must never forget Uncle Ho's teaching: "Any comrade who works in a well-run cooperative is a hero. A minister who does not fulfill his responsibilities is a bum."² This spirit was also referred to by Uncle Ho when comparing a president of a country and a common servant.

We continue to say that we must assign clearly defined tasks within each collective and leadership level. This means that we must clearly define the personal responsibility of each person regarding each task and job. This must be done well so that someone is accountable for every job, in order to avoid or correct negligence or, when achievements are recorded, avoid many persons wanting to take credit for themselves but are ready to "give" mistakes and failures to others, to the collective. Lenin once analyzed the following situation: when bureaucracy infiltrates the apparatus of the party and

state, all you see is persons bustling about looking busy but nothing gets accomplished and it is difficult to find anyone who is at fault. This observation is very applicable to us today.

The issue of personal accountability is one that must be given special attention in the present situation. From the principles of collective leadership and personal accountability, we know that the collective of a leadership level can only complete its task when each member of this collective fulfills his personal responsibility. And, it goes without saying that the higher a person's position is and the greater his authority is, the heavier his personal responsibility is. We cannot hold everyone equally responsible at a time when we are very clearly defining the scope of public positions and authority.

The sense of responsibility demands that cadres and party members assume responsibility and that they be held accountable. Responsibility is always closely tied to one's position. Each position demands a certain level of responsibility. We cannot accept a position but not accept the responsibility that goes along with it, as we still see some cadres and party members doing, particularly some who hold public positions and authority.

Assuming responsibility does not mean doing that which is easy while avoid the difficult. Once a job has been accepted, one must be determined to find every way to complete it. Daring to be held accountable is daring to acknowledge all that one has done and has not done, one's successes as well as one's failures in the spirit of courageously being forthright to the party and the people, to the upper level and the lower level, to leaders and the masses, to the collective and one's own title as party member. Uncle Ho criticized cadres and party members who only felt that they were accountable to their superiors, to leaders, to the party and government, in general, not to subordinates or the masses. Such is only one-half of accountability. In the spirit of Uncle Ho, being responsible to the masses is, in the final analysis, the highest responsibility of the cadre and party member because the party and government are also accountable to the people. It cannot be otherwise.

The spirit of daring to be held accountable demands that each person be honest with the party and the masses. We must be honest in our words and deeds, must resolutely defend that which is right and bravely struggle against that which is wrong. We must dare to engage in serious self-criticism when we commit shortcomings and mistakes. The 6th Congress raised the issue of squarely facing the truth, correctly evaluating the truth and speaking the truth, which mean being honest in all the many activities of the party as well as with regard to heightening the qualities of each cadre and party member. We know that only an honest attitude can create confidence in others, in the masses. Because, deception, as Lenin said, leads us to an ethical death and will, sooner or later, surely lead to political death.

To follow the example of Uncle Ho, we must make every effort to learn his mass view and his view on serving the people. Our socialist, communist ideals also stem from this basic issue.

Uncle Ho said: "Throughout my entire life, I have had but one goal, to struggle for the interests of the fatherland and the happiness of the people"... "If the country is independent but the people do not enjoy happiness and freedom, this independence is worth nothing."³ With his mass view and his view on serving the people, Uncle Ho taught us the thinking "of the people, by the people and for the people, the people are the masters." The 6th Congress of the Party summarized the lesson in "making the people the base" and raised the matter of "the people knowing, the people discussing, the people acting, the people inspecting," once again confirming this basic view held by Uncle Ho and our party throughout the past several decades. This view originates in the precious traditions of our forefathers in the cause of building and defending the country. It, combined with the view of Marxism-Leninism that "the revolution is the undertaking of the masses," has created an invincible strength and lead our country's revolution to victory after victory.

"The party leads" and "the state manages" means that they propagandize, educate and organize the people so that the people are the masters of their undertaking, so that the people themselves carry out this undertaking. Leadership and management do not mean taking the place of or doing a favor for the people. Serving the class, serving the people are the highest objective and purpose of each activity of the party. Therefore, Uncle Ho once advised us: "The party must be the leader and the truly loyal servant of the people." Regrettably, however, more than a few cadres and party members only remembered the part about being the leader and forgot the advice about being the servant of the people. This made it necessary for Uncle Ho to subsequently say: "Leadership is being the servant of the people." Anticipating that some cadres and party members would study but not remember, would speak but not act, would only want to be a leader by standing above and teaching others, he reminded them: "Being a cadre means being the loyal servant of the people throughout one's life. These abc's have not been memorized by everyone and must be studied, studied throughout one's life to be learned."⁴ At present, all of us must relearn this elementary and very basic matter, learn it so that we can act and can allow the people to be the inspectors, the evaluators.

In keeping with Uncle Ho's view on serving the people, the party must concern itself with the interests of the people, must concern itself not only with matters of major importance, but even with the fish sauce and salt the people need each day. The party would be at fault were it to allow the people to be hungry, to be cold, to not have enough medicine when they are ill, to not be able to receive an education and to live under unstable material and spiritual conditions, conditions which are not being gradually improved.

A very large part of the responsibility for the difficulties encountered in everyday life in recent years lies with the party. Regrettably, in this situation, some cadres and party members have only concerned themselves with furthering their interests and the interests of their families and have been indifferent toward the difficulties and shortages of the masses. They do not concern themselves with looking, from the position of which they are in charge, for every way to satisfactorily resolve for the masses and bring to the attention of the party problems in need of solution.

The view on serving the people demands that cadres and party members maintain close contact with the people, learn from the people, listen to the people's opinions and aspirations and respect and trust the people. Uncle Ho often taught us that only when we love and trust the people will they love and trust us, only when we respect the people will they respect us, that we should never think that "they will love and respect us if we simply write the word communist on our foreheads." Power does not win people's trust, love and respect, and only causes them to feel fear. The people only feel trust, love and respect when they see that cadres and party members are always "one of them," not strangers. The strength of the party is not created only by the party, but lies mainly in the flesh and blood ties between the party and the masses, through which the party is strengthened and built by the people.

We cannot allow the situation to continue to occur at many places and times in which some cadres and party members, particularly persons who hold public positions and authority, are bureaucratic and arrogant toward the masses, suppress and intimidate the masses and seriously violate their right to be the masters, sometimes in a gross and very brazen fashion. Once revolutionary cadres, they have become "revolutionary officials!" They have turned democracy into "officialdom," something which Uncle Ho harshly criticized on many different occasions.

Bureaucracy is truly a serious phenomenon within the apparatus of the party and state, is something to which a considerable number of cadres and party members have fallen victim. It stems from the corrupt thinking of the exploiting classes, mainly the vestiges of feudal thinking, such as the cast concept, paternalism, respect for orders and special rights and privileges. Once these things "reign," behavior become outrageous. We must resolutely combat these phenomena.

When the people speak, there must be someone to listen. When the people have a complaint, there must be a place where their complaint is heard. The aspirations voiced by the people must be examined. Their grievances must be resolved. We must quickly amend necessary policies, principles, procedures and regulations to further expand the system of socialist democracy and truly make the people the masters within our society. In the example of

Uncle Ho, cadres and party members must constantly cultivate qualities of diligence, frugality, honesty and integrity and be just, impartial, modest and simple in their everyday lives, in each social relationship. To live and work, everyone has certain material and spiritual needs that they must meet for themselves and their families. However, if we allow reasonable requests to become unreasonable demands and genuine material needs to become excessive desires, to become no longer the means, but the goal, the ambition of life, man degenerates and becomes deviant and corrupt very rapidly. There are limits in life which, if we exceed them, the good becomes the bad, a strength becomes a weakness, an achievement becomes a crime. Herein lies the cause of the downward slide of more than a few cadres and party members.

Uncle Ho often reminded us that everyone wants to eat well and dress well but that there is a right time for everything. If many persons around us are still experiencing shortages and we are only thinking about what we can get for ourselves, we are certainly no longer worthy of being the leader, the servant of the people. The revolution demands that cadres and party members not "eat grass before and wade across the water behind" the people, but that they "be concerned about problems before and enjoy the fruits of their efforts" after the people. Therefore, Uncle Ho counseled cadres and party members that they should have few material desires. If they desire anything, it must be "to learn, to work, to make progress." We cannot allow petty, ordinary desires to pull us down. We must, as Uncle Ho taught, cultivate wholesome, legitimate desires. These are desires which always lead man toward great and beautiful things so that he constantly transforms and perfects himself and contributes more to the party, to the people.

Over the past 10 years, such negative phenomena as embezzlement, bribery, theft, crimes against socialist property, waste of public property, abusing one's position and authority to create special rights and privileges for oneself, using loopholes in economic management to conspire, speculate, engage in black marketing and buy up goods and living a life of luxury and decadence have become constantly spreading ills within the corps of cadres, party members and state personnel and within the life of society, in general. These ills have caused very large financial losses to the state and collectives, eroded revolutionary ethical values, reduced confidence in the party and the system and corrupted many persons. Numerous cadres and party members, including some who hold important positions and have been engaged in revolutionary activities for many years, have degenerated, become deviant, tarnished the noble title of party member and harmed the prestige and reputation of the party. From this, we see that cultivating revolutionary ethics is a lifelong task. No one can ever say that they have done enough. As Uncle Ho reminded us, if they are complacent, satisfied with what they have achieved and do not routinely cultivate and forge good qualities, persons who were once good might later become bad, persons who once contributed might

subsequently commit a crime. Cultivating revolutionary ethics is similar to "polishing a pearl to make it shine more, refining gold to make it purer." Therefore, we must polish, must refine revolutionary ethics in a constant and more active manner.

From this, we also see that the struggle against negative phenomena is a sharp and complex revolutionary struggle. The struggle to prevent, reduce and gradually wipe out negative phenomena, in all strata of society, beginning among cadres and party members, is clearly a very pressing demand of the revolution, of the people.

The campaign to purify the party and the state apparatus and make social relations wholesome which was launched by the Political Bureau and is now being carried out by the entire party is aimed at meeting this pressing demand. This campaign demands high determination by the entire party and the widespread and strong support of the people. Appropriate but resolute and effective educational, administrative, economic, organizational and inspection measures must be taken in order to carry out this campaign in an urgent, positive and thorough manner, not a half way or lax fashion, with fairness toward everyone so that each party member is equal in the eyes of party discipline and each citizen is equal in the eyes of the laws of the state.

The significance of this campaign is to encourage each of us to make every effort to learn so that we can put into practice the teachings of Uncle Ho, follow his example and actively struggle to further improve our revolutionary ethics so that the "foundation" of the cadre and party member becomes increasingly solid and the source of life of the cadre and party member is never exhausted.

The matters of improving the revolutionary ethics of cadres and party members and purifying the party and the apparatus of the state are closely tied to the practical activities being conducted by the entire party with the aim of turning the resolution of the 6th Party Congress and the resolutions of the Party Central Committee into reality, with the immediate aims being to resolve the pressing problems in distribution and circulation and revamping the management of the economy and society. This is the best and the only way to make the party pure, solid and strong, to forge the corps of cadres and party members in the manner set forth by Marxism-Leninism: the transformation of man will occur along with the transformation of circumstances, occur in the process of conducting practical activities to transform circumstances and being determined to struggle to enhance our revolutionary ethics, reverse the situation and continue to lead the country forward under the light of the thinking of the great President Ho Chi Minh.

Footnotes

1. Ho Chi Minh: "The Mass View," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974, p 33.

2. Ho Chi Minh: "Revolutionary Ethics," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1976, p 116.

3. Ibid., p 117.

4. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Volume 2, p 488.

Some Thoughts on Socialism and the Scientific-Technological Revolution in Vietnam 42100010e Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 22-28

[Presentation by Ha Xuan Truong, editor-in-chief of TAP CHI CONG SAN, at the Science Conference held in Berlin (22-24 March 1988)(See the article on page 76)]

[Text] Vietnam is at a very low level of development in many fields, especially science and technology, compared to the other CEMA member countries. As of 1987, Vietnam had about 42,000 cadres with a college or post-graduate education and 74,200 million middle level technical cadres (however, a significant number of these cadres are not being utilized). Vietnam has 282 technical research and development agencies. However, investments in them have not been appropriate and inefficiency and waste are widespread. The country has 93 colleges and academies which need to be replanned and strongly redeveloped along new lines. Heavy industry is still at a very low level of development and the majority of its labor is manual labor. The infrastructure of the economy is among the weakest in the world.

Our party and state have adopted positions and measures aimed at gradually correcting our economic backwardness and mistakes, with special attention to science-technology. The 4th Congress of the CPV, in 1976, considered the scientific-technological revolution to be the key. In practice, however, the correct resolution could not be implemented due to the lack of a socio-economic strategy that includes a strategy for building and developing science and technology on the basis of the country's actual situation. At the final session of the 6th Congress in December 1986, our party harshly criticized itself for the shortcomings in socio-economic leadership. As regards science and technology, our party stated: "With the world rapidly entering the new stage of the scientific-technological revolution and in view of our country's actual situation, the pressing need to truly make science and technology a major moving force accelerating the process of the country's socio-economic development is even clearer."

The science-technology policy set forth by the 6th Congress of our party can be summarized in the following several points:

1. Coordinating scientific-technical guidelines with the targets and guidelines in socio-economic development.

2. Selecting, on the basis of the country's capabilities and potentials (natural resources, population, cultural, social and so forth), a number of areas in the modern sciences and technology to develop while gradually developing leading areas of science and technology.

3. Reorganizing existing scientific and technical forces on the basis of the principle of closely tying science and technology to production and everyday life. The reorganization of scientific-technical forces must also be closely tied to the development of the new economic management mechanism.

4. Organically combining the social sciences, the natural sciences and the technical sciences.

5. Expanding and increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation in science and technology, must importantly with CEMA.

6. Giving the masses, through education, an understanding of the role and position of science-technology, widely popularizing scientific and technical knowledge and tapping the creativity in science and technology of each worker and each collective of workers. In the words of THONG NHAT Journal, we must "make science and technology part of the flesh and blood of each citizen." In the words of Vietnam: we must launch a movement among the masses to become involved in science and technology.

I would like to bring to your attention the recent efforts made by Vietnam in its cooperation to implement the comprehensive program in scientific-technical advances with CEMA and apply the wholehearted assistance provided by the fraternal socialist countries, most importantly the scientific and technical assistance provided by the Soviet Union to Vietnam (along with Cuba and Mongolia) in keeping with the decisions of the 42nd session (1986) and the 43rd session (1987) of CEMA.

Although our level of development is still very low and we are wrestling with many large socio-economic problems, our party maintains that participating in CEMA's comprehensive program in scientific-technical advances is a matter of very important and practical significance in the socio-economic development of Vietnam and will help Vietnam reduce the gap between its level of development and that of the fraternal countries. The problem facing Vietnam is that it must correctly set targets and requirements in the implementation of this campaign which will enable us to develop the potentials and strengths of a tropical country whose labor force has a tradition of being diligent and intelligent while overcoming traditional weaknesses and the weaknesses arising in the process of socialist industrialization and avoiding the mistakes of the countries that have gone before us.

Vietnam is participating in many projects in biotechnology with the aims of protecting and efficiently developing its tropical natural resources. In biotechnology, Vietnamese scientists have recorded encouraging results in the hybridizing of plants and the crossbreeding of livestock as well as in farming techniques. Although our level of development and conditions are still very limited, our country also has much interest in the development of electronics and computer science. Through joint businesses, we have begun to produce a number of products that have won high praise from foreign customers. With its sources of labor and skills, Vietnam can participate in cooperation in researching, designing, producing and assembling some electronic components and pieces of equipment and modern computers. Although not rich, Vietnam's natural resources are diverse. Consequently, Vietnam can participate in many projects in new materials. In automation and the use of nuclear technology, Vietnam is also participating in the research and production of components and parts for automated systems and participating in a number of projects involving the development of atomic power. It has also begun research into high temperature super conducting materials. Vietnam is very moved by the preferential terms extended to it, along with Cuba and Mongolia, by the fraternal countries, thus enabling us to move directly into some of the most advanced fields of science and technology in the world today.

Through this brief report, it is my hope that you can visualize the situation and needs of our country, that you have a clearer understanding of the importance of the assistance provided by those socialist countries that are an entire stage of development ahead of us under peaceful conditions to the socialist revolution of a country such as Vietnam.

The report by M.S. Gorbachev, the speech by Nguyen Van Linh, general secretary of the CPV Central Committee and the speeches of many leaders of the communist and worker parties of the world in Moscow on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the great October Revolution confirmed the strong vitality of socialism in the Soviet Union and throughout the world. No system can compare with real socialism from the standpoint of its rate of development, its social and human superiority. The mistakes, stagnation and negative phenomena in each socialist country now and over the long range, regardless of by how much they are blown out of proportion in the West and by elements who are dissatisfied and have lost all confidence, cannot overshadow the light of the enormous achievements recorded by socialism over the past two-thirds of the 20th century.

However, it is also very clear that, from the perspective of socialism, by one method or another and sooner or later, every socialist country will come to recognize the enormous changes in the world, the turning point that the world has reached today. The superiority of an economy is manifested in productivity and efficiency.

The superiority of a society is manifested in fully satisfying the material and spiritual needs of each person and all society. These instructions of Marx and Lenin further indicate the pressing need for the scientific-technological revolution in the renovation of socialism.

The Vietnamese have lived under old style colonialism and neo-colonialism. Nguyen Ai Quoc—that is, President Ho—the founder of the Indochinese Communist Party and, later, the Communist Party of Vietnam, travelled throughout the world and lived for many years in the glittering civilization of capitalism but chose the path of Lenin, not the capitalist path. Socialism is the ideal, is the bone and marrow of Vietnam. But, in contrast to the Soviet Union and many other socialist countries in which the base of socialism has been completely constructed, thus guaranteeing the total and thorough victory of socialism, Vietnam is in the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism. The economy still consists of many different segments. Small-scale production is widespread. A small bourgeoisie still exists. In addition, imperialist countries and reactionary forces have laid economic siege to our country and been conducting wide ranging acts of sabotage, which include starting military conflicts. The struggle to resolve the question "who triumphs over whom" is taking place everyday in our country, in all fields.

Some 12 years after embarking on the socialist revolution, Vietnam now faces a much more complex and even much more difficult challenge to its survival than the challenge it faced in the two revolutionary wars against the leading imperialist powers of the world. The issue of the survival of Vietnam today rests with whether socialist construction is a success or failure, whether the socialist revolution is carried out rapidly or slowly compared to the developing world situation, particularly compared to the development of the countries within the region. The image of a Vietnam fighting for national independence and freedom for the fatherland is gradually receding into history and giving way to the image of a poor, backward Vietnam, a Vietnam which, despite all difficulties, is determined to advance directly to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. Imperialism and the international reactionary powers are hostile toward Vietnam primarily because Vietnam is determined to follow the socialist path, because Vietnam practices full-scale cooperation with the Soviet Union and the community of socialist countries.

Although we are determined to follow the socialist path, will we indeed achieve socialism? This question is not merely a matter of revolutionary will and spirit, but also a matter of knowledge, cultural standards and our level of organization and management of the economy and society. Against the background of Russia in the early 1920's, Lenin said: "In our struggle, it must be remembered that communists must think maturely. They speak very skillfully about the revolutionary struggle, about the situation surrounding this struggle throughout the world. But, to free ourselves from shortages, from extreme

poverty, we must think, must be educated, must have order to the way we do things."¹ This thinking is very important to we Vietnamese communists today. The keys to being educated are science and technology. The essence of "order" is the ability to manage and social discipline. The most important question facing Vietnam is: what is the shortest path to acquiring advanced science and technology and applying them in production and the organization of social life? Does such a path exist and can a country of small-scale, backward production advance to socialism without experiencing the stage of capitalist development? These two questions relate to the same issue: building socialism in a country of small-scale, backward production, a country suppressed for many years under the colonialist system and ravaged by war. Our party has answered these two questions in the affirmative at a time when the average standard of living of our people is among the lowest in the world.

We maintain that although our levels of development and conditions differ, it is clear that the issue facing those countries which have completed the construction of the base of socialism as well as those countries which are now laying the first bricks for this base is the same: we all must rapidly acquire the latest achievements of the world scientific and technological revolution. I entirely agree with the Soviet commentator Alexander Bo-vin [Vietnamese phonetics] when writing about restructuring and socialism in the Soviet Union: "If not socialism, but capitalism, exploits the new wave of the scientific and technological revolution, the comparison of forces in the world will change in the favor of capitalism. This will lead to a tragedy for the world: war and the destruction of world civilization." Vietnam absolutely must take part in the modern scientific-technological revolution. This is the shortest path to socialism for countries such as Vietnam. Of course, "short" is not just a few decades. China, with the largest population in the world, has set for itself the target of travelling this path in one century. Vietnam is still pondering its path. However, we reject the view that countries which have not experienced industrialization should only implement scientific-technical improvements as they came about in the industrial revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Were we to adopt this view, it would be more than two centuries before Vietnam reached the level of the developed industrial countries today, that is, Vietnam would find itself outside the modern civilized world. The direction being taken by Vietnam is straight toward modern science and technology. Of course, we must proceed gradually and by means of appropriate measures. Our party has had to pay a high price for decades of voluntarism, dogmatism and copying what others have done. Our Party Central Committee is drafting the Platform on the Socialist Revolution in the Period of Transition in Vietnam and Socio-Economic Strategy for the Year 2005, which will be the focal point of the agenda of the 7th Party Congress. Immediate targets must be consistent with long-range targets. Our efforts to solve the immediate problems in everyday life must not cause us to ignore basic goals.

The CPV considers the scientific-technological revolution to be a part of the socialist revolution, one closely tied to the two other revolutions, the production relations revolution and the ideological and cultural revolution. The scientific-technological revolution is a force stimulating the advance of society for the happiness of man, for the full development of man. The most important factor is the human factor. The lesson of national tradition of "make the people the base" was raised to a new level in the revolutionary activities that brought the national revolution and the two wars of resistance to brilliant victory. For the past 10 years, as we basked in the glory of victory, this lesson was given light attention, even forgotten at some times and places. It came to the fore again at our party's 6th Congress. It can be said that this has reinvigorated the democratic atmosphere of society. We mention this to express our party's total support for the restructuring campaign of the CPSU and many other fraternal parties. The lesson of democracy is also the most important lesson of our party. If each Vietnamese was not ready to die for the fatherland, there would be no Vietnam today. If the various stratum and circles of the Vietnamese were not mobilized, if their consciousness of the nation and socialism (even though our concept of socialism back then was very vague) were not heightened, Vietnam could not have won victory over millions of U.S.-puppet troops armed to the teeth and there would not be the image of unarmed, female Vietnamese guerrillas capturing U.S. pilots. As a result of tapping the creativity and bravery of the entire nation, a Vietnam in which electricity had not yet been introduced in the countryside and the majority of field work was still done by the draft power of buffalo and cattle, defeated the United States with its modern science and technology. Vietnam lives in the same age as the Soviet Union, the socialist community and a progressive mankind conscious of its noble responsibility. The victory of Vietnam went beyond the category of a national revolution and into the sphere of the socialist revolution. The victory of Vietnam represented a challenge to capitalism from socialism.

Today, in our country, where we face towering difficulties, some persons have lost confidence in socialism and some are worried, are waiting and asking themselves, can socialism be achieved? Among those who have lost confidence are many persons who were supported by U.S. aid for decades and dejectedly left the fatherland with resentment of socialism (I am not referring here to those who feel class hatred and are "anti-communist" extremists). However, the majority of Vietnamese and the vast majority of Vietnamese communists still retain the confidence to struggle for the line set forth by the CPV and President Ho Chi Minh. Imperialism, headed by the U.S. imperialists, together with other reactionary forces seek to change the image of the Vietnam which triumphed over them under the banners of patriotism and socialism. Through cunning, even vile, tactics they have smeared Vietnam's reputation and distorted the new style international relations among Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, between Vietnam and the Soviet Union

and between Vietnam and the other fraternal socialist countries. They have succeeded in creating certain misunderstandings of Vietnam among some persons in the world. However, it must be said that they cannot shake the confidence of the working class and people of Vietnam in socialism.

The scientific-technological revolution itself is a world process, one which is not restricted by national borders, one which stimulates the process of internationalizing the various fields of life and the activities of man. Marxism-Leninism recognizes the very important, even decisive, role of science and technology in certain fields and at certain points in time but does not place sole emphasis upon the role of science and technology. Marxist science sees a relationship between socio-economic issues and scientific-technological advances: man makes science-technology and science-technology serve man. Production relations which impede the advancement of science and technology are outmoded production relations. The development of science and technology is the most eloquent proof of the superiority of a mode of production. With two systems, socialism and capitalism, still existing, political, economic, cultural and social struggles surrounding the new stage of the scientific-technological revolution are sure to occur.

In Vietnam, the largest shortcomings of our party have been the light attention it has given to social policy, to the role and potentials of the people of Vietnam and allowing the mechanism based on bureaucracy and state subsidies to exist for far too long. This has led to economic difficulties, to a decline in ethics, in social order. The tendency to worship the West has multiplied the difficulties associated with living conditions, cast socialist ideals to the side and relegated to a position of secondary importance efforts to establish the socialist way of life and mold socialists. In my opinion, it can be said without exaggeration that the greatest achievements of the Vietnamese revolution over the past half century were that while achieving national independence and the reunification of the country, we molded a Vietnamese who is courageous, who makes sacrifices for everyone and established a simple, diligent and frugal way of life. But these characteristics disappeared very quickly before the new virtues could be established. One glaring reality is that, in the countries of the West, youths have taken to the streets, but not because they lack food, clothing or schools. In recent years, the economy of South Korea has developed strongly and its level of scientific and technological development is moving toward the point where South Korea will be able to compete with Japan. But in South Korea, youths and students have continuously been waging struggles for democracy and civil rights, struggles no less bitter than those in South Africa. The essence of socialism is democracy for everyone and emphasis upon the human factor. Regardless of its level of economic development, any socialist country which lacks these two factors cannot say that it is socialist. For this reason, the people and the Communist Party of Vietnam have very quickly responded to the influence of

the line of the Soviet Union on broadening democracy and practicing openness and to the policies on economic and scientific-technical cooperation with the Soviet Union and the fraternal countries.

In 1989, France will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French bourgeois revolution. The French president and prime minister have selected the politician Michael Ba-or-in [Vietnamese phonetics] to head this celebration. He has made the following comparison: "The opposite of the laissez-faire system, which neglects the social in the name of economics, is socialism, which carries with it splendid social aspirations but is trapped in slow economic development and burdened by the heavy weight of the state apparatus. It has come time for the laissez-faire system to serve man." Can the capitalist system do what socialism has been and is doing. Will the capitalist sharks and the multi-national monopolies be willing to use science and technology, use the new achievements of science and technology to serve man? It is our hope that they will and return to the dawn of the bourgeois revolution in 1789 and its slogan "liberty, equality and fraternity."

And we? The people of Vietnam and the communists of Vietnam hope and are confident that the Soviet Union, the GDR, the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia and the other fraternal countries, in view of their level of development, will display the superior nature of socialism as fully as possible by strongly stimulating the scientific-technological revolution and rapidly conquering the pinnacles of world science and technology. Socialist civilization will surely confirm the vanguard position of socialism.

Footnote

1. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Volume 45, p 124.

Renovating Higher and Vocational Education

42100010f Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 29-33

[Article by Tran Hong Quan, minister of higher and vocational education]

[Text] Under the leadership of the party, our country's college and vocational education system has recorded very large achievements over the past several decades. We have established a unified, nationwide system of college and vocational education consisting of 95 colleges and academies, nearly 300 vocational middle schools, nearly 300 trade schools and more than 200 precinct, district and basic unit trade training centers. This system is virtually able to meet the country's needs for cadres and specialized workers. It has trained about 400,000 college educated cadres, 700,000 cadres who have a vocational middle school education and more than 1.5 million technical workers, who are now the backbone of the country's work force.

However, in the face of the rising needs of life and the times, in the face of our acute socio-economic difficulties, the college and vocational education sector, despite many efforts and a creative search for a way to move ahead, still exhibits many weaknesses. It is outmoded and not compatible with new requirements. The scale of training has been steadily shrinking. The rate of training is not high enough to provide the necessary number of specialized cadres, manual workers and technical and professional personnel. The quality of training continues to decline and does not meet the needs of the country or keep pace with the advances of the times. The efficiency of training is very low. This corps has very little impact in life.

This situation is the consequence of adverse factors in many fields of a country which recently experienced several decades of war and an economy that has been weak for many years. It is the consequence of a management mechanism characterized by bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies, of not attaching importance to true efficiency and not creating a natural attraction, a pressing need to apply scientific and technical achievements in life. Consequently, we do not truly consider scientific and technical cadres to be a precious asset. It is the consequence of constraints imposed by conservative and backward views concerning education, views which are still deeply held. However, subjective causes related to the sector itself continue to be the main causes of this situation. Most importantly, these are the direct consequences of the weaknesses of the sector itself, the manifestations of which are: subject matter and training methods which are backward; a poorly developed material-technical base; very many difficulties related to living conditions; a detachment from reality; stagnation in management; and a decline in enthusiasm for teaching and learning.

In summary, the achievements are worthy of pride, but the weaknesses are troubling.

With the 6th Congress having opened the way with the views on renovation and having examined the education and training reform movements under way in many countries, particularly the fraternal socialist countries, our country's college and vocational sector has been and is searching for new directions, for new methods in light of the country's current circumstances. Following a process of research, of exchanging opinions, holding democratic discussions and struggling to unify targets and curricula and having conducted pilot projects, the college and vocational sector embarked on a stage of testing the new positions in education and training with the 1987-1988 school year.

The first problem we face is that of reaching agreement on important points. Our country faces acute socio-economic difficulties. Everyone has the responsibility of asking the question: how can we rapidly bring the country beyond its present situation so that it survives and develops? There are many different approaches that

can be taken. However, regardless of which approach we take, it will ultimately depend upon the human factor. It is in this significance that we can conceive of a "human strategy," a socio-economic strategy in which humans are the central moving force and the central goal. Today's workers must be persons who are specialized and skilled, persons who possess knowledge of science and technology. This requirement can only be met through education and training. Therefore, it can be stated: the future of socialism depends on the school, upon instructing and educating the new man.

The universal lesson drawn from many countries that have developed rapidly (socialist as well as non-socialist) is: there must first be a system of higher education, especially vocational education. Even from a purely economic standpoint, investing in the development of education and training is the investment that yields the highest returns, both in the immediate future and over the long range, which is not to mention the need to perfect the new man. This is the most basic, most intelligent form of investment that can be made. It can in no way be considered a type of investment in public welfare. Regardless of how great the difficulties we face might be, it must be stated: education and training must continue to be developed, not maintained in the current agonizing state or reduced in scale. Many persons maintain that we have a "surplus" of specialized cadres who have a college or vocational education and that it is not necessary to further expand the scale of training.

Is this actually the case?

The majority of the technical labor force that has been trained over the years works only in the state-operated sector and at state management agencies. Only about 4 percent of college educated cadres work within the collective economy. In the other segments of the economy (private, individual and household), in the important fields (agriculture, forestry, fishing, small industry and the handicraft trades), in many areas and localities and so forth, there is a very serious shortage of specialized cadres. According to one forecast, we will need some 750,000 college trained cadres, 1.65 million cadres who have a vocational middle school education, 3.4 million technical workers and personnel and 10,000 cadres who have a post-graduate education by the year 2000. Thus, compared to 1987, the number of cadres with a college education will increase 1.87 times, the number of cadres with a vocational middle school education and the number of technical workers will increase 2.25 times. At present, there are 22 students for every 10,000 persons of population in our country. This is a very low percentage in the world, even compared to other countries in Southeast Asia. With this percentage, these requirements cannot be met. Another pressing and long-range need is: at present, more than 1 million youths are reaching work age each year and need to receive occupational training and be provided with a job. Moreover, in the face of the

vigorous development of science and technology, studying throughout one's life has become a trend of the times. Meeting the need to raise the level of education essentially means preparing potential for the development of the country.

To continue to move ahead and effectively help to mold the human potential for the development of the country, the college and vocational education sector must carry out true reform. The difficult circumstances of today require that creative methods be adopted, that the spirit of self-reliance of the education and training system be tapped, that existing potentials be effectively developed.

On the basis of the general thoughts presented above, what must be done?

1) To begin with, we must reform the structure of the vocational education system (from colleges and vocational middle schools to trade training schools) along lines that are flexible and diverse. Many appropriate forms of elementary and advanced training must be provided: classroom and non-classroom; formal and on-the-job; long term and short term; in-school and correspondence; training under a systematic program and training under an individualized, specialized program... Importance must be attached to regular retraining and advanced training. We must encourage the individual schools to provide training in many curricula, provide many different types and levels of training. We must allow the opening of private, self-sufficient schools. We must select certain students and transfer them to other curricula and levels of study. We must provide incentive for the opening of precinct and district trade training centers and classes within enterprises. We must strongly develop the trade training network on the local level and eventually popularize occupational training for youths. We must restructure the network of colleges, academies, vocational middle schools and trade training schools in a way which reduces the number of echelons and results in a streamlined and strong system. There must be many different kinds of integration among schools, between schools and basic production units and between schools and scientific research institutes. We must give attention to opening preparatory classes for persons eligible under policies and talent development classes for young talents. The structure of investments in education and training must also be revised. Besides funding from the central state budget, we must also require (even in the form of a law) contributions to education and training by the sectors, localities and basic production units as well as by persons attending school. We must put an end to the situation in which the highest "product" we can produce, a trained person, is the cheapest and is not accepted at some places even if it is "free."

2) We must revise the list of fields of study and the system of training objectives to be broader in scope. On this basis, we must redevelop programs and subject matter along basic lines while attaching importance to

practical skills, management knowledge, social knowledge, knowledge of foreign languages and so forth, which must be closely tied to the requirement of the three major economic programs, the requirement of the realities of Vietnam: gradual modernization. Appropriate attention must be given to the social sciences, the production technology sectors...

3) We must reorganize the training process along flexible lines in order to tap the activism and initiative of the individual and the creativity of the student to the maximum degree possible. The conditions must be created for each student to determine how much additional subject matter he wants to study and the rate at which he will complete his program.

Programs of study should be part mandatory, part elective. Alternative examinations should be given so that students can skip a grade. Students should study under an individualized program. Students in the same class should be allowed to graduate at different times without having to remain in the same class for a second year. Examinations should be given to earn certificates and we should allow certificates to be accumulated toward a diploma. Students should be allowed to study for many diplomas. Selection standards must be strict. The number of hours spent teaching theory in class must be reduced and the number of hours spent in practical training, practical application and scientific research must be increased. Active teaching methods must be employed...

On the college level, education should be divided into two stages. Stage one should consist primarily of studying basic subjects in a group of fields. Upon the completion of this stage, a certificate should be issued (if the student passes his examinations). Only above average and excellent students should go on to the next stage and study specialized subjects within a particular field until their course is completed. The remaining students should be given supplementary professional training and dismissed from school.

4) We must intensify the teaching of politics and ideology among cadres and students with the aim of cultivating and developing the dynamism and creativity of each person in keeping with the new way of thinking and working consistent with the resolution of the 6th Party Congress. We must carry out the campaign to purify the organizations of the party and the state apparatus and make social relations wholesome. We must promptly criticize, stop and appropriately deal with cases involving negative phenomena. At the same time, we must commend and praise good persons and good work.

5) We must reorganize the formal, long-term system into a system of high quality education and standards for each level of study: colleges, vocational middle schools and trade training. This is the key to this reform. In the

years ahead, this system must not only grow in quantitative terms, but must also endeavor to achieve higher quality in order to give us a corps of highly specialized cadres and also to serve as the nucleus of the education and training system.

6) Positive steps must be taken to develop post-graduate training, mainly at home (by roughly 1995). We must expand the post-graduate system in order to raise, on a widespread basis, the standards of young college instructors and young research cadres. The objectives of the domestic training of research trainees and holders of masters degrees must be improved along lines that are "broader and more basic" (at the minimum, they must correspond to the post-graduate program). We must encourage students to find subject matter for their research projects in domestic science-technology, production and society. Priority must be given to domestic research students going overseas for practical training. Subsidies for research trainees must be increased. The doctoral training system should be abolished and replaced with evaluating scientific research projects from the perspective of how well they support socio-economic development and awarding doctoral degrees on this basis.

7) We must standardize, plan and actively organize regular elementary and advanced training in the profession and theory of politics for the corps of instructors on the college, vocational middle school and trade training levels. We must quickly correct the shortage of personnel, the poor qualifications of personnel and the instability of personnel staffs (average years of seniority is not high), primarily in the vocational and trade training schools, colleges and academies in the South. We must close the gap between elderly college instructors and the next stratum of instructors. Party committees, administrations and mass organizations must concern themselves with elevating the social position of the educator. To begin with, there must be a satisfactory policy toward instructors and education management cadres. These are the persons who determine the success of training, determine the success of the reform of training.

8) Intensifying scientific research and productive labor within schools and implementing the guideline of combining education with practical application with a view toward improving the quality of the training of scientific forces. In many countries, colleges play an important role in scientific research. In our country, although the corps of scientists at colleges is the largest, it has been assigned few tasks and few material conditions have been provided to it for research. They have made many efforts to undertake research projects through direct contracts with basic production units but not much has resulted, due to many causes that need to be seriously examined. It is necessary to reorganize this force in order to directly support the three major economic programs of the country and competently participate in scientific and technical cooperation contracts with CEMA. We must gradually shift the management of basic production

units and research centers at schools, the scientific-technical service centers and the productive labor of sectors to internal cost accounting. We must establish training-science-production organizations, integrate the schools within the technical, industrial and agricultural-forestry-fishing bloc and eventually integrate the other types of schools. To encourage scientific research, the policy on the distribution of scientific research results must be improved to insure that this distribution is open and fair. The education and training system must endeavor, through scientific research and productive labor, to earn income equal to the funding received from the state budget in order to make up for shortfalls and improve training conditions.

9) We must establish an effective management mechanism. From now on, the responsibility for inspecting the knowledge of research trainees and deciding upon disciplinary action, the graduation of students, the issuing of diplomas and the appoint of leaders, from office and section heads downward, must be assigned to the school. We must research and establish self-management procedures combined with a system of quotas. Control work and inspections must be intensified. Democratization and openness must be put into practice. We must gradually expand the election of leadership cadres on all management levels within the sector. Cadres who are appointed must be appointed to a term.

We must gradually establish communication and integration among schools in order to make common use of the material base and the corps of instructors and combat fragmentation and isolation. We must study the possibility of establishing information centers, computer centers and measuring centers for each region.

The use of training contracts between schools and localities or basic production units must gradually be expanded.

10) International cooperation must be expanded, most importantly with the Soviet Union, in the fields of training and scientific research. We must strongly improve the management of students overseas and actively contribute to the development of the various forms of cooperation in the fields of specialists, skilled labor and other types of "gray matter" with other countries and foreign organizations.

In the immediate future, special attention must be given to endeavoring to reduce the difficulties being encountered in everyday life. At many schools, students must take time off from their studies or skip meals (because they cannot live on their scholarships and there is a shortage of grain and food products). As a result, together with the state taking urgent, necessary measures (promulgating a new scholarship policy; establishing an allowance for teachers...), schools and basic units must take the initiative, be creative and tap every potential in

order to provide part of what cadres, educators and students lack in their everyday lives. This is the first prerequisite to each activity of the school.

In summary, the renovation of the college, vocational and trade training sector is: reforming the structure of the system and the objectives, subject matter and methods of teaching and training, or, reforming training and vocational education; intensifying scientific research-productive labor and improving the material-technical conditions of training; and building the corps of college and vocational educators and management cadres. The above form three well coordinated and goal-oriented programs which the college and vocational sector is endeavoring to implement in the years ahead.

The college and vocational sector is determined to make every effort to implement these three programs in order to gradually move beyond the stagnation and difficulties of today and meet the large requirements of the revolution. To achieve the desired results, it is necessary, to an important degree, for the sector to receive effective assistance and support from the other sectors, the various party committee echelons, basic production units and all society.

Combating Empiricism and Dogmatism, Adopting New Theoretical Thinking

42100010g Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 34-38

[Article by Nguyen Ngoc Long, M.A. in Philosophy]

[Text] To carry out revolutionary renovation, theoretical thinking must re-examine itself in the spirit of self-criticism.

1. No one doubts that of importance in the process of adopting new thinking is the need to "restructure" the entire system of concepts which serve as the tools of the new thinking. However, it is equally important that theoretical thinking be conscious of its own backwardness.

To us, it is not any longer a matter of whether or not our theory is backward, but a question of how backward it is. Nor is it any longer a matter of citing specific examples of this backwardness, but of analyzing the origins of this backwardness in order to truly understand the essence of this situation. There are more than a few differing responses to this question.

Comprehending the theory of Marxism-Leninism is a continuous process. Every generation of Marxists must re-examine its perceptions with the aim of resolving the new problems raised by practice. In this process, changing arguments and conclusions which are no longer consistent with reality must not be a matter of re-examining Marxism-Leninism itself with a view toward

abandoning it, but a matter of remaining loyal to Marxism-Leninism and exhibiting its revolutionary and scientific spirit. And, it would be a mistake to allow true "metamorphosis" in the concepts and practice of real socialism to lead us to doubt the truth of Marxism-Leninism and its victory in reality. Some persons defend the backwardness in our perceptions of socialism by saying that "real socialism has yet to come into existence" (?) to serve as a model. This argument reduces the significance of the achievements of real socialism and the real strength of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Of course, when engaged in this self-criticism, theoretical thinking must re-examine itself in light of the realities existing at the source of its spiritual heritage. However, the approach taken must be to give our thinking the ability to perceive and resolve problems better. Because, whereas the founders of scientific socialism did not and could not provide ready "prescriptions" or complete answers for socialist construction under present day conditions (because they did not want to be utopians), the problem confronting us is how to give our thinking a creative capability in developing and augmenting the storehouse of Marxist-Leninist theory.

2. The level of development of the ability to engage in theoretical thinking depends mainly upon the level of knowledge of the persons doing this thinking and, in the final analysis, upon social realities. In Vietnam, socialism is being built in a country which has a backward economy, a country in which the level of education of the people is low. The spiritual product of these socio-historical circumstances is emotional, empirical thinking which lacks the necessary rationalism. The immaturity of the early years, even the empirical groping about and the dogmatic copying of others were not always manifestations of a malady in our thinking. Whether or not a low level of theoretical thinking leads to empiricism and dogmatism depends upon the impact of other factors. Deserving of attention is subjectivism and voluntarism. They can lead us to maintaining a belief or rejecting a truth for a subjective purpose. What I would like to stress here is that they cause a person to not be conscious of his weaknesses and, as a result, to not correct his mistakes. In our country, when socialist construction was only in the initial phases in one-half of the country and the country was at war, more than a few cadres and party members thought that our party had reached the pinnacle of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The 6th Congress of the Party revealed the class-social origin of the mistakes in thinking. "It is petty bourgeois thinking, both 'leftist' and rightist."¹ Petty bourgeois thinking distorts socialism to suit its subjective illusions. In the "Communist Manifesto," Marx and Engels pointed out the "utopian and reactionary" nature of petty bourgeois socialism. Facts also show that the malady of subjectivism in socialist construction has been quite widespread. However, in countries that have a small farmer economy, they easily fall into the concept of

utopian socialism. Consequently, breaking free from "the grip of enthusiasm" is more difficult and the danger of practicing subjectivism and voluntarism is even greater.

It is necessary to more closely examine dogmatism because it can be considered the main cause of backwardness in the field of theory. In Vietnam, the characteristic of dogmatism is that it bears the clear imprint of the socio-historical conditions mentioned above. Many shortcomings which appeared to be consequences of dogmatism are actually closely related to subjectivism based on empiricism elevated to the level of truth. As an example, consider the shortcomings in the socialist transformation of agriculture and in the policy on socialist industrialization. Socialist transformation in agriculture and socialist industrialization are matters tantamount to laws in socialist construction in our country. The shortcomings have been our failure to see the very large differences between the realities of Vietnam and the experiences of the Soviet Union and other countries in the timing, rate, methods and forms of the socialist transformation of agriculture and socialist industrialization plus subjective, impetuous thinking and a desire to skip stages. The main mistake in how we have been carrying out socialist industrialization in recent years was setting the target of building an independent, autonomous and relatively complete economy. Such an economy, according to its own logic must "give priority" to developing heavy industry at the very outset of the period of transition in order to lay its "own" heavy industrial foundation. This mistake reached its peak in 1976-1980. It was also the "post victory over the U.S." Subjectivism and voluntarism found new vitality as a result of illusions about the boundless capabilities of zeal and bravery, about our ability to acquire capital and the most modern technology of the world. This led to the desire to rapidly create a new "model" of socialism—a civilized collectivism born of the communist tradition. The mistakes made in the process of agricultural cooperativization in the past stemmed from how we raised the issue: using "advanced" production relations to open the way for the development of production forces and merging production relations with production forces as one, thinking that if we continue to use these "advanced" production relations, we would automatically promote the development of production forces. But when the actual situation in agricultural production proved that this was not so, instead of finding a way to modify production relations, we laid the blame on production forces. This led us to promoting industrialization even more impetuously. Actually, the simplistic and mistaken perception of the law that production relations must be compatible with the nature and level of development of production forces and the system of socialist public ownership could have been corrected were we not impeded by subjectivism and voluntarism.

The logic and the history of the process of the formation and implementation of the economic line show that before dogmatism became the cause of shortcomings, it

was the result of subjectivism and voluntarism. Thus, when talking about dogmatism in theoretical thinking within our country, attention must be given to the following characteristics: 1) It is the product of the underdeveloped state of theory; 2) Abstract, textbook theory, instead of playing the role of setting the direction and providing a framework for thoughts and actions, has played the role as a tool defending objectives and methods based on the aspirations and experience of the subject; and 3) The coexistence and intertwining of dogmatism and empiricism and the difficulty in discerning one from the other. For example, mechanical thinking and actions are primarily the mechanical application of experience. Moreover, this experience is one's own experience. The "mania for terminology" produces "concepts" lacking scientific certitude as a result of "incomplete deductions" from a paucity of experience. "Theories" which are divorced from life frequently stem from a less than serious attitude toward theory, from the convenient "generalizations" of a few persons.

3. Correcting the backwardness of theoretical thinking goes hand in hand with developing the ability to think and cultivating dialectical thinking. Whereas cultivating dialectical thinking and developing the ability to engage in theoretical thinking are a difficult and constant process, the first requirement we face in adopting new theoretical thinking is the need to remove the obstacles that stand in our way in this process. These are not only outmoded concepts and regulations which weigh heavily upon the mind, which "constrain" theoretical activities, but also persons who have become obstacles in the process of renovation. A democratic atmosphere and wholesome ethics are a fundamental guarantee of success in the process of renovating society, in general, and adopting new theoretical thinking, in particular. It is "a democratic atmosphere in society, particularly in party life and scientific research; it is the spirit of respecting facts, respecting the truth..."² To carry out democratization within the field of theory, it is first necessary to correct the mistakes in the concept of party spirit. The relationship between the party spirit and the scientific nature of theory is the matter of foremost importance in setting the direction for our theoretical thinking. In Marxist books, the unity between the communist party spirit and scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism is established in principle. However, this is no reason to not re-examine our concept of party spirit in light of the new political thinking. In our country, the problem is also that we must overcome incorrect concepts concerning the relationship between politics and theory and concerning party spirit in theoretical work. For example, there is the concept that politics and theory are synonymous. The party spirit of theory is sometimes understood simply as serving politics. Serving politics is understood as nothing more than propagandizing and disseminating the revolutionary line and resolutions of the party. The result is that many political-practical matters are not resolved on a scientific basis. Theory is viewed as nothing more than repeating what is recorded in resolutions in one form or another. This has been a

habit for many years and has made it impossible to "sharpen" our theoretical thinking. This also helps to explain a seemingly illogical reality: at a time when theory is incapable of answering many of the pressing questions of life, many persons in society feel that there is "too much" theory. The concept of party spirit is so shallow that it has led to considering the political authority and the theoretical perceptions of individual leaders on the various levels of the party to be synonymous. It seems as though the theoretical standards of persons change as the level of leadership within the party changes.

The matters mentioned above have shown that an incorrect concept of party spirit leads to regulations which help to create an undemocratic atmosphere in theoretical work, in particular, and in life, in general. The realities of the revolution over the past several decades have caused political matters to always be of foremost importance in social life. The leadership of the party and the role of ideology and politics in setting a direction have directly influenced the survival of the nation, of the system. The theoretical work of the party has always been openly and directly political in nature with the aim of maintaining the leadership role of the party. The formation of the corps of theoretical cadres and theoretical research and instruction organizations has more clearly reflected party spirit than in the other fields of science. In this situation, a simplistic and wrong concept of party spirit easily develops not only within political leaders, but also within persons who research and teach theory.

The problem we face today is that the political task itself is new and raises new requirements of theoretical work. Theoretical work itself has also been renovated to some extent, even though it is still backward compared to the developing requirements of the realities of the revolution. Reality demands that we not only correct long-standing shortcomings, but also adopt a new concept and mode of leadership and a new way of organizing the party's theoretical activities. Theoretical work must make positive contributions in the process of democratizing social life, which, to date, has only brought about initial changes. The renovation of society, in general, and particularly changing the country's economic situation raise new and very high demands concerning theoretical work. "The more thoroughly theory is prepared, the more successful renovation will be."³ On the other hand, it is through the realities of the renovation campaign taking place within our country (and within the world socialist system) that theory will be increasingly revamped.

Renovation is finding solutions suited to our country in the current stage on the basis of recognizing reality against the specific historical background of the country. As a result, new theoretical thinking must first be based on a specific understanding of our starting point in the process of making the transition to socialism in our country and all the peculiarities and complications it entails. The overriding characteristic of this starting

point is a backward economy called by the commonly used terminology in our country "small-scale production." In practical terms, the mistakes that we made of being subjective and impetuous in past years "were mainly the result of not knowing and thoroughly studying this characteristic."⁴ This proves that the concept "small-scale production" has yet to be recognized on the scientific level of theoretical thinking.

Analyzing experiences—both successes and failures—in a critical spirit helps us to eliminate many theoretical perceptions which are incorrect, particularly regarding the social contradictions under socialism, the law that the production relations must be compatible with the nature and level of development of production forces... On this basis, theoretical thinking can recognize the objective dialectical nature of the period of transition in our country. Economic thinking must "unshackle" itself from prejudices toward the relationships between goods and money and the economic forms associated with these relationships, which have long been viewed as capitalist. This is of even more special importance in building the economy under conditions in which there is "small-scale production" but no widespread commodity production.

In the socio-political fields, it is even more necessary that theoretical thinking move ahead to resolve the pressing practical problems of the socialist revolution and socialist construction in our country in a manner consistent with the enormous changes in our times.

Giving attention to the human factor as it is conceived in the new thinking must become the pressing matter of foremost importance in renovation, in general, and in the adoption of new theoretical thinking, in particular. The pressing nature of this matter in our country also demands that we consciously resolve the contradictions associated with the subjective factor itself. On the one hand, circumstances demand that we vigorously tap the dynamism and creativity of the subjective factor. On the other hand, these circumstances have created limitations and major shortcomings that are unavoidable from an historical perspective because, as Marx pointed out, the practical skills of man "are limited by the conditions under which he lives, by the production forces that have accumulated over the generations and by the pre-existing social form, a form created not by him, but by preceding generations."⁵ Being conscious of the backwardness of theoretical thinking and the causes of this backwardness are the first step in the adoption of new theoretical thinking. Revolutionary and profound change in thinking can only be achieved when this change is closely tied to revolutionary practice in which, as Marx said, man, while changing his circumstances, also changes his thinking. Experience has shown that we must avoid vacillating between the two extremes of the mistakes recently made. Some persons blame every mistake on "old thinking" instead of analyzing the specific, actual situation. When seeing difficulties and problems, even certain deviations in our efforts to adopt new theoretical thinking, they turn

back to empiricism, failing to realize that changing the country's situation and adopting new theoretical thinking both require that we understand the spirit of unity between theory and practice. This is a fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism.

Footnotes

1. The Proceedings of the 6th Congress, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1987, p 26.
2. Ibid., p 126.
3. Nguyen Van Linh: "The October Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution," TAP CHI CONG SAN, No 11-1987, p 6.
4. Ibid., p 7.
5. Marx-Engels: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Volume 1, p 788.

Democratizing Cadre Work

42100010h Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 39-42, 73

[Article by Tien Hai, deputy chief of the Party Building Department of TAP CHI CONG SAN]

[Text] Our cadre work, besides the good aspects, also exhibits a number of rather basic shortcomings. These are the lack of democracy and the failure to correctly combine centralism and democracy, or democracy in name only.

It has come time for the matter of democratizing cadre work to be raised in a more serious manner. That is, the spirit of democracy must pervade every aspect of cadre work. However, in view of Vietnam's situation, we should perhaps begin by practicing broader democracy in a number of vital areas of cadre work in order to lay the groundwork for expanding the practice of democracy in all aspects of this work.

1. First, Broader Democracy Must Be Practiced in the Evaluation of Cadres

For many years, the evaluation of cadres in our country has been considered secret work, considered the private work of the chief and the organization-cadre component. Few people have known whether a particular cadre has been evaluated as good or bad, as competent or incompetent. Few have known what his qualities are, whether he has completed his political task successfully each year and what his potentials for development are. There have even been cases in which a cadre himself has not been informed of his superiors' observations and assessment of him. Cadre files have always been considered classified material and kept in an iron safe. Only the chief and the organization-cadre component are allowed to examine them.

Numerous weaknesses and shortcomings are associated with the approach described above. This approach causes the evaluation of cadres to be neither objective nor precise. The sense of responsibility and the socio-political activism of the cadre himself are not tapped. The masses cannot inspect or supervise cadres because they do not have accurate information. And, of course, mistakes are unavoidable in the assignment and promotion of cadres. There have been more than a few cases in which good cadres have been evaluated as bad only because they do not "get along" with their chief. There are persons who have borne a burden throughout their working life because their files contain mistakes and shortcomings they did not commit. But how can these cadres clear themselves? The masses cannot provide any assistance whatsoever because they do not know anything. Cadre files and the annual observations and assessments of the upper level concerning cadres have virtually become a "forbidden zone," one which only a few persons may enter. Throughout his work life, a cadre is transferred many times and his files and personal history are sent along with him. But the cadre never sees them because they are sent by a separate channel—the secret channel of the organization-cadre system. Conversely, there have also been more than a few persons who are truly bad who have been evaluated as good because they "get along" with their chief, please their superiors, are in cahoots with the organization cadre... Such happenings are symptoms of a lack of democracy in the evaluation of cadres.

To correct this situation, the evaluation of cadres must be based on specific standards. This is a principle. Basing the evaluation of cadres on standards will correct the problem of evaluating cadres on the basis of sentiment, on the basis of the "likes" or "dislikes" of the chief or other superiors. Evaluating cadres on the basis of standards will thwart improper intentions and thwart hatreds and attempts to seek revenge. And, this will also mean that democracy is assured.

Thus, how do we evaluate cadres in accordance with standards? The most common standard of every cadre, of every type of cadre in our country today is: the cadre must adapt himself to the renovation campaign. This standard is expressed in the requirements concerning the personal qualities, the skills and the work efficiency of each person. The cadre whose personal qualities suit the renovation campaign must be a person who is determined to carry out renovation, a person who is forthright and honest, who dares to speak, think, act and assume responsibility and whose words are consistent with his actions. He must act more than he speaks and be dynamic and creative. He must possess the collective, democratic spirit and routinely engage in self-criticism and criticism. He must possess the sense of organization and discipline, maintain close relations with the masses and lead a pure and wholesome life. As regards his abilities, the renovation campaign demands that the cadre be proficient in his work, thoroughly understand the line of the party, know how to concretize this line in

practical activities, know how to organize, manage and coordinate work and know how to perform party work and mass work. The efficiency of work must be reflected in the volume and quality of work performed by this person and the practical impact of this work.

On the basis of these general requirements, it is necessary to clearly define the standards for each type cadre and each position. Party, administration and mass organization cadres, economic cadres, scientific-technical cadres, education, public health and physical culture-sports cadres, cadres who perform cultural and literary-art work and so forth, there must be requirements concerning abilities and qualities corresponding to each type.

All the above are the bases for evaluating cadres in an objective manner. And, according to Lenin, being objective is one of the manifestation of democracy.

To assure democracy, the evaluation of cadres must also comply with the principle of collectivism. That is, it is necessary to combine the evaluation of a cadre by his chief, by the organization-cadre component with the self-evaluation of the cadre himself and with soliciting the opinions of concerned persons, such as cadres on the same level, cadres on the same job, masses and cadres on the lower level with whom the cadre has a work relationship, cadres on the upper level, the related party committee and mass organizations, the cadres and people at the place where the cadre resides, etc. Arrangements must be made for cadres to report on their work and present their opinions to the collective. The collective must question the cadre and he must respond and engage in dialogue with the collective. Every cadre must work within an organizational system and live within a community. Within this organizational system and community, every cadre has superiors. At the same time, he has the broad masses around him. Therefore, to evaluate a cadre by only relying upon the opinions of his superior or the opinions of the masses is not enough. To evaluate a cadre accurately, it is essential that the observations of superiors be combined with the observations of the masses and the observations of the cadre himself.

2. Besides the Evaluation of Cadres, the Assignment of Cadres Must Also Be Democratic

Democracy in the assignment of cadres is the complete negation of the convenient approach, of imposing assignments from above or from anywhere else. For many years, we have demanded that the revolutionary cadre accept any task under any circumstances and at any place required by the fatherland. In principle, this is entirely correct. However, because we have applied this principle rigidly and in a mechanical manner, we have made more than a few mistakes. There have been very many cases in which a person skilled in one job has been assigned to another and an incompetent person has been assigned to an important job. In the face of being assigned tasks, many cadres are not asked by the upper

echelon what their opinions are and do not make their own aspirations, their ability to perform work or their strengths and weaknesses known. The cadre is only permitted to answer that he will or will not accept the task. This is not to mention cases in which cadres are assigned tasks on the basis of feelings of affection and treating the cadre with indulgence or on the basis of enmity or seeking revenge. Such undemocratic assignment of cadres weakens the corps of cadres itself and causes considerable harm, even very serious harm, to the party and state.

Without being democratic, it is difficult to correctly assign cadres. Perhaps no one understands this better than the cadre himself. Therefore, before assigning a cadre to any task or position anywhere, it is necessary to discuss this assignment with this cadre. The chief or the organization-cadre component must clearly state the reasons and intentions of the organization, of the leadership and guide the development of the cadre. An honest cadre virtually always evaluates himself correctly, sees his own strengths and weaknesses and correctly defines his responsibility to the tasks assigned to him. Through a democratic dialogue with cadres, we will see this and, of course, be able to assign cadres more accurately. The realities of cadre work in the Soviet Union and a number of other fraternal countries show that as a result of such democratic dialogues, the decisions of the organization are often times promptly changed.

Democracy in the assignment of cadres is also the opposite of "one party rule." In our country, it has long virtually been a principle that leadership cadres and management cadres, regardless of their level, even on the lower levels, must be party members, even if there are persons outside the party in this locality, sector, unit or component who possess better qualities and skills than a particular party member. Assigning cadres in this way is actually undemocratic. The party leads, not rules. As a result, the more democratic we are in assigning cadres, the more we succeed in rallying the broad masses and tapping their intellect and talents, thereby helping the cause of revolution under the leadership of the party to record even more fine achievements.

The assignment of cadres must, of course, be the subject of collective and democratic discussion. Democracy and collectivism are the finest ways to insure the correctness of cadre assignments.

3. Democracy Must Also Be Fully Practiced in the Selection of Leadership Cadres and Management Cadres Through Elections

The selection of leadership cadres and management cadres through elections has begun to reflect democracy. However, of greater importance is that we want to demand a true democracy, democracy in the full sense of the word, not fake democracy or democracy in name only.

At present, in the Soviet Union and a number of other fraternal countries, the selection of leadership cadres and management cadres through elections is being widely practiced, particularly in economic units.

In our Vietnam, the selection of leadership cadres and management cadres through elections is being tried on a pilot project basis at a number of places. At these places, we see fine signs which prove the superiority of this method.

In order for the election of leadership cadres and management cadres to be truly democratic, thorough, serious preparations must be made and we must avoid doing things in a form for form's sake manner. Once an election has been organized, it must be conducted by secret ballot and the results of the election must be publicly announced. However, doing this is not easy, particularly in our country, where we do not have much experience in holding elections and elections have yet to become an established practice. A lack of objectivity, irresponsibility and voting on the basis of personal likes and dislikes without caring for what the consequences might be very easily occur. For this reason, in combination with elections, there must be correct and unbiased leadership, guidance and inspection. Moreover, cadre planning and cadre training must be carried out on a regular basis and performed well. Only on the basis of a well planned and well trained corps of cadres can the masses select worthy leaders and managers.

Facts have shown that the selection of leadership cadres and management cadres through elections affords clear advantages:

- The persons elected by the masses truly have the confidence of the masses that they will be able to perform their job. The masses, generally speaking, are objective and clear-sighted. They carefully consider for whom they will cast their vote because, in addition to a sense of responsibility, in addition to conscience and honor, the election of a leader and manager also affects their everyday lives.
- The leadership cadre or management cadre who is elected by the masses and recognized by the upper level is a person who has the support of both sides, the upper level and the masses on the lower level, consequently, he can easily perform his work.
- Democracy and openness are guaranteed and the masses are respected. As a result of being permitted to select their leaders, they are enthusiastic, confident and truly support their leaders.
- The selection of leadership cadres and management cadres through elections has caused a marked decline in the lack of unity within leadership sections and a marked increase in the efficiency of their work because the members of these sections also elect their leaders.

From the above analysis of the need to practice broader democracy in a number of vital areas of cadre work, several points deserving of attention arise. These are:

Democratizing cadre work does not mean negating centralism nor does it mean that we seek to place sole emphasis upon the issue of democracy. Democracy-centralism, these two factors in cadre work must be placed in a dialectical relationship. The broadening of democracy must be closely tied to centralism and be under the central guidance of the upper level. Otherwise, excessive democracy will result. Conversely, centralism must be based on democracy in order to be correct. Otherwise, harmful bureaucratic centralism will result.

The factor of democracy in cadre work is very closely tied to the factor of collectivism. To assure democracy, we must strictly adhere to the principle of collectivism. Only by implementing this principle can we overcome bureaucracy, paternalism, arbitrariness and despotism—the enemies of democracy.

Democracy in cadre work is very closely tied to fairness. There can be no democracy without fairness and vice versa. Fairness is one of the manifestations of democracy. Democracy is fairness in practice.

Democracy in cadre work is also closely tied to openness. Without openness, there also can be no democracy. However, we must never place sole emphasis upon openness. In cadre work, there are still cases in which it is necessary for secrecy to be maintained. Secrecy must be maintained when it is necessary and in no way harms the broader practice of democracy.

**The Farmers and Rural Areas of Vietnam Today:
Matters in Need of Attention**
*42100010i Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 43-46*

[Article by Dinh Thu Cuc, M.A. in History]

[Text] As the ally of the working class and the largest and most powerful force among the masses led by our party, the class of farmers has played a very large role in the nation's revolutionary undertaking. History records enormous contributions by the class of farmers to the success of the August Revolution and to the victories over the French colonialists and U.S. imperialists. And, history has also witnessed profound social changes in the rural areas of our country in less than three decades. A feudal countryside in which peasants existed as tenant farmers or small-scale, private producers, has become a new countryside in which collective ownership of the means of production has come into existence and the master of the countryside is the farmer. It can be said that our country's class of farmers has taken a long stride forward in the struggle to abolish the feudal countryside in order to build the new, socialist countryside.

The victory of the national, democratic revolution made Vietnamese farmers the true owners of their cropland. And, the special relationship between the party and working class and the class of farmers has helped farmers to voluntarily follow the party, with their lofty dream being to build the new, civilized and happy society in rural areas, the places where they work and live.

In productive labor, the farmer gradually began earning their livings collectively in increasingly highly developed forms of production. Today, large numbers of farmers nationwide are the members of 16,334 cooperatives, 39,380 agricultural production collectives, 4,000 forestry cooperatives, 961 marine products cooperatives and 2,571 marine products production collectives.

Our country's agriculture has undergone changes in the level of development of production forces. Many scientific-technical advances have been applied within agriculture. A number of socio-economic bases for transforming the psychology of small-scale production have emerged and are being nurtured.

The facts mentioned above prove that the socialist revolution has begun to establish a foundation within the most backward economic field in our country, agriculture, that socialist production relations can gain a foothold in the countryside under certain conditions of the development of production forces.

However, besides the above, we have, over the past several decades, placed too much emphasis upon the factor of collective ownership of the means of production and given little attention to the factors of management and socialist distribution in the socialist transformation and construction of the agricultural economy. For this reason, the production forces within agriculture are underdeveloped and are not only unable to carry out expanded reproduction, but also find it difficult to carry out simple reproduction.

The mechanism based on bureaucratic administrative management and state subsidies and the backwardness of many of the economic policies of the party and state concerning farmers have also severely controlled and exerted a negative influence within the countryside. The initial bases of socialist production relations in the countryside, instead of being consolidated and improved, have been weakened in many respects. There is a significant percentage of weak and deficient cooperatives and production collectives in practically all provinces.

The search for an appropriate management mechanism for cooperatives and production collectives in order to open the way for the development of agriculture was launched in the early 1980's. When the "final product contracts with groups of laborers and individual laborers" mechanism was officially established (Secretariat Directive 100, April 1981), it made a difference in agricultural production, particularly in grain production.

However, reality demands that we closely tie efforts to refine the contract mechanism to efforts to strengthen cooperatives, strengthen socialist production relations and make correct use of the various segments of the economy on the basis of a comprehensive and coordinated restructuring of the policies that apply to agriculture and farmers. Many different kinds of work in the countryside (such as planning, financial and credit work, the trading of materials, pricing, marketing, agricultural taxes, the labor obligation and so forth) must be changed to be compatible with the nature of the ownership exercised by the different segments of the economy.

Revamping the management mechanism within agriculture with the aims of liberating production capacity, developing the potentials which lie in labor, arable land, the trades and material-technical bases and developing existing scientific potentials in order to rapidly increase the supply of agricultural products to society and raise the income of the farmer is the pressing requirement we face today.

The situation of the class of farmers and the rural areas of Vietnam today also raises social problems which must be quickly resolved. These problems are no less pressing than the economic problems being faced.

To begin with, there is the need to constantly struggle against negative vestiges of an historical nature which still linger in the countryside. These vestiges of the past are persistent and exert a direct impact upon the life of the countryside today, especially during the past several years.

As mentioned above, Vietnamese farmers have taken a long stride forward in the struggle to abolish the feudal countryside in order to build the new, socialist countryside. The cultural standard of farmers has gradually been raised and they have been equipped with the new philosophy of life and world view. However, the traditional way of life is still quite deeply ingrained in their psychology, their habits and the way they think and act.

Fine expressions of the traditional way of life in the countryside, such as uniting and helping one another in work, production and everyday life as well as in the struggle against oppression and exploitation and the closeness of each person to the common ideals of the village, of the country have still been maintained. However, the limitations imposed by the traditional way of life are also very large and have had a negative impact upon efforts to build the new countryside today. The feudal laws, ethics and customs which bound the peasant in the old society continue to impede the progress of the farmer today. Paternalism, the village elder order and the bureaucratic order, the most important of which is the latter, have left deep marks in the countryside. Within the bureaucratic system, position was an environment which gave rise to bitter disputes within the ranks of the feudalists, which cause them to form factions, slander one another and topple one another. The

bureaucratic feudal system and private ownership gave birth to an evil offspring—the village bullies. These persons exploited and oppressed peasants through embezzlement, pilfering, misappropriation, repression and the taking of public property (in the old village, public property was the public rice fields and village funds). In the past, these village bullies had very many ways to exploit peasants through public rice fields. Today, many negative things also surround the use of the public funds and cropland of collectives. Numerous investigations have shown that in more than a few localities, the party committee, administration and cooperative management board have actually become the reincarnation of the old stratum of village bullies. From their positions as representatives of the people, of the village, they have become persons who have turned around to oppress, exploit and suppress farmers, have become parasites who extort farmers. This stratum of "new village bullies" has been using their public positions and family ties—a problem which has become a matter very deserving of attention in recent years—to control people, form factions and oppress honest and legitimate laborers, thus causing a loss of internal unity. The psychology of the village as a community, a positive feature in the spiritual life of the farmer, is slowly disappearing. In the past, farmers dared to unite to oppose the village bullies and wicked landlords. Today, many persons see injustice but dare not struggle against it for fear of being accused of being against the party, against the administration! At many places, a new class structure has formed, the backbone of which is the persons who hold public positions and their supporters. This structure controls socio-economic relations in the countryside and creates serious inequities in the distribution of grain, industrial goods and agricultural materials, in the allocation of land for housing construction, the allocation of contract fields, the appointment of local officials... They have established very many unreasonable "funds" and "laws" to bring in money from the labor of farmers. This situation has resulted in a severe lack of democracy in the countryside.

In the past, villages, through their strength as a close-knit community, used self-management and autonomy to struggle against oppression by landowners and officials, by the dictatorial monarchy and against intervention by the state in the affairs of the village, with the aim of protecting the rights of the laborer. Today, many persons in public positions have distorted this tradition to mean "the laws of the king stop at the edge of the village." They violate the positions and policies of the party and state and have turned the locality they lead into their own "private space" in order to further their personal interests. At many places in the countryside, the division and the differences between rich and poor are becoming increasingly clear. Honest, hard working laborers only receive a minimum of the product they produce, which is not enough to support them. This is partly due to unreasonable state policies. But it is largely due to local leaders taking this product for themselves or using it wastefully. Clearly, illegitimate economic interests are

the origin of the bureaucratic system and the "new village bullies." And, there is no other way to rid ourselves of them than for party cadres and working farmers to wage a forthright and determined struggle against them while combining economic policies with social policies in a correct and appropriate manner.

There is one other matter with which those who make socio-economic policies regarding farmers and the countryside and those persons who guide agricultural production and the work of the farmers associations must concern themselves: during the past 10 years, the overall cultural standard in the countryside has been declining. Farmers have little concern for cultural life or for raising their cultural standards. This situation is partly due to a lack of concern on the part of leadership levels. Many minimum cultural and social requirements of farmers are not being met, particularly in border areas and on the islands. Shortages of teachers and schools and shortages of medical facilities, medicine and doctors...are widespread in the countryside. On the other hand, economic difficulties and worries about contract fields and private fields (virtually every farm family must do all field work with crude implements and techniques and cope with the vagaries of the weather) have prevented their knowledge from being broadened, even though they have always been persons who want to learn and like to make technical improvements in order to achieve higher yields. Many achievements of the biological revolution which were applied very effectively in the countryside have been given little attention in recent years. The activities of the science-technology units, libraries, clubs and local literary-art units have markedly declined. "Semi-illiteracy" and illiteracy in the countryside are an alarming phenomenon. More than a few farm families have had to take their children out of school so that they can stay home and work.

During the past several years, very many old customs have reappeared in the countryside (lavish and costly funeral and wedding ceremonies, superstitious beliefs...). The main causes of this situation are the low level of economic and cultural development and socio-economic policies in the countryside which are either inappropriate or have not been thoroughly implemented. Efforts to propagandize and educate farmers, especially rural youths, regarding politics, ideology, culture and the new world view and philosophy of life have been somewhat lax. Whereas in the past, the members of the village thought and were honored to be recognized and praised when they contributed to the collective and considered building and strengthening the village to be their duty, with each generation having the responsibility of setting an example for the next; today, even though their world view and philosophy of life have been broadened, many persons recede, withdraw to their families and look out for their own interests.

To rid ourselves of this selfish, individualistic lifestyle that has trampled upon each ethical and cultural value accumulated by our people over the generations and

re-establish the new order in the countryside (as manifested in economic life, political life and cultural-spiritual life), it is first of all necessary to consolidate and strengthen the corps of cadres on the basic level, which includes party committees, people's committees, cooperative and production collective management boards, farmers associations, the Communist Youth Union, the Women's Union... This is the most important prerequisite to guaranteeing the success of the policies of renovation in the countryside today.

Research-Exchange of Opinions

K. Marx, F. Engels, V.I. Lenin and Ho Chi Minh on Cadres: The Leader and the Masses, the Requirements of Cadres

42100010j Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 47-53

[Text] K. Marx and F. Engels

In particular, it is the obligation of leaders to make themselves increasingly well versed in each matter of theory and steadily separate themselves from the influence of statements associated with the old world view. And, they must always realize that socialism, once it became a science, demands that we treat it as a science, that is, that we study it. The increasing consciousness achieved by this method must be disseminated among the mass of workers with increasing zeal and the party organization and the organization of trade unions must be consolidated and made stronger with each passing day.

Selected Works, Su That Publishing
House, Hanoi, 1982, Volume 3, p 633

The broad mass of workers will never believe that the common work of their country is not, at the same time, their own work. By nature, they are political activists and anyone who intends to force them to abandon politics will, in the end, be abandoned by them.

Selected Works, Volume 4, pp 564-565

Both Marx and I have always been opposed to every form of public praise of certain personalities. This is only acceptable when remembering this personality might serve a significant objective. However, more than anything else, we oppose praise of ourselves while we are still alive.

Complete Works, Russian version,
Political Publishing House,
Moscow, 1961, Volume 22, p 270

Neither of us (Marx and Engels) would spend a penny to acquire fame. Here, for example, is a case in point: while the Communist International was in existence, due to my aversion to all forms of worship of the individual, I never permitted the circulation of the many appeals in

which my contributions were recognized and I expressed my boredom with these appeals sent to me from other countries. I even refused to respond to these appeals, except on occasions by criticizing the persons who sent them. The participation by Engels and I in the secret organization of communists (the Alliance of Communists) was predicated upon removing from its statutes everything which supported the worship of prestige.

Collected Works, Russian version,
Volume 34, p 241

Zetkin and Bebel sent me a very personal letter. The Germans have not yet become accustomed to the thinking that no personality in a high position has the right to want to be treated more flexibly than other persons.

Complete Works, Russian version
Volume 38, p 63
V.I. Lenin

It is necessary for the entire party to train for itself, in a systematic, orderly and steadfast manner, worthy cadres on the central level; for the party to see that in its hands are all the activities of each member it intends to appoint to these high positions; and even for the party to know the traits of these persons, their strengths and weaknesses, their successes and "failures"... At a glance, this seems like an unnecessary inconvenience. In the case of one leader or another, it would sometimes even be an "insult." But we must overcome this false feeling of inconvenience, it is our obligation to the party, to the working class.

Collected Works, Progress Publishers
Moscow, 1979, Volume 8, pp 107-108

The masses must have the right to appoint responsible leaders. They must have the right to replace their leaders and the right to know and inspect even the smallest steps these persons take in their activities. The masses must have the right to promote from within their ranks any worker to a position of leadership. However, this does not at all mean that the process of collective leadership does not require a leader, does not require a precise definition of the duties of the leader and does not require a very strict order established by the will of the leader.

Collected Works, Volume 36, p 192

We must live the life of the worker, must know his life thoroughly, must know with certainty the mode of the masses and their needs, aspirations and true thoughts on every issue and at every time. We must know how to determine—without the slightest bit of idealization—their level of awareness and the strength of the influence upon them of prejudices and remnants of the past. We must know how to win the boundless trust of the masses through an attitude of fraternity toward them and through concern for satisfying their needs.

Collected Works, Volume 44, p 426

Being very perceptive, the working masses are able to discern the difference between communist party members who are loyal and devoted and persons who are forcing the masses to live on their own sweat and tears without any special rights and privileges, without a "straight path to office," persons who must be despised.

Collected Works, Volume 44, p 152

If we are to actively teach discipline to workers and peasants, we must begin by teaching it to ourselves.

Collected Works, Volume 50, p 82

Our policy and our administrative measures are based on the following: the whole of the vanguard unit must be closely tied to the whole of the proletariat, the whole of the peasantry. It would be a tragedy for anyone to forget this close relationship and insist only on administrative measures.

Collected Works, Volume 45, p 128

We must expel from the party elements who are remote from the masses (and, of course, elements who harm the good name of the party in the eyes of the masses).

Collected Works, Volume 44, p 152

It is necessary to select youths among workers to exercise the right of the mass of workers to supervise... We cannot admit into the party persons who join the party in search of a position. They must be expelled from the party.

Collected Works, Volume 37, pp 55-56

Thoughtlessly altering the work of hundreds of outstanding specialists, evading issues through crude jokes and bragging about one's "unauthorized" power, are not such things a disgrace?

We must respect science and reject all "communist" boasting by talented persons and bureaucrats. We must learn how to work in a systematic way using our own experience and practice!

Collected Works, Volume 42, p 431

If a communist party member is an administrative cadre, the first task of this person is to avoid becoming infatuated with issuing orders. He must first give attention to the things revealed by science, first ask if events have been investigated, first engage in research (in reports, the press, meetings and so forth) to determine where mistakes were made. And, only on this basis, can he change what has been done. Let us have less of these Tit Ti-tu-tso [Vietnamese phonetics] kinds of tricks ("I might have approval, I might not") and do much more by way of studying our actual mistakes.

Collected Works, Volume 42, pp 435-436

What we need are not new regulations, new agencies or new ways of struggle. What we need is to inspect the ability of working personnel, inspect actual compliance. The purge of the party will soon be aimed at those communists who assume the airs of a governing official.

Collected Works, Volume 45, p 19

All persons who are close observers of real life and have experience in life know that to manage, a person must be well versed in a special field, must have a full and accurate knowledge of all the conditions of production, must understand the technology of this production on its modern level of development and must meet a certain scientific standard.

Collected Works, Volume 40, p 248

We must constantly endeavor to insure in practice that everyone's personal accountability for a job or work unit is accurately and strictly defined. Collective debates must be kept to a minimum but must never impede the rapid and decisive resolution of problems or blur the responsibility of each cadre.

Collected Works, Volume 39, pp 349-350
Ho Chi Minh

Each and every comrade and the entire party must devote the full measure of their spirit and forces to turning all the people in one direction, toward one objective... Therefore, each and every comrade and the entire party must be clear-sighted, capable, cautious, determined, diligent and of one mind.

At this point in time, the thinking and actions of each and every comrade are very much related to the entire nation. A mistake by one person might ruin a large undertaking. If we miss by an inch, we might be off by a mile.

Collected Works, Su That Publishing House
Hanoi, 1984, Volume 4, p 291

We must take determined steps to rid ourselves of the following shortcomings:

Localism

Localism is only being concerned with the interests of one's locality and not seeing the interests of the whole. It is only knowing how to defend and build up the unit in which one is working. Because of this shortcoming, seemingly unrelated things occur which are very harmful to the overall plan.

Factionalism

Factionalism is listening to good friends even though what they are saying is not correct and using them even though they have no talent. It is belittling persons who are not friendly toward you even if they are talented and not listening to them no matter how necessary it might be.

This is a very harmful shortcoming. It causes the party to lose cadres, to lack consensus and often ruins work. It is a very dangerous disease.

The Bureaucratic, Militaristic Mind Set

This mind set is that of persons who reign as a king in the area of which they are in charge, arrogantly doing as they please and finding fault with everything. These persons have little regard for the upper level and use their power to suppress the lower level. They present themselves as officials to the masses and strike fear in the masses. These, "mister and madam prime ministers" cause much ill feeling and many divisions and cause the upper level to be far distant from the lower level, the mass organizations to be far distant from the people.

Narrow-Mindedness

We must remember that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. We must use the strengths of a person and help him to correct his weaknesses. We must use people as we use wood. A skilled craftsman can use all kinds of wood, large and small, straight and crooked.

When thinking is narrowminded, actions are also narrowminded. One has many enemies but few friends. Few persons go out of their way to help someone who is narrowminded. A mass organization which is narrowminded cannot develop.

A Fondness for Form

Here, everything is done without taking practical, pressing results into consideration. Everything is done with a view toward external form only, with a desire to be ostentatious and make a show...

At many places, propaganda and agitation efforts involve nothing more than painting slogans, displaying banners, making the information and propaganda center look attractive and writing speeches while not maintaining close contact with the masses on a day to day basis in order to give them a thorough understanding of the positions of the party.

The "Paper Work" Approach to One's Job

These persons like to do very much paper work. They sit in one place pointing their fingers and never once go down to localities to inspect work or map out plans for thoroughly implementing the directives and resolutions of the party. They also do not know if the directives and

resolutions sent down by the upper level to the locality are being implemented or not. This way of working is very harmful. It causes us to not keep abreast of the movement and not understand the situation on the lower level, consequently, many of our policies are not thoroughly implemented.

The Lack of Discipline and Less Than Strict Discipline

At many places, comrades have committed crimes but not been properly punished. Some have been demoted while, at other places, they remain on the same level or have been demoted in name only but still continue to work on the same level.

Some comrades are deserving of being punished but are only criticized or given a cursory warning out of sympathy and respect. There are even places where comrades cover up for one another, condone one another's actions, lie to the upper level and conceal things from the party. Such disciplinary action not only causes comrades to not know how to rectify their mistakes, but also causes contempt for discipline. Even worse, if the discipline of the party is lax, reactionary elements will have an opportunity to infiltrate our ranks to sabotage our party.

Selfishness, Corruption

Some comrades still have the mentality of always seeking a better position and are constantly trying to become a member of one committee or the chairman of another. Some are only concerned about eating and dressing well, about using public property as their own and using their position or job to get rich through trade. They are concerned more about personal than public affairs. When one's revolutionary ethics are such, the criticism of public opinion is deserved.

Each of us must be modest, diligent and competent. We must constantly seek to make progress and remember the words of our father: learn, learn, never stop learning.¹ To be satisfied with ourselves is to not allow ourselves to make further progress.

Some comrades still have the habit of being "officials to whom everyone is beholding." They put their relatives and close friends in one position or another without any concern for whether or not they actually perform their job. These comrades will ruin the work of the party just to give their relatives and friends a position.

Collected Works, Volume 4, pp 291-295

Every cadre and party member must place the interests of the revolution, the party and the people above everything else. They must be determined to sweep away individualism, enhance revolutionary ethics and cultivate collective thinking, the spirit of unity and the sense of organization and discipline. They must keep abreast of practice, maintain close contact with the masses and truly respect and uphold the right of collective ownership

of the people. They must make efforts to learn more, to improve themselves and increase their knowledge in order to perform each task well.

"Enhancing Revolutionary Ethics

Wiping Out Individualism,"

TAP CHI HOC TAP

Number 2, 1969, p 7

It is even more necessary for cadres and party members to display a high spirit of responsibility to the party and the masses and wholeheartedly serve the people. They must respect and love the people. They must truly respect the people's right of ownership. They absolutely must not assume the airs of a "revolutionary official" and go around issuing orders to show their authority. They must firmly adhere to the class view, correctly follow the mass line and teach and mobilize the masses to implement each position and policy of the party and state. They must be honest and forthright and not conceal shortcomings and mistakes. They must be modest and close to the masses, not arrogant. They must seek advice and not be subjective. They must always be concerned with the life of the masses. They must be impartial and "worry about problems before the people, take their pleasure after the people." These are the ethics of the communist.

The invincible strength of the party lies in the self-imposed discipline and the strict sense of organization of cadres and party members.

It is even more necessary for the cadres and party members to display a high spirit of responsibility, to set an example of "diligence, frugality, honesty and fairness," do not take one xu or one grain of paddy from the state or the people. They must combat bureaucracy and management by fiat, which are the sources of misappropriation and waste. They must be deliberate and carefully weigh the pros and cons in every job they undertake. "Time is precious." They must work to stop the habit of holding meetings at which there is much heavy drinking, meetings which waste time, are harmful to one's health and produce no practical results.

We must grasp the laws of development of the revolution, must take specific conditions into consideration and carefully consider specific measures. Plans must be sound and balanced. Subjective desires cannot take the place of actual conditions. We must combat subjectivism and the bureaucratic, cursory style. We must cultivate a style characterized by investigation and research in every job we undertake as well as in deciding each policy of the party and state.

"Molding Socialists,"
TAP CHI HOC TAP
Number 4, 1961, pp 6, 8

Revolutionary work is a thousand complicated and difficult jobs. To be able to carefully consider complex circumstances, to clearly see contradictions and to correctly resolve problems, we must make an effort to learn Marxist-Leninist theory.

Only by studying Marxist-Leninist theory can we develop stronger revolutionary ethics, firmly maintain our stand, increase our knowledge, raise our political standards and perform the work assigned to us by the party well.

Selected Works, Volume 2, p 105

The forces of the working class and laboring people are very large, are inexhaustible. But these forces need the party to lead them to be assured of victory. At the same time, the party must maintain close contact with the masses and skillfully organize and lead them in order for the revolution to be a success.

Revolutionary ethics are a matter of joining with the masses to form a single bloc, of trusting and understanding the masses and listening to their opinions. Through their words and actions, party members, Youth Union members and cadres must gain the people's trust, admiration and love, closely unite the masses around the party and organize and motivate them to enthusiastically implement the policies and resolutions of the party.

At present, however, individualism is controlling some comrades. They consider themselves to be proficient at everything. They are remote from the masses and do not want to learn from the masses, only to teach them. They are bureaucratic and manage by fiat. As a result, the masses do not trust or admire them and love them even less. In the final analysis, these comrades are worthless.

Selected Works, Volume 2, pp 103-104

Within the party, widely practicing democracy and regularly practicing serious self-criticism and criticism are the best ways to build and develop the unity and consensus of the party. Comrades must love one another.

Ours is a party in power. Each party member and cadre must truly practice revolutionary ethics, must truly be diligent, frugal, honest and impartial. We must keep our party truly pure, must insure that it is worthy of being the leader and the truly loyal servant of the people.

Selected Works, Volume 2, pp 541-542

Footnote

1. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Volume 43, p 444.

State Management of the Economy
42100010k Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 54-58

[Article by Truong Son, economic specialist]

[Text] In his speech at the 3rd Plenum of the Party Central Committee, General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh pointed out: "In revamping the economic management mechanism, there are two basic matters: revamping the management mechanism at basic units and revamping state management of the economy. Practice as well as theory tell us that these two matters are very closely interrelated. We cannot do one and ignore the other."¹ Revamping the management mechanism at basic units, that is, granting independence to economic units in their production and business, has been discussed at great length. Below are some thoughts on revamping state management of the economy.

I. The Specifics of State Management of the Economy

State management of the economy is the economic management function of such state agencies as the National Assembly, the Council of State, the Council of Ministers, the ministries and the people's committees on the various levels. It can, therefore, simply be called state management or economic management. And, when talking about the state, we are talking about administration. Therefore, this management can also be called administrative-economic management at certain times. Thus, the terms "state management of the economy" or "state management," "economic management" and "administrative-economic management" have the same meaning and will be called economic management in this article.

Economic management is broader than production management. Economic management is managing the entire process of social reproduction. Economic management is also broader than business management. Business management is micro-management, the management of an economic unit. Economic management is macro-management, the management of the entire national economy. Generally speaking, economic management is applying economic laws under the specific conditions of the country to build and develop the economy, to make the people and the country prosperous. Understood in its broad sense, economic management encompasses economic strategy and the management mechanism. Understood in its narrow sense, economic management is using the management mechanism to implement economic strategy.

In the past, we only spoke about economic management. Nowadays, we call it socio-economic management. We do this mainly because of the link between economic policy and social policy. Social policy is not an "unnecessary" part of economic policy, but the objective of economic policy. We also do this because of the organic relationship between the economy and society. We cannot develop the economy without social prerequisites,

the most important of which is tapping the human factor. Likewise, we cannot achieve social goals if they are not based on the development of the economy. Moreover, as defined here, economic development also encompasses cultural development because, without culture, there can be no development of the economy. Consequently, economic management in its full sense is a matter of combining the following factors in a way that is well balanced: democracy, politics, economic growth, social fairness, cultural development and the development of the human factor.

Such is economic management in general terms. In specific terms, economic management entails the following jobs:

1. Investigating, researching and correctly evaluating the natural conditions, natural resources and socio-economic situation of the country.
2. Researching theory and summarizing the economic management experience of the country while gaining an understanding of and selectively studying the experiences of other countries in the world.
3. Formulating socio-economic and scientific-technical development strategy and plans for the development of the various economic sectors.
4. Formulating a model for the development and distribution of production forces nationwide and planning the development of economic regions.
5. Formulating long-term, 5-year and yearly goal-oriented programs and socio-economic development plans and insuring that the primary balances of the national economy are maintained.
6. Formulating management strategy and routinely augmenting, revamping and refining the management mechanism.
7. Promulgating and guiding the implementation of economic laws, of domestic and overseas economic policies.
8. Implementing cadre policy, defining cadre job titles and standards, planning the elementary and advanced training of cadres and appointing and dismissing cadres.
9. Establishing state control over all economic activities and insuring strict compliance with economic law and policies.
10. Creating a favorable socio-economic environment for business activity and dealing with matters which lie beyond the scope of business units to insure the performance of tasks assigned by the state.

Such are the general functions of economic management. The specific functions of each ministry and locality differ depending upon whether the scope of their operation is broad or narrow. For example, the Ministry of Communications-Transportation formulates 5-year and yearly development plans for the entire transportation sector. The municipality of Hanoi, however, formulates socio-economic development plans for the Hanoi area, etc.

II. Revamping State Management of the Economy

The mechanism of bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies has long prevented our state agencies from exercising state management of the economy as described above. That is, they have been performing very few macro-management functions. Instead, they have intervened in business and taken over the business function of economic units. Consequently, it is necessary to revamp state management of the economy.

Revamping state management of the economy is essentially a matter of separating the state from the enterprise, separating administration from business—that is, state agencies must return to properly fulfilling their true economic management functions instead of intervening in business. In other words, revamping state management of the economy is a matter of clearly distinguishing between and properly combining economic management and production-business management in the following way: economic management must not force production-business management to ride the two "rails" of economic management, but bring it within the "corridor" of economic management. In other words, the state should not control economic units as though they were "puppets," but should act more as a referee in a soccer match, permitting the teams to do everything on their own and only blowing the whistle when they break the rules.

The specific relationship between economic management and production-business management in a number of important fields can be understood as follows:

As regards planning, the state formulates the national economic plan and informs economic units of the contents of the plan which relate to them. On the basis of the direction charted in the state plan, their own capabilities and the needs of society, economic units formulate their production-business plans through economic contracts. For the foreseeable future, the state will continue to assign to enterprises anywhere from one to three legally binding norms as stated in the resolution of the 3rd Party Plenum. Later, however, these legally binding norms might be replaced by orders for goods and business taxes.

In the field of finance, the state promulgates the national financial policy and tax laws. It allocates initial capital to enterprises once. Enterprises will then operate on the

basis of full-scale cost accounting. They are self-financing, use their revenues to pay expenditures, retain their profits and absorb all losses.

As regards prices, the state sets the pricing policy and the price range or scale for the most vital materials, goods and services of the economy. Generally speaking, a business price mechanism is applied to other goods. Sellers and buyers negotiate prices.

With regard to wages, the state promulgates the general policy but does not set a maximum limit on wages. Taxes are used to regulate income which is excessively high. Decisions concerning the wage fund, the form of wages and the specific wages paid are made by the enterprise on the basis of its business income and the results of the labor of its workers.

In exports and imports, the state exercises exclusive management of foreign trade and signs foreign trade agreements with the governments of other countries. Enterprises which have all the necessary conditions to export and import goods in accordance with state regulations are permitted to directly sign and execute export-import contracts with related economic organizations of foreign countries, etc.

In summary, the relationship between the state and economic units under the new mechanism is: enterprises are independent production-business units whose fate does not entirely depend upon orders and directives of the state. The state manages enterprises primarily by means of laws. Within the framework of state law, enterprises exercise autonomy in their production and business and have the right to do whatever is necessary, rational and profitable to serve the needs of society well, fulfill commitments to foreign countries and fully pay business taxes to the state.

Within this context, the state consists of the central government and the various levels of local administration. Therefore, one important aspect of revamping state management of the economy is to increase the authority and responsibility and tap the initiative of the various levels of local administration. In keeping with the spirit of the resolution of the 3rd Party Plenum, this is to be done as follows:

—On the basis of national economic planning and the national economic plan, local administrations will formulate the planning and plans of their territories for developing the economy, building the infrastructure, supporting the material and cultural lives of the people and fulfilling economic obligations to the central state.

—On the basis of nationwide economic zoning, the local administration must closely tie the local economy to the economy of the larger region and the entire country, thus eliminating the division of these economies by level and administrative boundary. The local administration has the responsibility of stimulating economic integration

and organizing and coordinating activities between units of the central economy and units of the local economy within its territory while maintaining social order and safety.

—The division of responsibility for the management of economic units must be based on socio-economic returns. The principle which applies here is: management responsibility should be assigned to whichever management level can best serve the development of the production and business of a basic economic unit.

The national budget is a unified entity. The division of budget management responsibilities between the central level and the local level must be reasonably proportioned during each period of time to support expenditures by both the central and local levels and encourage efficient operations while guaranteeing uniform development among the different regions of the country, with priority to key regions.

—The economic relations mechanism between the central and local levels is the "contract" mechanism. The central level will stabilize the obligations of the localities for a specific period of time. On the basis of fulfilling their obligations to the central level, the localities have the authority to use all the remaining value and product to develop the local economy and improve the living standards of the local people.

To be able to revamp economic management, two important jobs must be performed:

First, we must increase the flow of economic information and scientific-technical information, both from our country and the world. Special attention must be given to information on the market situation, prices and technical advances. We must restructure the content, methods and organization of statistical work and increase the reliability of data to meet the need for economic information and economic analysis. We must develop many forms of information services which operate on a cost accounting basis and eventually establish data banks.

Secondly, we must reorganize the state management apparatus from the central to the local levels along lines which reduce the number of management echelons, eliminate unnecessary intermediaries and strongly streamline the administrative staff. On the central level, we recently merged a number of ministries. We must now study ways to further reduce their size. This must be done for two reasons: if there are many ministries and many persons, this apparatus will infiltrate business and establish unnecessary requirements which pose a bother to basic units. Conversely, if there are few ministries and few persons, the upper level, although it might want to deeply intervene in the work of basic units, will be unable to do so. Once there is a clear distinction between the management function and the production-business independence of economic units, the central level will

only perform jobs on the "macro" scale and not need to have many ministries. The apparatus on the provincial and municipal level will also be reduced accordingly. Not every ministry on the central level needs to have a corresponding service on the local level.

Revamping state management of the economy is a new undertaking. The thoughts presented above are aimed at contributing to the research now under way.

Footnotes

1. TAP CHI CONG SAN, Number 9-1987, p 6.

Revamping State Management of Business Activities

421000101 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 58-61

[Article by Tran Thai Nguyen, department chief, the Agriculture Department of the Party Central Committee]

[Text] The socialist state plays an exceedingly large role in the socio-economic activities of the country as well as in the business process of all segments of the economy.

However, as the state, even a socialist state, its impact upon economic processes is still governed by certain limits. The state and businesses do not become one and the same thing. Determining through research what these limits are, that is, the limits at which the state is still providing effective management and not posing an obstacle to businesses but still creates the conditions, the environment, the "channels" for businesses to operate freely, will be of important significance from the standpoint of both theory and practice. This is a very difficult and complex matter. Although it has been addressed on many different occasions, our practical activities in this area have usually not yielded the results desired by us. Rather, there has been a steady increase in the organizational apparatus of state agencies impeding one another, working at cross purposes and trampling upon one another as well as a steady increase in the expansion of this organizational apparatus. This has placed a heavy burden upon the state budget, upon basic production units and the working people in two ways, by excessively wasting national income and by impeding the development of production.

Clearly, the management function of the state cannot be studied in isolation. Rather, this matter must be raised and resolved within the framework of all the very basic matters related to it.

1. The approach to the issue: the realities within the socialist countries as well as our country show that virtually restructuring the state apparatus is an objective requirement, an objective demand aimed at perfecting the socialist democratization mechanism. In our country, power has been in the hands of the people for several

decades. The state has only been involved in economic processes for a very short period of time. In addition, the specific elements of state management of the economy have been concealed and distorted by the mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies, which has been accompanied by some very simplistic and incorrect views concerning the economic function of the state and the desire to immediately establish ideal socio-economic relations as well as the desire for the state to directly issue orders in the form of norms governing each economic activity—regardless of how minor in importance—of each segment of the economy. Incorrect views concerning the economic management function of the state have led to the fear that economic relations will slip from the grasp of state agencies and be regulated by market relations, with this being considered the same thing as the state abandoning its economic function.

This situation demands that we clearly define, to the degree necessary, which activities are state activities and which are business activities.

2. We must begin at basic units. Basic economic units, or businesses which are the object of state "management," occupy an extremely important position. They determine both the content and form of state activities. For every type of basic unit there is a corresponding type of state activity.

—In the case of businesses (both state-operated and collective) which operate under the "allotments-deliveries" mechanism, much of the work of the basic unit is taken over by the state, such as determining the structure of production (crops, species of livestock and growing seasons), building the material base (how many drying yards, storehouses and pens and their sizes), determining remuneration rates, setting economic-technical quotas, determining the scale of organization, determining the support apparatus... Many other things violate the rights of the basic unit, such as approving the purchase of one product or another, approving the use of funds and even managing the use of the funds of cooperatives and enterprises, deciding on its own to conduct an audit at any time "required by the state"...

These "functions" have caused the state apparatus to burgeon but its management effectiveness has been gradually declining. In actuality, our state is performing very many jobs, even concerning itself with the profits and losses of enterprises, with whether workers are getting enough to eat. However, the mood shared by each and every member of society is still that there is "too much" of the state and that we should always look for ways to avoid assistance and control by the state. Regrettably, this situation has steadily worsened, particularly in the case of state-operated enterprises. The essence of this situation is: the state maintains a "tight grip" on basic units while basic units "charge ahead and let others close the holes." In H. District, one of the poorest districts in our country, there are 70 cooperative directors and more

than 200 enterprise directors but as many as 200 bank cadres, 140 of whom perform a "special management" task (that is, they have been put in charge of a number of enterprises and observe and supervise the expenditures and operations of the enterprise on a day to day basis). In this district, not only the bank has "special management" tasks, but the finance, public security, procuratorate, control, organization and other sectors have also been assigned such tasks. Is this not the "typical model" for the entire country? Is not the situation virtually the same on the provincial and central levels? Are these 200 bank cadres enough or still too few? This is the primary force vigorously opposing the policy of reducing the state's administrative staff.

On this occasion, one example must be recalled: there was a time when we managed even the bicycles and radios of citizens. Back then, we argued that without such management (issuing certificates of ownership, approving transfers of ownership, and so forth), many negative phenomena would occur in society. Yet, since the day that we decided to abandon this style of management but not for this reason, more negative phenomena have emerged, with fewer bothersome procedures being in place! Is this not a fact on the basis of which we should "track down" existing styles of management which are similar to the "bicycle management"? This issue here is: determined steps must be taken to abolish that which is not necessary, not just "reduce" the scale or the intensity of this work. For this reason, even raising the issue of "opposing deep intervention by the state in the business activities of the enterprise" is, in my opinion, imprecise.

—Were we to shift to enterprise self-management (with the enterprise financing itself, being accountable to itself for the results of and returns from its business, carrying out expanded reproduction on its own...), the situation would surely be different. The majority of the "state work" described above would be unnecessary and have to be returned to the basic unit (not in the form of "expanded authority" done as a favor, but with the state being responsible for guaranteeing that the basic unit has the rights which it must have). But this would not mean lax management by the state or that basic units would be free to operate as they please. The state has all conditions and capabilities it needs to establish a foothold in basic areas because, if the state does not do this, no one can take its place. This is a difficult, complex and brand new matter, one which must be the subject of research and careful testing.

3. Revamping the contents and methods of the activities of state agencies consists of revamping planning; revamping the system of economic leverage policies (on taxes, investments, prices, the circulation of money, labor and wages); revamping legal tools; and revamping the organizational system of the apparatus and relationships. Defining the state management "function" is closely related to and determined by all these basic matters.

This article does not address the matters mentioned above, only one small aspect of these matters namely, correctly defining the functions and tasks of state agencies, especially with regard to economic management. In this area, the state must perform the following functions well:

The first function is to set the direction of development of the economy. This function consists of formulating socio-economic development strategy and long-term national economic plans; building the leading or key sectors of the economy; building the infrastructure; selecting appropriate forms of organizations and stages for the process of transforming production relations and establishing the new production relations; researching and vigorously applying technical and industrial advances; training cadres; organizing economic information services, etc.

The second function is to regulate socio-economic activities in accordance with strategy through a system of economic policies codified in the form of a system of unified and effective laws, such as a tax policy, an investment policy, an interest rate policy, an export-import policy...

The third function is to conduct inspections, perform control work and implement management by laws (promulgating and supervising the implementation of laws). Our state does not yet have a significant body of law. This can be said to be the field in which the state is the weakest. On the other hand, we have leaned toward "quasi-legal" regulations, toward pieces of legislation which are not systematic or basic, thus giving very much "flexibility" to those who implement the law and those who supervise implementation. In legislative work, there has been a tendency to first and primarily make laws governing the objects of management, not executive organizations. This situation masks our practical activities. The many persons who maintain that we lack the conditions needed to make laws are incorrect. This is also a factor which has weakened state management.

In the relationship between the law and the citizen, between the law and the business activities of basic units, we see that as their freedom and material accountability to themselves increase, the more basic production units and businesses need the law, need the protection and assistance of the state.

If we do not resolutely dismantle the mechanism of a central economy, bureaucracy and state subsidies and establish a proper business mechanism for basic units and workers, we cannot establish suitable management functions for state agencies.

To implement the above functions, state agencies must fundamentally revamp their mode of operation from one of issuing administrative orders and directly intervening

in the work of business units to one which has an indirect impact through a system of economic policies, legal tools and the material conditions available to the state.

At present, in our country, these functions and tasks must be specifically defined for each level: provincial, district and village. This must be done in accordance with a number of principles, such as the following:

—The responsibilities and authority of each level must be clearly defined. The various levels must not work at cross purposes, take over one another's work or push things off on one another. Every level must be held responsible for the methods and forms it employs to complete its tasks.

—Authority must be closely tied to responsibility (both economic and administrative). When tasks are assigned, the conditions needed to complete them must be created. There must be harmony between the interests of each level and the entire country.

—Anything that can be done well by a lower level should be turned over to this level. The upper level should only guide and inspect.

—Management policies and procedures must be uniform in principle. At the same time, there must be room in these policies and procedures for the lower levels to apply them in a manner consistent with the diverse and complex realities of the country. There must be fundamental uniformity between "the laws of the king" and "village customs," which cannot be abolished at one stroke nationwide.

—Control and inspection work must be intensified and every violation which causes adverse consequences must be strictly but fairly and promptly prosecuted.

To a large degree, the matter of continuing to turn over responsibilities to the lower levels must be studied more and carried out more thoroughly. It is not a matter that we have already "done too much." At the same time, it must be established that the people's committees and the various services are not business agencies.

The combined management agencies of the state must also be seriously studied with a view toward increasing the efficiency and quality of their operations to suit the new management mechanism, especially such organizations as the bank and foreign trade sector, which are agencies that combine two functions in one organization: state management and business management.

As regards the ministries which are called "sector management" ministries, there are also numerous matters that must be clearly spelled out. The present situation cannot be allowed to persist. Merging one ministry with another, although reasonable in some respects, has not

resolved the problems currently being faced nor has it improved the quality of operation of the state agencies in the fields of which they are in charge.

Round Table Conference

The Renewal of Our Literature and Arts Within the Party's Cause of Renovation

42100010m Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 62-73

[Text] Bui Cong Hung: with regard to the relationship between life and literature, I maintain that the scope of life reflected in literature is not restricted to historical and political events, to activities in production and combat, even though these are important subjects and must be given special attention. We have shied away from common, everyday life for far too long. Recently, many works of art have reflected a richer, more diverse and rational life. This was the success of "Leaf Shedding Season in the Orchard," "Until October," "The Woman Who Sat Weaving," "Wait Until Spring," "A Time Long Ago," "The Wind from the Region of Sand,"... On the one hand, there is a need to reflect the life of man in a richer and more comprehensive way. On the other hand, our literature must understand how man speaks and thinks and the problems of man in the late 20th century so that we can make our contribution and join in debate with the rest of the world.

As regards the way by which reality is reflected, there was a time when we only praised the reflection of life as it exists in reality, making this our standard. But life can be reflected by many other methods: romanticism, myth, symbolism, impressionism...

As regards the impact of literature and the arts upon life, upon the revolution, what we must examine is the combined impact of very many works in many different periods and genre. We cannot demand that a work contain everything because people will only read or see this one work. If we examine a work within a broad context, our evaluation of it will be less coerced, less haphazard, less strict and less simple.

In reflecting reality, it is necessary, in my opinion, to expand everything from content and themes to form and genre. Of course, all research into this matter and everything we do to expand how we reflect reality must lie within the limits of the Vietnamese socialist realist method and be based on the achievements of our party's line on literature and the arts.

On this occasion, allow me to say that in the paper sent to the conference by Le Thanh Nhi, this matter was discussed as follows:

"Reflecting reality—this is the essence of literature, but the purpose of literature does not stop here. Using reality as its means, literature goes much further. Its goal is the improvement of man... In socialist realist literature, the

principle of reflecting the truth in life is raised to a new level and becomes the new characteristic of literature. It is the reality of life perceived, evaluated and reflected in the course of its development, that is, a diverse and changing reality consisting of things that have occurred, are occurring and will occur... This brings out in the writer a greater ability to see ahead, to make forecasts regarding the reality of life...

In this spirit, in the two recent wars of resistance, our literature produced many outstanding works which won the hearts of large numbers of readers, particularly through the honest realism of these works. The images of the two wars of resistance, the backbone of which were the people fighting and dying for the independence and freedom of the fatherland, were very deeply imprinted in the fabric of the realism of literature.

Looking back, however, we see that although the war ended more than 10 years ago, we still have not given full attention to each aspect of reality in literature. Here, we find such simplistic and one-sided views as considering the objective reality of life and reality within a work to be synonymous, only addressing one aspect of reality, presenting the truth poorly... These concepts unintentionally encourage only one kind of writing—searching for things “resembling the truth” of life in literature. In critical articles written over the past several decades, we have constantly encountered a familiar approach—comparing the reality reflected in a work to the reality of life at the places mentioned in the book...“).

Nguyen Thi Ngoc Thu: I would like to say a few words from the perspective of a writer. In my opinion, to talk about the work of today and renovation, we must recall the past, must view and evaluate it from an historical perspective and in light of the demands of renovation.

Prior to 1975, with the entire country at war, literature supported the political task: everything for victory over the U.S. aggressors, everything for the reunification of the fatherland. The writer had to constantly place himself before this noble and sacred mission and society also viewed an evaluated the writer in light of this requirement. Everything which went against, everything which adversely affected efforts to meet this requirement was criticized and rejected.

Go to progressive places, write about progressive persons...these were the appeals. There was no document forbidding us to write about bad things, about the negative. In practice, however, writing about these things was very difficult and required that the writer possess ability—first in the eyes of the editorial board of the publishing house. The short novel “My Village”—which was the product of several long visits at progressive places (where there were also bad persons and social ills)—ran into numerous difficulties and was not printed until 7 years after it had been written. Most recently, the book “Seed for Next Season”(printed in 1984) was only published because it stated on the first page: “The things

written about in my book are not directed toward any specific individual...” Recently, a young reader asked me: “Why does a book which says such bold things contain such words in its preface? But I suppose it is better for the book to carry this statement than not to be published.”

Therefore, in my opinion, when looking back on the past, we must view it from an overall perspective: the differences between war time and peace time, the contradictions between the enemy and ourselves and the internal contradictions in the struggle and in development.

I think that whereas it was simplistic and one-sided to only write about the good and only praise and commend achievements in the past, it is also radical, illogical and unrealistic to only talk about the bad, the negative and the obstacles today and ignore the beautiful aspects of life. Because, regardless of the time, life is not all good, heroic and progressive nor is it all bad and negative. Essential is the need to call things by the right name, to praise or criticize things to the proper degree so that the reader respects and admires the good, the noble and is fearful of and detests that which is bad.

I am very apprehensive about persons who present themselves as the most correct, the most progressive in every era. In the past, they loudly criticized and intimidated those who wrote about the bad and the negative. Now, these very same persons are yelling about, are degrading the writing of those years, calling it writing by a formula, calling it illustrative literature!

Some new and seemingly very minor difficulties are having a major impact upon creative efforts: both the price of paper and the cost of publishing a book are very high. To print a book, a publishing house must be heavily subsidized. As a result, there are some good books which must wait to be published. The trend toward commercialization in literature poses the danger of developing and spreading. To sell quickly, how many pages long should a book be, what is an interesting title for the book and which subjects should the book address? The writer must give much thought to what must be done so that his book is printed without having to be subsidized (because, books are only printed when they do not have to be subsidized). Some books which are not of high literary value but do satisfy the tastes of those readers who dominate the market have been printed in very large quantities and have sold very quickly, bringing in high profits. On book counters and shelves are countless love stories, adventure books, spy novels and so forth. Should the writer be brave and try to teach aesthetics to the reader or simply pursue his every taste? Are not these things that need to be examined, need to be corrected, things concerning which we must demand renovation in order to create a real, a genuine literature?

Phuong Luu: as regards evaluating things in the past, we have come to the agreement that we must take both an historical perspective and a modern perspective. However, when combining the two to shed light on and examine practical matters, we still see problems. Here, perhaps, there are also such relationships as those between strengths and weaknesses, the individual and history, criticism and heritage...which need to be examined in greater depth. If there have been times when the strengths of the individual have lessened the mistakes of history, as in Xuan Trinh's "My Vietnam," there have also been mistakes by an individual which have brought into focus the limitations of history. Therefore, the historical perspective does not mean not talking about mistakes. Conversely, taking a modern perspective does not mean ignoring achievements. Both achievements and shortcomings must be pointed out fully and one should not be diminished because of the other.

As regards mistakes in the relationship between literature-the arts and politics, the matter can, in one sense, be generalized thusly: genuine politics is the nerve center of society. It is important and also difficult. As a result, it has given rise to many "fake goods" which have spread throughout the life of society, including within science, education and so forth, not just within literature and the arts. I endorse the thinking of Nguyen Van Hanh that genuine politics and skilled leadership are those which gain the participation of each sector in social activities while insuring that the sectors retain their special characteristics. If everything is turned into politics, what is there left to lead? There are several kinds of literature and art but genuine literature and art are also opposed to such "fake" politics. But this is precisely why they are closely bound to genuine politics, particularly in the present situation...

I also endorse two aspects of the troubled thinking of Nguyen Minh Chau: literature and art which are illustrative must be cast aside and there are many illustrative works for politics. But if we say that they are illustrative because they are closely tied to politics, two obstacles emerge. One is that more than a few works are very political but not illustrative, such as "The Path We Are Following" by Nguyen Ngoc. The other is that when writing about anything, there are always very few good works but many crude illustrations. For every 100 poems, there is only one good poem.

Literature and the arts have always overflowed with inspiration associated with the nation, the people and the times. There is no field of politics, including its basic fields, that will forever be "off limits" to literature and the arts. Literature and the arts should not and must not proclaim that they are concerned solely with the human condition. In summary, we should not distinguish between literature-the arts and politics on the basis of temporary manifestations which exist at only one particular place or time, manifestations which are form only, such as breadth and narrowness, the upper and the lower, the public and the private and even the long and

the short! Although very closely tied to politics, literature and the arts are a world apart from politics. Politics is the "practical-spiritual." It can define the line to be followed and propagandize policies, but, in the end, practical problems must be solved. Literature and the arts, on the other hand, are the "spiritual-practical" (Marx), and while they must relate to practice, their main impact is upon the human soul...

As regards socialist realism, we should re-examine the official thinking of the Department of Culture, Literature and the Arts of the CPSU Central Committee (INFORMATION ON CULTURE, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS, No 1, 1988, p 60). We also have the official thinking of the general secretary and Political Bureau concerning this matter. Despite this, in my opinion, socialist realism, as a creative method, is an academic matter which must continue to be studied. Consequently, on the basis of a true desire for our country's literature to "reflect the ardent aspiration of the people and the determination of the party to bring the renovation campaign to victory," the differing opinions concerning this creative method (that it does not exist, that it is unnecessary or that there is a better method and so forth) can and should be brought forth for debate. Of course, we must not only state, but also prove our opinion, must not only propose a new concept, but also reject the entirety of an existing concept. And, in the case of some comrades, part of this rejection must be self-rejection, or self-criticism, as Miss Ngoc Thu said. This self-rejection will make rejection more serious. As I see it, there are only outmoded concepts of socialist realism to be abandoned. Socialist realism itself continues to exist through constant renewal in keeping with the development of revolutionary practice and Marxist-Leninist consciousness.

Ha Minh Duc: since the August Revolution, the party's political line, its line on literature and the arts and the realities of the revolution have brought to literature and the arts a new creativity and a new stature. In particular, in the two wars of resistance against France and the United States, literature and the arts recorded numerous achievements. Although some illustrative works were unavoidable, many works can stand the test of time. The political line of the party and the profound realities of the country were the two major sources of inspiration that had an impact upon creative efforts in literature and the arts. In this stage, there was a high degree of unity between ideals and reality, between the public and the private, between works of literature and art and their public. This was also the basis upon which the values of anti-American literary works were created. On this point, I agree with Bui Hien, Xuan Chinh and Miss Ngoc Thu: the dominant inspiration back then was a genuine inspiration, one closely associated with ideals. As Nguyen Van Hanh said, were we to do it all over again, we could not do much better.

Today, however, as we look back on those years, we clearly see the limitations of some of the works of that period. The artistic nature of works was weak. Many

aspects of life were not generalized or reflected in literature and the arts. Importance was not attached to the creative role of the artist nor was this role appropriately developed. Little attention was given to the private. In some respects, the perception and resolution of problems in works of literature and art were simplistic. Were these weaknesses in literature and the arts during the resistance against the United States inevitable? Which were the product of history? Which were the fault of individuals? Were there any limiting factors that were outside the line and policies on literature and the arts?

Since 1975, we have been somewhat slow to recognize and resolve problems being faced in literature and the arts. What we should be doing is quickly adopting and developing upon the new that is emerging in life and the art. What we should have is a more thorough and resolute attitude toward the commercialization of art and art pandering to ordinary tastes. Literature and the arts have not developed in a manner consistent with the needs of life. In some respects, literature and the arts are still of poor quality. But the past 12 years have also been a time of searching, of uncertainty in literature and the arts, a time when many truly new things have emerged in literature and the arts, from poetry and biographies to theatrical art. Although poetry is not the genre most closely associated with renovation, we do see many new things in the creative work of Y Nhi, Nguyen Duy, Nguyen Dinh Thi, Y Phuong... The contributions by Nguyen Khai and Nguyen Minh Chau to how we perceive and explain life, the new creative inspiration and the objects reflected in the work of Le Luu and the approach taken by young authors and their use of real materials in many short stories are features new to novels and biographies in recent years. I think that, in this renewal, we must forthrightly point out the limitations of works of the recent stage but must also focus our attention on analyzing, introducing and confirming the new. What is the new in literature? In which areas has it emerged and which forms has it assumed (in the different genre and among the different authors)? Once it has emerged, the new must be identified and confirmed. We must establish the most favorable conditions that we possibly can for the new to expand its creativity.

Te Hanh: I agree with Ho Si Vinh. It is true that we have been very harsh toward rightism but rarely have we criticized leftism. I also agree with Tran Do and Nguyen Van Hanh when they say that we should not view literature and the arts as the antithesis of politics but that it is also a mistake to merge them because literature and the arts have their own special characteristics.

As regards the leadership of the party, I feel that the party has made mistakes at times but I am displeased more as a citizen than as a creative person. I have supported the party through many ups and downs and my attitude is "even if they use my poems to wrap a loaf of bread, I will still follow the revolution," as the poet Henrich Hai-no [Vietnamese phonetics] said. Whether there is freedom or not is determined by the writer or

artist. Creative freedom was frequently found even in prison! You often hear someone say that you wrote more before the revolution than since the revolution. But this has nothing to do with the revolution, it is a personal decision. Whether you write or do not write is determined by you. The leadership factor is only an objective factor.

Turning to specific matters, the "humanism-masterpieces" period also saw excesses in writing. One author wrote that one summer he saw an old, solitary phoenix tree and was told by someone that it was the reincarnation of Uncle Ho. I maintain that while it was correct for us to struggle against the "humanism-masterpieces" school during that period, some steps are long overdue and for the Writers' Association to take 30 years to consider the matter of restoring some writers was far too long. The other associations have already done this, such as organizing exhibits for Nguyen Tu Nghiem, Nguyen Sang, etc. Or, in the case of a new poem, we still hold views that are incorrect. But I do not agree that all the poetry during the 40 years since the August Revolution is not as good as one new poem. When we view things incorrectly, looking back does not change anything. The same applies to "restoration." Pasternak is just being restored today but it is not because we did not see his greatness earlier. We knew he was a great talent in 1967. The same holds with Han Mac Tu. Restoration yes, but to what degree? Han Mac Tu was great but he was not lucky enough to see the revolution. Xuan Dieu was great but he did not live to see the renovation campaign of today (if I may be so blunt!). And, it has not been at all easy to get my works published. Consider, for example, the volume of lyric poems "To the North" back in 1957. But I do not think that we should nullify everything because we are in difficult times. Of course, the party has made mistakes, but even at the most difficult of times, it has still devoted much time to literature and the arts.

Ha Xuan Truong: To enliven the atmosphere, I suggest that you engage in a dialogue. Concerning the matter of assessing today from an historical perspective, as Phuong Luu said, do you agree or disagree?

Then, there is the matter of the relationship between literature-arts and politics: how do we deal with cases in which the party is not correct (this has also been asked by the party)? We remain within the collective. If the collective is wrong and we are wrong along with it, is it because we lack ability? I remember the time when Huy Can read to me the poem "To My Comrade" by Nadim Hit-met [Vietnamese phonetics] about an argument over right and wrong and the search for the truth by a communist party member: "...You believe that you possess the truth. Please, comrade, share the truth with the party. Bring the truth into the party, speak the truth for the sake of the party." Pavlov Ne-ru-da [Vietnamese phonetics] shared this thinking. In our society, in particular, where we have a flesh and blood relationship with the party, how will we deal with cases in which a writer or artist disagrees with the party?

You have expressed many thoughts about literature-the arts and reality. But it is necessary for us to take an objective look at where renewal has occurred in our literature and the arts since the 6th Party Congress. Is it not, as some have said, that we are simply saying today things that were not or could not be said in past years? But has it just been since the 6th Congress in 1987 that literature and the arts have flourished? Are our assessments of the achievements recorded in recent years in literary and art activities to celebrate the major holidays of 1985 still correct? The basis of the achievements were works of art. Consider, for example "A Time Long Ago." In which year was it written, Le Luu? (Le Luu: it was written in 1981). I suggest that my comrades here express their thoughts concerning this.

Many comrades have emphasized the responsibility of the writer and artist to the party's renovation campaign. In my opinion, this is an issue of decisive importance in the contributions made by literature and the arts to the party's cause of renovation.

Te Hanh: I would like to say one thing more: I do not consider Nguyen Tu Nghiem and Nguyen Sang to be like Le Dat and Tran Dan. I only meant to say that the Fine Arts Association acted earlier.

Ha Xuan Truong: I understand what Te Hanh is saying very well. I, too, am concerned with this matter. In my opinion, there was virtually not one case similar to that of the Writers' Association anywhere else within the fine arts nor even in the theatrical arts, cinematography or music; it can be said that everyone in these sectors who made mistakes in the "humanism-masterpieces" case continued to be active and became association members once again. One became a member of an executive committee, one has written articles in the party paper and been a representative overseas... Why did this situation occur within the Writers' Association? I would also like to take this occasion to state that while I was fulfilling my responsibilities within the Propaganda-Training Department and, later, within the Culture, Literature and Art Department of the Party Central Committee, I reminded the leaders of the Writers' Association about this matter. But I must confess that I only participated in the struggle over viewpoint when the struggle first began. I subsequently went to school and did not know those who were disciplined within the Writers' Association. I also did not know who was a member of the association and who was not. Now that an opinion has been expressed by the Secretariat, the Writers' Association should follow it and do the correct thing. When we talk about the leadership of the party (that which is right as well as that which is wrong), our analysis must be soundly based and we must avoid generalities. If we talk but do not analyze, we will easily fall into subjectivism and convenience.

Phan Cu De: Concerning party leadership and the relationship between politics and literature-the arts, many articles have recently shed light on these matters from

new perspectives deserving of attention. However, there are some matters which, in my opinion, need to be discussed. For example, there is the assertion that "the dominant trend" in literature and the arts during the 30 years of war was to place sole emphasis upon politics, to make politics synonymous with literature and the arts, to make literary criticism synonymous with propaganda-training criticism. Or, in the "stage of illustrative literature and art," writers and artists only performed the work of giving feeling to political themes, only voiced the sentiments and thinking provided by the state. In the field of theory, there was "absolute domination" by the voice of authorized criticism, by authorized thinking. And, besides authorized criticism, there was criticism by flattery, the "servant" and "companion" of authorized criticism! During the past several decades, due to the the "arbitrariness and oppression in the leadership of literature and the arts, and the habit of rehashing the past," creative freedom has existed only for illustrative literature. This is the literature of writers who have lost their heads and literary works that have lost their ideological identity.

The observations previously made regarding the creative freedom of writers and artists and the relationship between politics and literature-the arts are radical in tone and lack a basis in science. Even back in 1979-1980, no one ever said the word "negate." However, the overriding contents and way of speaking of such literature and art gave the same impression and caused the same harm as caused by negation, thus causing many leaders, theorists, critics and writers to raise their voices in criticism. If the "common characteristic" of literature and the arts over the past several decades has been "proper realism," socialist realist literature and art have not existed. This thinking was incorrect back in 1979. Today, in light of the assessment made in the Political Bureau resolution issued in December 1987, it is still incorrect. The attitude of negation is stronger today than it was then. This attitude is not consistent with the genuine spirit of adopting new thinking. Was it accidental or solely for propaganda purposes that the Soviet Union selected 15 volumes of modern Vietnamese literature to publish? Over the years, in documents, many party leaders have reminded political cadres to respect the initiative and creativity of the artist, to give attention to the special characteristics and separate laws of literature and the arts. However, at certain times and within certain localities, agencies and journals, we continue to commit shortcomings and make mistakes because of our immature understanding of the theory of literature and the arts, because the mode of management is still coercive and undemocratic in some respects, because of the severe constraints imposed by war time conditions and because cultural exchange with foreign countries has not been expanded. I maintain that these shortcomings and mistakes do not, for the most part, stem from the nature of the party's political line or its line on literature and the arts. The historic victory in 1975 through which we

defeated the full-scale war of the U.S. imperialists was the victory of our party's correct and creative political line, military line and literature-art line.

Through these debates, we have come to agree with one another that what was meant by saying in years past that "literature and the arts serve politics" was that literature and the arts served the party's political line, not that the literary-art form served the political form or that literary-art cadres served political cadres. We have also gained a deeper understanding of the special features of literature and the arts compared to politics. However, we have not yet said much about the reciprocal impact they have upon each other, especially the unity between politics and literature-the arts in the class struggle, the national struggle and the molding of the new, socialist man.

Some comrades maintain that politics is the voice of the public, is the interests of the majority, while literature is the voice of the private, is the voice of an individual, is the personal suffering experienced by one person. In actuality, no such distinction exists. Literature is both public and private or, to be more precise, literature reflects the public through the private, through the voice and style of the writer.

As regards the freedom of writers and artists, some comrades assert that during the 30 years of war, writers were restricted by politics and had no right to think on their own; that politics was legal jurisdiction, was the official mechanism whereas art was non-official consciousness, thus making a "clash" unavoidable. These opinions must be debated. To my way of thinking, we should not speak in generalities about politics or about literature and the arts. Of course, to guarantee creative freedom, the mode of management must be truly democratic. But the essence of creative freedom under our system lies in the artist voluntarily aligning himself with the common cause of the nation, of the party. Lastly, I would like to say that our renovation must be based in science and true solidarity.

Nguyen Van Luu: Our literature and arts must renew themselves in every respect on the basis of solidarity and science. As regards theoretical views and the general line on literature and the arts, I personally feel that they need not be discussed again. What needs to be discussed is our level of understanding and application of them, our method of organization.

For example, in theory, we talk about the function of literature and the arts of making discoveries and perceiving things. In practice, however, this has not been done correctly. We assert the absolute correctness of the lines and resolutions of the party and that literature and the arts need only reflect reality in accordance with these lines and resolutions. This demand has its own reasons. But if we only stress this aspect, we will cause literature and the arts to be less dynamic in this function.

As regards the relationship between politics and literature-the arts, it is clear that socialist politics and socialist literature and art are united by the common goal of serving man. But it must be realized that politics is the generalization of life for the purpose of organizing life in line with this generalization while literature and the arts are the generalized reflection through artistic images which possess the depths of soul and sentiment of the paths of life that are being or will be travelled. The generalizations associated with politics and literature-the arts might differ, but they do supplement each other. Here, the experience of Nguyen Khai is very deserving of attention: the writer discovers and generalizes life in accordance with the views and line of the party but when practical aspects of life differ from these views and line, the writer must possess the consciousness of an artist and dare to speak the truth, not be evasive.

From the standpoint of theory, we always emphasize the role of literature and the arts and the function and inclination of writer and artist. But, in practice, such has not been the case with investments or with how we have treated writers and artists. This is not to mention that organizational work in literature and the arts is very weak. Recently, the opinion has been expressed that we have turned writers into state civil servants who perform literary work. Actually, in our country, the majority of writers are left-handed, that is to say, they do not earn their living through writing. The policy on emoluments does not bind the writer to the value of his work and does not provide the writer with the minimum conditions needed to live and write, that is to say, the way things are organized is very unreasonable. Therefore, very few writers are conscious of the number of lines or pages they write or the quality of their works.

Duong Vien: I recently attended the fine arts conference held in the Soviet Union. The general secretary of the Soviet Association of Fine Artists said that the creative method of Soviet literature and art is socialist realism but that they are abandoning tenets of old theory which are rigid and have become dogmatic.

I agree with much that he said. As Xuan Trinh also pointed out, I also work in art and the matter of primary concern to me is talent (both under the circumstances of yesterday and today). We must concern ourselves with the development of talent and make it possible for this to happen. Following the 2nd Congress of the Association of Fine Artists, Ha Xuan Truong and I discussed the possibility of organizing exhibits in the South and the North of the paintings of Nguyen Tu Nghiem, Nguyen Sang and so forth so that the public could assess their work. During the past several years, more than 40 artists and groups of artists have been exhibited.

In the 1960's, our fine arts were highly praised at exhibits of paintings of 12 socialist countries. Our association was also awarded a prize at the Socialist Realism Exhibit

in Bulgaria. Recently, in a 9 country exhibit held here, our friends evaluated Vietnamese paintings as being in touch with the times and being natural in nature. This is because we have talents.

I also agree with Miss Thieu Mai concerning "literature-the arts and reality." But, in the realities of our creative work, the most important elements are still the talent and soul of the artist. In the resistance against the United States, hundreds of persons who worked in the field of art went to the battlefield. More than 40 of these persons were killed. But only a few writers produced major works. Or, in the case of Nguyen Sang, although he did not go to the South but did live with the problems of the South, he was able to paint the picture "Bulwark of the Fatherland," a painting of high value.

Now that we seek true renovation, we must correctly evaluate works and authors and adopt appropriate procedures and policies regarding writers and artists, not create new difficulties. The party has already talked about the mistakes of a general nature that have been made. The specific mistakes made within the sector must be clearly pointed out by us. Renovation depends first upon each of us. As General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh said: "We must first save ourselves. For talent to develop, we must save ourselves first." Another matter to which attention must be given, as Nguyen Van Luu and Phan Cu De said, is the degree to which we have been right or wrong. Now, it is necessary to correctly point out, to clearly establish that all the jobs we are doing now are being done to open the way to the future. We should not turn our backs on one another. We must move ahead on the basis of tradition, on the basis of each generation carrying on the work of the preceding generation, even into the 21st century. At the same time, we must intensify the teaching of aesthetic consciousness and struggle against today's commercial, fashionable tastes.

Tu Son: Having observed many debates, I feel that we are not far apart in our views but are far apart when it comes to specific issues, to personalities. Actually, one person sometimes might not be satisfied with another because of the way he speaks: a few specific incidents are blown out of proportion and become a viewpoint which the other person finds difficult to accept. For example, Phan Cu De said: "There is a tendency to negate the system of socialist realist literature." If he were to not use the word "tendency" and dropped the words "the system of," there would be no problem at all. In the past, we often had a "superstitious" mentality. In practice, there have also been times when the party or leaders have said things that were wrong. No one dares to negate the achievements of the past because to negate the past is to negate the work of the generation who preceded us.

Looking back over the past 10 years, I see that there were signs of renovation some years ago in more than a few works which dared to squarely face the truth through the conscience of the writer. But the atmosphere back then

did not permit these works to emerge, to be printed in papers. Today, it would be no problem to put in print the articles of Hoang Ngoc Hien or the essays of Nguyen Ngoc but, in light of circumstances back then, things had to turn out the way that they did.

In the evaluation of literature and art in years past, we should not blame everything on the party. Often times, the thoughts expressed were only those of an individual (not a leader). I feel that Truong Chinh and Pham Van Dong viewed our literature and art very soberly: our literature has not kept pace with the times and must avoid writing by a formula, brevity and "painting a rosy picture." I have compiled the following statistics: of the 73 so called "literature and art" cases or "incidents involving a problem" since 1960, only 3 "cases" have been the subject of party documents. These are: the "humanism" case, the play "Nguyen Trai in Dong Quan" by Nguyen Dinh Thi and the film "Hanoi in Whose Eyes?". Practically all the other "cases" were the result of critical circles tormenting themselves. I endorsed the opinion of Phan Cu De that everything we say must be based on a specific document, must be scientific. But the true "authorities" today are the editors, not our force of critics.

As regards democracy, there is still the problem of one newspaper arguing with another. It would be better for each paper to carry many different opinions, the opinions of persons debating one another. This is the only way to discover the truth and avoid giving the impression that there are different factions and groups.

I also agree with Duong Vien: we have been giving most of our attention to right and wrong, not to whether a work is good. We have encouraged egalitarianism, not given attention to talent.

One problem which cries out for a solution is the very strong trend today toward commercialization and business in literature and the arts. Those who are part of this trend do not want to publish "internal" books, particularly research books, only "external" books—spy novels, love stories and so forth.

Ha Xuan Truong (concluding the conference): I thank you all for attending and applaud your contributions. Very regrettably, many comrades sent theses to the conference or said they would attend but were unexpectedly prevented by their work, such as Nguyen Dinh Thi, Du, Nguyen Ngoc, Le Thanh Nghi and others. Due to our limited facilities, we were unable to expand this round table seminar to include many other persons who also wanted to participate and were able to do so. I ask that you convey our apologies to all of them.

One day of debate is a very short debate. However, we have touched upon all the matters that were raised, some of which have been clarified:

—The need for renovation in literature and the arts is closely tied to the need of the revolution for renovation.

—To adopt a new approach, we must evaluate and explain in a scientific manner the achievements as well as the mistakes of literature and the arts yesterday, doing so from an historical perspective and from the perspective of the views and demands of today.

—Literature and the arts are a part of the entire cause of the party. Therefore, it is necessary for them to be under the leadership of the party and for them to struggle for the line and goals of the party. The literature and arts of every social system have the task of defending and building this system. As the Political Bureau resolution said: creative freedom is a vital prerequisite to creating real values in culture, literature and the arts. But it was the party itself that brought this creative freedom to us and the essence of the creative freedom of our writers and artists is contained within the cause of revolution being led by the party and is defined by the responsibility and obligations of each of us.

—Renovation consists of renovating the leadership of the party (from the management mechanism and policies of literature and the arts to the way in which guidance is provided, including instructing and educating the masses in aesthetic tastes) and renovation of ourselves, the development of a higher sense of responsibility and the development of talent by writers and artists.

—In renovation, we must strengthen the factor of criticism in works of art by creating, with profoundly critical significance, negative characters but not give light attention to developing positive central characters, particularly characters representative of the renovation campaign today. This is difficult to do, but it is the ultimate goal of our country's revolutionary literature and arts.

We have not discussed at much length or in deep detail the matter of how renovation should be carried out or the relationship between literature and realism, the socialist realist method. Our evaluation of literature and the arts in the past, especially since 1975, is a matter which we must continue to analyze in a scientific, honest and objective way. Even at this conference, differing opinions have been expressed. It is also necessary to accurately assess the situation in literature and the arts in 1987. We must correctly evaluate the line and leadership of the party in literature and the arts during the various periods, especially since 1975. The creative freedom of writers and artists in cases in which there is a disagreement with the observations and positions, even the line, of the party, the relationship between the freedom of choice of the masses with regard to their appreciation of art and the role of teaching aesthetics in accordance with the line of the party...these are matters that we must continue to discuss. TAP CHI CONG SAN, with the

assistance of its collaborators present and not present here today will try to participate along with literary and art circles in solving problems within the scope of its function.

We applaud your forthrightness, your respect for one another and your constructive attitude in the matters you have addressed and thank you very much for the trust you have placed in the party's review.

Footnote

1. Concerning the "humanism-masterpieces" issue, the Party Secretariat expressed the following opinions: this was a political case concerning which a conclusion was reached and which was resolved. It will not be re-examined. At present, the Secretariat has agreed to allow the Department of Culture, Literature and Art of the Party Central Committee and concerned agencies to examine in detail each writer and artist who participated in the "humanism-masterpieces" case and each of their works and to consider whether to accept them back into the Vietnam Writers' Association on the basis of the attitude and activities of each person (which is not to be called restoring membership)(Ngoc Le).

Letters to the Editorial Staff

A Matter Which Concerns Each Person, Each Household

42100010n Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 74-75

[Letter from Le My Van]

[Text] In light of present circumstances, many efforts have been made to improve the benefit policies regarding retired cadres of our party and state, efforts which reflect the superior nature of our socialist system. However, there are some justified complaints concerning the implementation and application of these policies. Here, allow me to cite two problems:

1. Boosting the morale and molding the thinking of retirees: the concept "concern by the state" for retirees is usually with concern and encouragement for retirees on the part of the leaders and cadres of agencies and enterprises—the places where retirees worked and to which they had close ties for several decades. But without relatively uniform guidance (I say "relatively," never "absolutely") by the state, implementation becomes haphazard and causes some very complicated thinking and questions to arise. For example, on holidays or Tet, the minister of one sector might personally invite retired cadres to the ministry to celebrate Tet and present them with gifts. In another sector, the chief might personally visit the homes of retirees to inquire about their well being, bringing along a rather large gift. At some agencies, New Year's cards might be sent to retirees, but only if it is convenient. More than a few agencies do nothing at all.

Within a family, when the husband, wife and children all work at different places, they tell one another about their agencies, about whether the concern for them, the fairness and the unity at their agency are good or bad, thus causing unnecessary hard feelings and even bringing an unspoken feeling of sadness to retirees! In the municipalities and other areas, this is surely even more evident.

In Hanoi, retired persons who are not party members (the number is quite large) feel abandoned and lost. They do not, of course, have the party. Their agency trade union no longer looks after them. No one from the ward or subward trade union ever comes to inquire about how they are doing. The elders teams were considered to have ceased functioning long ago. The team of retired persons goes all year without holding a single meeting. Subward clubs have yet to be established and agency clubs exist at some places but not at others. And, not everyone can go to the Thang Long Club. Even at the large clubs, facilities are very limited. Even the smallest of pleasures are difficult to realize. Retired persons do not dare to dream about taking a vacation or a trip. A deficit weighs heavily upon the everyday lives of retirees.

Should there not be broader organizations which will give retirees an opportunity to come together, meet one another and be close to society and their friends, thus giving them a longer and happier life?

2. Procedures and policies should be improved. Not one retired person, whether he has been retired for many years or is recently retired, can readily answer the following questions with any degree of certainty: how much do you receive in pension? On which day is it paid? Are you paid a price subsidy? That is, do you know when you are paid and how much? They know even less about the goods available at canteens. Everything depends upon the team chief. If he is a good and honest person, the team's members are remembered. If he is not, team members suffer. There are many complaints about team chiefs and calls for their resignation. The response of party committees is: "You'll have to put up with it, the administration does not have enough personnel to replace him!" This is truly a simple response. If it is true that personnel are unavailable, what do the war invalids-social welfare sector and the concerned agencies which manage retirees think and what improvements can they make to meet the requirements of the millions of persons who depend upon them? Our income is not much compared to our current needs but relatives of retirees still have to go to the home of the team chief several times to inquire about our pensions, even though they are hesitant to do so. There are also not many canteen goods available but, at one place or another, fees, transportation charges, change for purchases made, surpluses and shortages, distribution and the weighing and measuring of goods have given rise to regrettable cases of shorting customers and cheating.

That state agencies lack personnel is hard to believe. They have the personnel but the facts are that these personnel lack a sense of responsibility, lack compassion

and leave things up to others. It is also common place for these personnel to not be democratic and to not openly speak the whole truth so that they gain the understanding of retirees.

Therefore, I respectfully suggest that a pension fund in the form of a vertical sector extending from the central to the local levels be immediately established as part of a logically related ministry or sector (there is no lack of experience concerning this matter in friendly countries). The pressing problem is: today it is me, tomorrow it is you. This is a law. I respectfully ask the state to concern itself with this matter at an early date and establish regular procedures so that each person, each family can live with a feeling of assurance.

The World: Issues and Events

Scientific Conference in Berlin: "Socialism and the New Stage of the Scientific-Technological Revolution"

42100010o Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 76-79

[Text] Under the title "Socialism and the New Stage of the Scientific-Technological Revolution," the Conference of Editors-in-Chief of the Theoretical Reviews of the Communist and Worker Parties of the Socialist Countries organized by UNITY REVIEW, the theoretical organ of the German Socialist Unity Party, was held in Berlin (GDR) from 22 to 24 March 1988.

Participating in the conference were 15 delegations: the GDR, Cuba, Laos, Rumania, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the USSR, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Vietnam and the review ISSUES OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM.

With the exception of the Lao delegation, which was headed by the Lao ambassador to the GDR (because conditions at home prevented them from sending a delegate), the delegations were headed by the editor or assistant editor-in-chief of the review, who delivered the review's presentation. In between presentations, the delegates discussed various issues: the material conditions and cadres needed to develop science and technology; the economy and ideological work; specialization and the role of Marxism-Leninism; the party's leadership of science and technology once the party has become the party in power; the class struggle and science-technology; science and technology in the service of the people; science-technology and world peace...because the amount of time available was limited, the delegates concentrated on discussing only a number of issues. A number of other issues were either not discussed or only touched upon briefly.

Through their presentations and discussions, the delegations informed one another of the achievements and difficulties, the views and perspectives concerning the

scientific-technological revolution that is now developing very strongly in the world. At the same time, they raised a number of important theoretical questions related to the cause of restructuring and renovation of the socialist countries today. The conference confirmed the role of the theoretical reviews of the various parties in disseminating correct perceptions concerning the scientific-technological revolution and stimulating the development of this revolution.

Below are summaries of the main opinions expressed by the various delegations:

SOCIALIST CUBA (Cuba): science and technology are a world issue. Reactionary forces are using science and technology to attack the underdeveloped countries. The socialist countries must help one another to develop science and technology in order to prove that socialism, not capitalism, is the standard bearer in this field. Cuba attaches very much importance to ideological work, to teaching about socialist ethics, about the responsibility of each person toward socialist ownership. Molding socialists and heightening the awareness of the laborer are the matters of foremost importance in socialist education. Cuba is focusing on bringing about development in the field of biology and developing the electronics industry.

THE SOCIALIST ERA (Rumania): the scientific-technological revolution within each country cannot be separated from the development of science and technology in the world. In the development of science and technology, attention must be given to the issue of social fairness, democracy must be emphasized and centralism must be opposed. Rumania considers it important to conserve minerals, use man-made fuels and put microcomputers into use. The achievements of science and technology over the past 20 years are the foundation for carrying out the task of developing science and technology under the plans for 1981-1990 and up until the year 2000.

KADAYA AL-ASR (the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen): we are stressing the role of the socialist system in the development of science and technology and the assistance provided to the underdeveloped countries. We maintain that science and technology are a field in the ideological struggle.

KOMMUNIST (Soviet Union): it is necessary to clearly point out the pressing need for restructuring and the relationship between science-technology and restructuring in the Soviet Union. The political tasks of the land of the Soviets are to create an efficient economic structure, develop production in depth and promote the advancement of science and technology. We must improve the quality of the education system, which is the base of the country's scientific and technological potentials. We must bring to light the shortcomings committed with regard to preparing for the new wave of the scientific-technological revolution, especially in the electronics

sector and computer science. Also, there was the mistake that was made in establishing integration between science and technology in support of the military and science and technology in support of the economy: we concentrated a rather large force of scientists and much wealth in military science and technology while making the military a closed, secret field, which led to difficulties in putting military science and technology to work supporting the economy. We have shown that the Western countries hope that the Soviet Union will fall behind in its use of science and technology in support of the economy and that they will win in the competition between the two systems, which would pose a danger to the security of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. Therefore, there must be a strict reordering of "priorities." We have emphasized the role of man in science and technology and the need for the restructuring campaign to serve man, to serve the humanization of socialism. We have stressed that importance must be attached to training scientists and that appropriate attention must be given to persons who work in science and technology. The CEMA member countries must help one another raise the common level of development of the socialist community.

CAN LAO (the People's Democratic Republic of Korea): we have been stressing the need for self-reliance in the development of science and technology. The People's Democratic Republic of Korea has built socialism on its own upon the rubble of war and recorded numerous achievements in the chemical and cement industries, in automation, etc.

PARTY LIFE (Mongolia): we have been pointing out the importance of integration with and assistance from the fraternal countries, particularly the Soviet Union, in the development of science and technology in Mongolia. We have stressed the need to combine the creativity of each country with utilizing the achievements of the fraternal countries. It is in this direction that Mongolia is developing its economy in depth.

NEW THINKING (Czechoslovakia): it is necessary to intensify international cooperation, particularly among the socialist countries, to avoid groping about to discover things that have already been discovered in the world. Science and technology are not the private work of scientists, but potentials for the development of all society. We must make information available and combat patterning what we do after what others do, combat egalitarianism and anything which reduces the zeal of scientists. The party absolutely must lead science and technology.

THE NEW PATH (Poland): to acquire the conditions needed to develop science and technology, greater investments must be made. The majority of youths must be drawn into scientific and technical activities. We must combat bureaucracy, which isolates science and technology from production. Scientific and technical advances must be closely tied to creating a democratic

atmosphere in economic activities and must encourage the display of creativity by scientists. Appropriate ways must be devised to guarantee leadership of science and technology by the party.

THE NEW AGE (Bulgaria): full importance must be attached to the human factor in the development of science and technology. At the same time, the other factors within society must also be taken into consideration. We must develop a new model of science and technology. We must raise the standards of the masses, expand socialist democracy and combat bureaucracy and excessive centralism. We must train a corps of scientists who serve socialism. This is an issue to which the social sciences must respond. The scientific-technological revolution depends upon the structure of society, upon its human structure.

TAP CHI CONG SAN (Vietnam) (see complete text on page 22):

SOCIAL COMMENTARY (Hungary): in addition to the basic obstacle to technological advances in the economy of Hungary, namely, a shortage of capital, there is also the problem of inefficiency in the activities of foreign trade and home trade. The success of the socio-economic development program depends, to an important degree, upon how well we revamp the leadership of the party and the work of the government and, generally speaking, how well we revamp the entire system of political agencies. It is not just the scientific-technological revolution, but also the powerful influences of the ideological turning point reached in the world during the past decade which demand that Hungary quickly carry out a vigorous renovation campaign.

SEPTEMBER (Ethiopia): in Ethiopia, in order to take part in the scientific-technological revolution, it is of pressing importance that we promote education and raise the cultural standards of the people, the vast majority of whom are peasants. The current economic situation, especially the prolonged drought, pose the threat of more serious famine and unemployment among several million persons.

UNITY (the GDR): we must develop upon the strengths of socialism and accelerate the development of science and technology in a manner consistent with the conditions of each country. Importance must be attached to improving the quality of education and familiarizing students with science and technology at an early date. We must provide training and raise the scientific-technical standards of cadres and workers. There must be concern for social issues and the full scope of the life of man. Importance must be attached to closely tying science and technology to production. The slow development of science and technology within the GDR in past years was due to our incorrect perception of the role of science and technology and the relationship between production forces and production relations. Being well

versed in and using science and technology are a fundamental task of the party. The party must create the conditions for science and technology to develop. It must teach politics and ideology to scientists and oppose bourgeois ideological tendencies. There is a close relationship between the scientific-technological revolution and the structure of society, man, specialized-occupational standards, education and the culture of man and nature. The struggle for peaceful coexistence does not exclude class struggle or opposition between the two systems. Countries must develop science and technology on their own but this does not mean that countries cannot integrate with others in order to be able to use each other's achievements in labor.

ISSUES OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM (the theoretical and information review of the communist and worker parties): we have been stressing the issues of struggling against the threat of nuclear war and correctly establishing the relationship between the class struggle and peaceful coexistence, between the class struggle and the scientific-technological revolution. We have pointed out that we must know how to use the scientific and technical achievements of the capitalist countries: society is always changing and the development of science and technology also raise new problems which must be resolved. The review will try to present the experiences of countries in the scientific-technological revolution and specific paths which will help to overcome the difficulties encountered in building socialism.

After meeting for 2 days, M. Banasac, member of the central committee of the German Socialist Unity Party and editor-in-chief of *UNITY REVIEW*, concluded the conference.

Following the conference E-gon Kren-xo [Vietnamese phonetics], member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the German Socialist Unity Party, held a reception for delegation heads. During the reception, he reported to them on the major features of the situation surrounding the effort to "perfect developed socialism" in the GDR.

During the next 2 days, the delegations visited Erfurt, the largest electronics center of the GDR, where the East Germans reported on their efforts to implement the economic strategy of the German Socialist Unity Party, especially with regard to carrying out and being the master of the scientific-technological revolution.

Concerning "A Reasonable Tri-Dimensional Strategic Border" Theory

42100010p Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 5, May 88 pp 79-81

[Article by Phan Lang]

[Text] "Pursuing a Reasonable Tri-Dimensional Strategic Border"—this was the title of a lengthy article by Tu Quang Du published in the 3 April 1987 edition of

LIBERATION ARMY Newspaper (China). It was not surprising that immediately after this article appeared, it drew the special attention of public opinion in all countries of the world, most importantly in the countries of Southeast Asia, whose "reasonable three dimensions" about China.

Of course, it is not possible here to present the complete text of this long, 6,000 word, article. But it is possible to present excerpts of those passages of the article which contain the most information.

Tu Quang Du maintains that there are two, not just one, concepts of border: in addition to the geographical border, there is also a strategic border. He defines these borders as follows: "geographical border refers to boundary, to the scope of territory and the corresponding territorial waters and air space. Strategic border refers to geographical border, to the space related to national interests which the military forces of a country can, in practical terms, control."

Analyzing the reciprocal relationship between geographical border and strategic border, this spokesperson for Beijing ruling circles continues:

"...The geographical border and the strategic border differ. The former has as its standard of international recognition national territory and the corresponding territorial waters and air space. The latter is not limited by the territory and corresponding territorial waters and air space of a nation." On the other hand, it is also possible for a mutation to occur between the two. For example, when the strategic border of a country is smaller than its geographical border for a long period of time and this country is unable to bring the two together, the geographical border will become smaller than the strategic border and this country will lose a portion of its territory. Conversely, if a country is able to effectively and permanently control the strategic border lying outside its geographical border, this could lead to expansion of its geographical border."

The above is the presentation of this theory in "principle." What follows is the author's application of these "principles" to the realities of China:

"...The strategic border determines the space within which a nation exists. Although it consists of three dimensions, it is especially identified with a country's space at sea. In the case of coastal countries, the exclusive economic zone at sea, the continental shelf, petroleum and natural gas zones...sometimes even play the role of determining the country's existence and development. China is a large country with many natural resources. Despite this, natural resources on the mainland are limited. On the momentum of development of the economy and science-technology and as we continue to use the resources on the mainland, we need the sea very much in order to take from it many different means of production and consumption and gain a larger space

in which to live... In an age of very highly developed military technology such as the present age, China needs the sea very much and must look for every way to extend its battlefield from its geographical border to its strategic border in order to defend itself from afar, give itself advance warning and expand its strategic reach."

Such is the entirety of the reasoning and arguments behind the "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory. Its main points can be summarized as follows:

1) The border of a nation is not "immutable." Even if "internationally recognized," it can still expand depending upon two factors: the need and the ability of the country to expand its strategic border.

2) The geographical border can shrink and become smaller than the strategic border and vice versa. This movement is determined by the ability of the military forces of each country to "control the strategic border in practical terms."

3) The strategic border is tri-dimensional but, to China, expansion at sea is vital.

Could it be any clearer? Beijing ruling circles have themselves revealed to the people of the world the whole of their ambition and scheme together with some plans developed long ago, particularly since the founding of the PRC in 1949.

The "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory is a crude distortion of every fundamental international law. It casts aside and forthrightly rejects all the common understandings that have always been held by the world concerning the borders between nations. It advances specious reasoning which opens the way for redrawing the maps of the territories of countries.

The "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory also extols the law of the jungle: "survival of the fittest." It brazenly asserts that movement between the geographical border and the strategic border is "a practical matter" determined by whether the military forces of countries are, "in practical terms," strong or weak.

The "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory can also be viewed as a black and white declaration, as an agenda of Beijing ruling circles for the years ahead, one aimed at carrying out their Asia-Pacific strategy. This specious theory is irrefutable proof that Beijing's expansionism is the most serious threat to peace and stability in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia.

Of course, the countries on the South China Sea did not have to wait for this article to be published in LIBERATION ARMY Newspaper to realize that "the Beijing dragon has begun to show its teeth," as an Indonesian paper recently wrote following a series of incidents caused by Chinese naval forces in the region of Vietnam's Spratly Islands.

Several decades ago, when "China's military forces could not 'exercise control in practical terms,'" calls were heard from the ruling circles of this country "to send 500 million peasants down to control Southeast Asia."

The peoples of the countries in the region of the South China Sea have every reason to be concerned about and must attentively watch China's actions, especially the truly extraordinary efforts they are putting into the modernization of their navy with a view toward "expanding their space at sea." Their Southern Fleet has grown very rapidly. It now numbers more than 700 warships, which include atomic powered submarines built by China. Hainan Island has been elevated in administrative terms to become China's 30th province and has been developed into a huge naval and air base supporting the military activities of China's navy in the South China Sea.

On 31 January 1988, having attacked and occupied Vietnam's Paracel Islands in 1974, China sent warships into the waters off the Spratly Islands, which resulted in the 14 March incident. Today, they occupy Gaven, Kenan, Chu Thap, Chau Vien, Gac Ma, Xu Bi and other islands of Vietnam.

Occasionally, history seems to repeat itself. In the early 1930's, in conjunction with frantic efforts to build and develop their forces and militarize the industry of Nazi Germany, the Hitler clique also made rather extensive theoretical preparations with a view toward opening the way for and defending the acts of aggression we later witnessed in World War II. At that time, there emerged the "philosopher" Spengler and his "living space" theory. Today, if we delete a few words and change a few dates, we see that this theory and Tu Quang Du's "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory are twins.

The "living space" theory and its proponents were thrown onto the trash heap of history. The ultimate fate awaiting the "tri-dimensional strategic border" theory is certainly no different.

From the Publications of Fraternal Countries

Democracy, Dictatorship and Self-Management by the People: The Concepts
Prior to and Under Socialism
42100010g Hanoi 1987 CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 5, May 88 pp 82-88

[Article by Thanh My]

[Text] Democracy, dictatorship and self-management by democratic people prior to and under socialism are issues addressed by Anatoli Butenko, Doctor of Philosophy and professor at the Moscow National University, in a number of his recent works.

Below are summaries of his opinions deserving of attention concerning these issues as presented in his book "The Party Within the Political System of Socialist Society" published by APN Publishing House (USSR) in 1987.

Democracy, Dictatorship and Self-Management by the People: The Concepts

Without going into detail and based solely on the most commonly held views, democracy is, above everything else, the most important achievement of mankind. It is a method whereby each citizen can resolve the most important issues of life in accordance with the principle of majority rule. This method was established and has been refined in the process of world history.

As a form of political power in a society divided into classes, democracy is the opposite of dictatorship, which is another form of this power. The difference between these two forms of power within a society based on classes is: democracy is the form of class rule in which the masses still have certain authority and freedoms, in which the law permits them to influence the resolution of vital issues whereas dictatorship is the form of class rule in which the authority and freedoms of the masses are restricted if not totally eliminated, in which the law does not permit the people to express their will.

However, the two forms of political power in a society based on classes are only opposite in relative terms. From the perspective of its essence and historical role, dictatorship by a revolutionary class is much more progressive than political democracy of a reactionary class because this dictatorship is in the interests of the majority.

And what about democracy and self-management by the people?

Democracy is a form of management in which methods and statutes of the state are still used, that is, the management function and the executive function are still separate. Self-management by the people is a form of management which demands that state methods and statutes be abandoned. In other words, democracy is a form of state management while self-management by the people is a non-state form of management.

But there is no "wall" separating these two forms of management. The path to self-management by the people is that of democratizing state management activities and gaining the increasingly widespread participation of workers and farmers in the management of state affairs on the momentum of the development of their overall culture and their political culture. This, of course, can only be accomplished under the conditions of socialism and the maximum democratization of society.

There are two different degrees of self-management by the people. In the initial stage of communism, or the stage of socialism, it is socialist self-management. In the later stage, or under communism, it is communist self-management.

Socialist self-management is a form of management in which society must continue to use state methods and statutes. Consequently, it is still not possible to completely eliminate certain contradictions between the management function and the executive function, between the "managed" and the "managers," between the interests of those who manage "the public work of society" and the interests of those persons who place their trust in them to manage these public works and those persons who have been appointed or elected to perform certain functions. Of course, although it is still associated with the state, socialist self-management is a system of managing the work of the state and society in a democratic manner, is a management system which not only serves working people, but is also gradually undertaken by them. For this reason, socialist self-management is a very important stage in the advance to communist self-management.

Communist self-management is a form of non-state, non-political management. Here, all functions of state power, with the exception of none, are directly fulfilled by the people. Of course, this can only be achieved where and when participation by virtually every working person in the management of the work of society is guaranteed.

Democracy Prior to and Under Capitalism

The first democratic system was the non-political democracy or, to be more correct, the pre-political democracy of tribal society.

When societies based on classes emerged to take the place of tribal societies, pre-political democracy, which expressed the will of each person and the principle of majority rule, became political dictatorship, became dictatorship by a class and reflected the will of the exploiting classes and the principle of minority rule. This dictatorship did not abolish democracy. It only caused democracy to begin to assume a political form, a state form, one reflecting state power, reflecting the political rule of the economic ruling classes in societies based on classes.

As the pre-socialist societies based on classes developed, the political nature of democracy underwent distinct and unavoidable changes. As production developed, populations grew and large nations came into being, direct participation by all members of society in resolving the issues of life could not be achieved. Thus, beside universal democracy, the next form of democracy emerged: parliamentary democracy. The results of this further complication of social functions were: persons were divided into the "managed" and "managers" and the

extent to which each person could participate in the resolution of national issues became, after a time, the standard of the law. But because it was dependent upon supplementary conditions, the exercise of this power was guaranteed less and less as time went by. In the end, with the emergence of antagonistic classes, democracy became one of the means for protecting and realizing the economic interests of the ruling class, became one of the state-class forms, a form of class rule.

Together with the development of political democracy, democratic bodies (such as legislative councils, parliaments, commissions, central agencies, local agencies, federations and so forth) were also established and gradually perfected. The positive and negative aspects of universal and parliamentary democracy, of these different relationships between legislative authority and executive authority, of the masses inspecting their representatives and their representatives inspecting executive authority and so forth were evaluated in practical terms. And, facts showed that democracy is the most effective way to resolve the burning and vital issues of society.

At the same time, facts have also shown that wherever exploiting classes are in power and do not want to practice democracy, democracy will not exist except if the masses there force the exploiting class in power to make concessions, to promulgate or enforce needed laws and regulations in accordance with their demands. This is also why, in the societies based on classes which existed prior to socialism, democracy was not only an effective experience in the management of social life gained by mankind over the centuries, but was also the result of class struggle waged by the masses.

Expressing the interests of the opposing social forces within societies based on classes are political parties. Political parties are political organizations of the most active representatives of a given class (or social group) and express the basic interests of this class in their platform and other documents. The most important function of a political party is to find ways and means to satisfy these interests. A political party is the organizer of the actions of a class and the ally of this class. For this reason, the struggle of political parties, as Lenin said, is "the most complete, fullest and clearest manifestation of the political struggle of classes."¹ In capitalist society, the most complete, fullest and clearest manifestation of the political struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class, the two main classes of this society, is the struggle between the political party of the bourgeoisie and the political party of the working class.

In capitalist society, neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class are socially homogenous²; therefore, in this society, there might be not just one, but two parties of the bourgeoisie (as in the United States) or two parties of the working class (as in France).

In capitalist society, in addition to the two main classes, the bourgeoisie and the working class, there are other social forces and groups whose interests do not coincide with those of these two classes, such as farmers, the middle class and intellectuals. Therefore, in this society, in addition to the political parties of the bourgeoisie and the working class, there are also political parties of the other social forces and groups.

Because capitalist society consists of antagonistic classes and many social forces whose interests are opposing, it is also easy to understand that, in this society, there can be no democracy without open struggle by the political parties representing these different classes and social forces. In other words, in order for there to be democracy within bourgeois society, there must be a multi-party system. However, it cannot be concluded from this very correct observation that "a multi-party system is the democratic norm of society." The United States has a multi-party system. For years, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party has replaced one another in power. But this, as facts have shown, has not affected the rule of the monopolistic capitalist class in the United States one bit. The multi-party systems in the other capitalist countries also very clearly show that the bourgeoisie has long known how to use the various forms of parliamentary democracy and has turned the multi-party system into camouflage for their political rule.

And, for this reason, it would truly be a mistake to think that in a society, the degree of democracy depends upon the number of political parties, in fact, in every society, the degree of democracy is measured not by the number of political parties, but by the degree to which the interests and the will of the working people, who always constitute the vast majority of the members of society, are achieved and implemented.

Democracy Under Socialism and the Leadership Role of the Party

In socialist society as well as in the preceding societies based on classes, the degree of democracy is measured by the extent to which the interests and will of the working people are achieved and implemented, not by the number of political parties. For this reason, it would be incorrect to think that in order to achieve democracy in socialist society, it is necessary to replace the one party system with a multi-party system.

Neither the experience of the capitalist countries or the experience of the socialist countries confirm the following logic: only under a multi-party system is it possible for there to be struggle and criticism of one another and, consequently, possible for every aspect of the situation to be examined more alertly, possible for more correct decisions to be made. In fact, the United States has a multi-party system but still has committed some very clumsy blunders, such as the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which led the United States to its tragic defeat in its reckless war in Vietnam. Poland also has a multi-party

system but has been unable to avoid serious political crises, such as those in the 50's, 70's and 80's. Clearly, to be able to examine all aspects of the situation more alertly, to be able to arrive at the most reasonable solutions in the face of the requirements raised by life today, the issue lies not in replacing the one party system with a multi-party system, but lies elsewhere: expanding democracy to the maximum degree possible and gaining the direct participation of each working person in the vital work of society.

As we know, socialist society is completely different from all the societies based on classes which preceded it. It is a society without antagonistic classes. In this society, not only the working class, but also working farmers, small owners and working intellectuals are concerned with the victory and development of socialism. For the most part, the interests of the working class and the classes and social groups mentioned above are identical. Therefore, it is also easy to understand that even before embarking on the struggle for socialism, the political party of the working class—the Marxist-Leninist party—was able to become the representative of the interests not only of the entire working class, but of the other laborers as well.

The experience of real socialism has shown that whether a one party or a multi-party system is established in the countries within the socialist communities does not in any way affect the leadership role of the Marxist-Leninist party in these countries. The establishment of a one party system by one socialist country and a multi-party system by another socialist country is determined solely by the unique conditions of each country when establishing the political power of the working class and the allies of this class. Specifically, in countries in which the working class and its allies rose to power with a Marxist-Leninist party being the only party representing the interests of each and every working person in the struggle for socialism, a one party system has been established. In those countries in which the working class and its allies rose to power with other political parties in addition to the Marxist-Leninist party representing the separate interests of the other laboring classes and social groups in the process of building socialism, a multi-party system has been maintained.

Because socialism can only come into being under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party, the expansion of democracy to its maximum degree under socialism can, of course, only occur under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist party.

Marxist-Leninist theory has proven and the experience of real socialism has confirmed that to successfully build socialism, then communism, the Marxist-Leninist party in power must carry out the thorough democratization of society, establish socialist self-management and then establish communist self-management. As long as the countries following the socialist path have not succeeded

in building communism, have not established communist self-management with the participation of not just one significant component, but of each and every working person in society in the management of society's work, democratization in these countries will still encounter certain limitations, the contradictions between the "managed" and "managers" will not be entirely eliminated and it will still be possible for persons assigned by the masses the task of managing as the servants of society to become the rulers of society, a possibility which the Paris Commune tried to prevent by taking the following two measures with which we are all familiar: first, all personalities who hold management positions had to be elected and could be removed from office at any time decided by the electorate; and secondly, the salaries of these persons are the same as the wages of workers.³ Of course, we can only advance to communist self-management if the Marxist-Leninist party insures that the working people gradually assume and directly carry out each of the functions of power in the socialist countries which are now being performed almost entirely by state agencies. As the experience of real socialism shows, the following measures constitute direct preparations for this turning point in the future: gradually expanding the political rights and freedoms of the citizen and fully implementing the rights that have been promulgated. Indirect preparations for this turning point are: decentralizing and democratizing management and strengthening control by the masses over each activity of state agencies.

To thoroughly carry out the democratization of society, it is necessary, of course, to thoroughly carry out democratization within the party. To accomplish this, the party itself must have a mechanism which prevents the party from ever becoming a bureaucratic organization of special rights and privileges which is divorced from and above the masses, a mechanism which insures that the party is always worthy of being a genuine Marxist-Leninist party until there is no longer a need for it to exist. In the society of the future, when communism has been established, when there are no longer any classes, when there are no politics or political relations, when there is no organized struggle of the classes and social groups to achieve social ideals, that is, when there are no longer the conditions needed for the existence of the party, the party will dissolve.

The experience of history has shown that to always be worthy of being a genuine Marxist-Leninist party, the parties in power within the socialist countries must never stray from immutable principles:

First, Marxism-Leninism and the material dialectic must always be the compass of each of its actions. More specifically, when reaching one decision or another, the party must always integrate astute calculations of objective conditions with recognition of the importance and significance of positive actions by the party, the class and the masses. Only by recognizing and giving consideration to the interests of the working people, that is, the majority, in assessing capabilities and making choices can the party make the fullest possible use of realistic capabilities and select optimum solutions.

Secondly, it is necessary to emphasize and widely practice criticism and self-criticism, considering this to be an indispensable principle of party life. More specifically, the party must not conceal any difficulties or new problems and must dare to present each important issue for widespread debate not only among persons within the party, but also among persons outside the party. Only in this way is it possible to avoid mistakes, to scientifically resolve the problems faced along the path of carrying out thorough democratization, thereby insuring the successful construction of socialism, then communism, and the successful establishment of socialist self-management, then communist self-management by the working people.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, Volume 12, p 164.
2. The bourgeoisie consists of different groups and strata, such as: the urban bourgeoisie and rural bourgeoisie; large-scale bourgeoisie and medium-scale bourgeoisie; monopolistic industrial bourgeoisie and middle class compradore bourgeoisie. The working class consists of the following different groups and strata: workers in the upper stratum who are highly specialized and highly paid; workers in the lower stratum and ordinary laborers who are poorly paid; urban industrial workers and agricultural workers...
3. K. Marx and F. Engels: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, Volume 1, p 583.

Preparing To Mobilize the Army

42100011d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88, p 1

[Article published in FBIS-EAS-88-171 of 2 Sep 88]

Urgent Inflation Fighting Measures

42100011d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88, p 7

[Article not Translated]

Uncle Ton and the Revolutionary Movement in Saigon in the Late 1920's

42100011d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88, p 13

[Dinh Xuan Lam, Pham Xanh; Article not translated]

Let Us Discuss the Grain Problem in Our Country in the Years Ahead

42100011a Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 17-23

[Article by Nguyen Thanh Bang, Ph.D. in Cybernetics, the Institute of Central Economic Management Research]

[Text] Discussing things that might occur in the future, even if in the next few years, is not easy to do. However, on the basis of long-term forecasts that we have made and in light of actual changes in the grain production situation in our country and the world during the past several years, we have acquired additional information needed to reduce the scope of variable factors and, on this basis, adjust short-term forecasts with a greater degree of reliability concerning things which might occur in the production of grain in our country during the next few years.

From the perspective of a forecast for the near term future, we hereby propose a number of urgent measures that must be taken with a view toward effectively dealing with the shortage of grain that has occurred and certainly will occur in the next several years.

I. Concerning the Laws of Change in Grain Production in Our Country

Four years ago, on the basis of the major characteristics of the weather and climate as they directly relate to agricultural production, we extracted and processed statistical data and then compiled rows of moving data on the results of grain production from 1955 to 1984 in the two different climatic zones in our country: the North, from Hai Van Pass northward, and the South, from Hai Van Pass southward. Using the sliding average method combined with the minimum expanded mean method, we determined the trend of development of grain production in our country, that is, determined the essential trend of development after removing random factors

(which include systems errors, such as incorrect reports intended to conceal or increase output). On this basis, we deduced a number of laws governing changes in agricultural production in our country.¹ Specifically:

1. The changes in agricultural production in our country occur in definite cycles which we call cycles of calamity. These cycles virtually coincide with the cycles of minimum solar activity and vary by 1 to 2 years between the two different climatic zones in our country. The average length of this cycle is 11 years. That is, once every 11 years, sudden natural disasters occur which cause serious harm to agricultural production.

2. Within each of these cycles, one-half of the cycle is favorable for agricultural production and one-half is adverse. In the favorable half, paddy output increases. In the adverse half, paddy output declines. Annual paddy output fluctuates between these highs and lows.

3. On the basis of the laws that have been discovered, we forecasted that the adverse half of the cycle would occur from 1983 to 1989 in the South and from 1984 to 1990 in the North within agricultural production and asserted that, in the late 1980's or early 1990's, serious changes would occur in our country's agricultural production. On this basis, we proposed various measures to create grain reserves in order to effectively deal with the serious difficulties that might occur during the adverse half of the cycle.²

4. Because the cycles of change in agriculture are closely related to the cycle of solar radiation, the changes which occur in grain production within the countries of the region as well as throughout the world are closely related and differ only in the following ways: changes occur earlier or later and the favorable and adverse halves of the cycle are longer or shorter depending upon the geographical position and the terrain of each country. In other words, the cycle of calamity and the favorable and adverse half cycles (although they vary to some extent) must be part of a chain of closely related events.

Thus, the realities of grain production in the various countries of the world, particularly in the countries of our region or the tropical zone, provide us with useful reference material.

II. The Grain Production Situation in the World and in Our Country During the Past Several years:

1. According to a recent report by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in 1987, the countries of Asia bore the serious consequences of such natural disasters as drought, flooding and typhoons. Unfavorable weather conditions adversely affected grain production in the surrounding Asian countries, such as Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, China, etc.

Cambodia was hit by its worst drought in 10 years, a drought which caused a serious shortage of grain.

The late arrival of the rainy season in Laos caused reservoir levels to drop, which made it difficult to provide irrigation water and led to crop failures.

In Thailand, a prolonged drought destroyed about 1.4 million hectares of rice, corn and other cereal grains together with 6,000 fish farms. The drought was so serious that the Thai government launched an emergency relief program to reduce the difficulties being encountered by farmers.

Drought at many places in India affected at least 300 million persons, with losses estimated at 2.5 billion U.S. dollars.

In Nepal, drought also caused a serious grain shortage.

Severe drought in northern China and flooding in other regions of the country destroyed crops on a large scale and caused paddy output in China to decline from a high of 178.3 million tons in 1984 to 171 million tons in 1987 while grain output declined from 407 million tons (1984) to 379 million tons (1985) and then to 392 million tons (1986) and 384 million tons in 1987. Clearly, since 1985, China has also entered that half of the cycle which is not favorable for agricultural production.

In 1987, Bangladesh was hit with its worst floods in 40 years. Some 660 persons were killed, 23 million persons were affected by the floods and more than 4 million hectares of cropland were destroyed.

News reports showed that due to the loss of crops to bad weather, the price of white rice in Thailand jumped by 29 percent in mid-July 1987 and the price of dried rice in India and Bangladesh rose by more than 50 percent, from 190 U.S. dollars per ton in February 1987 to 292 U.S. dollars per ton in October 1987. Rice prices were pushed up by a serious decline in national rice inventories throughout the world. As of late October 1987, according to estimates by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, paddy and rice inventories throughout the world had declined by 14.5 percent to only 22.5 million tons. By the end of 1987, inventories had declined by 30 percent compared to the same time in 1986.

MARKET REVIEW of the World Wheat Council reported that world cereal grain output in 1987 was an estimated 1,316,000,000 tons, a decline of 68,000,000 tons compared to 1986. Cereal grain inventories in 1987 stood at 325 million tons, a decrease of 45 million tons compared to 1986.

According to a report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), total paddy and grain output of the world in 1987 was 451 million tons, a drop of 15 million tons compared to 1986.

According to a forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, paddy output in practically all the countries of Asia-Pacific, with the exception of Australia, China, Burma and Indonesia (see Chart 1), declined in 1988.

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the famous Indian agriculturalist and director of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), has observed that the very serious droughts and floods which have been occurring in Asia are threatening the crops in those countries which raise mainly rice and could cause a drop of 20 million tons in grain output in India in 1988. Although India has some 23 million tons of cereal grains in reserves, these reserves might be exhausted in the space of 1 year. A similar situation occurred in India in 1979-1980. Thus, the cycle of calamity in India is virtually the same as the cycle of calamity in our country.

Chart 1: Forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning paddy output in the countries of Asia-Pacific

Country	Paddy Output (Millions of Tons)	
	1987	1988
Australia	0.5	0.7
Bangladesh	23.1	21.5
China	171.0	176.0
India	90.9	70.5
Indonesia	38.1	38.1
Japan	11.6	13.3
Pakistan	5.3	4.7
The Philippines	9.0	8.6
South Korea	7.9	7.6
Thailand	18.0	15.8
The U.S.A.	6.1	5.8
Vietnam	15.4	14.6
Burma	12.5	13.5

According to Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, a serious grain shortage is unavoidable in the years ahead. He has estimated that total paddy and rice output in the world could decline by 8 percent. In view of the fact that trade in paddy and rice in the world only accounts for less than 4 percent of total grain output, such a decline would be extremely serious.

It is regrettable that we do not have a full supply of information on grain production in all the countries of Asia-Pacific in order to draw a complete picture of the adverse half of the cycle in grain production that is now occurring in the countries mentioned above. Despite this, the information we have gathered and presented above is very useful in forecasting what might occur in the next few years in grain production within our country.

Chart 2

Year	Grain Output (millions of tons)	Rice Output (millions of tons)			Rice Yields (quintals per hectare)		
		Entire Country	North	South	Entire Country	North	South
1976	13.49	11.83	5.46	6.37	22.3	22.9	21.9
1977	12.62	10.60	4.69	5.91	19.1	19.4	19.3
1978	12.26	9.79	4.76	5.03	17.9	19.6	16.6
1979	13.98	11.36	4.90	6.46	20.7	20.0	21.3
1980	14.41	11.65	4.39	7.26	20.8	18.9	22.1
1981	15.00	12.41	5.10	7.01	22.0	21.8	22.1
1982	16.83	14.39	6.17	8.22	25.2	24.7	25.5
1983	16.99	14.71	6.17	8.57	26.1	24.9	27.3
1984	17.80	15.51	6.20	9.31	27.0	25.0	29.0
1985	18.20	15.87	6.29	9.58	27.8	25.2	29.9
1986	18.38	16.00	6.36	9.74	28.1	25.0	30.4
1987	17.65	15.28	6.06	9.22	25.3	24.2	28.4

2. Now, let us review grain production results in our country from 1976 to 1987 (see chart 2) in order to make some comparisons. Chart 2 shows that grain production in the South dropped sharply in 1978 (due to a serious flood during that year) and declined in the North in 1980 (due to waterlogging). Paddy output in both zones of the country subsequently rose rapidly: in the North, output soared from 4.39 million tons (1980) to 6.17 million tons (1982) and remained at this level in 1983. The rate of increase did not rise significantly in the years that followed and output stood at 6.06 million tons in 1987. In the South, output also soared from 5.03 million tons (1978) to 9.31 million tons (1984). In subsequent years, the rate of increase of grain output gradually declined and output stood at 9.22 million tons in 1987. Rice yields have risen and fallen in virtually the same way that rice output has.

From the above analysis it can readily be seen that the half of the cycle which is unfavorable for agricultural production began in 1983 in the North and in 1984 in the South. Thus, our previously published forecasts with an error of plus or minus 1 year (1 year earlier in the North, 1 year later in the South) were relatively accurate.

According to statistical data, 1987 was the opening year in a period of serious decline within the adverse half of the cycle. The rate of growth of grain output and rice yields in both zones of the country was negative. The grain output of the entire country declined by nearly 1 million tons compared to 1986. Thus, what does 1988 hold?

According to the Ministries of Energy, Water Conservancy, Agriculture and Food Industry and the Meteorological Forecasts-Hydrology Department Liaison Standing Committee at its regular meeting on 11 April 1988 (see NHAN DAN Newspaper, 13 April 1988), this year's

winter-spring season in the North could be even worse than the winter-spring season in 1985 due to pests, drought and overcast skies for more than 3 months at the start of the year.

An initial evaluation shows that 40 percent of the rice under cultivation is above average while 60 percent is of average or poor quality.

Of the 1.04 million hectares of winter-spring rice being grown in the North this year, more than 200,000 hectares are infested with pests (as of the end of April 1988) and there is the danger that this infestation could increase when the weather becomes warm and humid. Some 5,000 hectares of rice seedlings were allowed to become too old. As a result, the buds are old and, at some places, the rice has blossomed early. Nearly 100,000 hectares of rice (as of mid-March) are undersized with stunted roots. More than 130,000 hectares of rice are dry and in need of water. There is the danger that the drought will increase because water levels in ponds, lakes and reservoirs are 2 to 6 meters lower than in previous years.

The above preliminary assessments show that there is the danger that the 1988 winter-spring season in the North might be worse than the 1987 winter-spring season and our calculations based on the statistical data in chart 2, calculations made by many different methods, also show results very similar to the forecasts made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning paddy output in our country in 1988 (see chart 1).

In addition, if changes in the weather and climate occur as we have predicted in the cycle of calamity, our country's agriculture will experience much more severe natural disasters this year and in the next several years than during the past several years. Moreover, we have been very ruthlessly destroying the forests in our country for more than 10 years. As a result, the consequences of the natural disasters in this adverse half of the cycle will be much more serious than during the period from 1978 to 1980.

Thus, the grain shortage this year and for the next few years will be very serious. It will remind us to recall a similar lesson learned in 1978-1980 and adopt long-range plans to reduce the price our country and people will have to pay for the management methods and irresponsible ways of operating that have long been practiced.

It must be emphasized once again that all the forecasts mentioned above were presented by us more than 4 years ago. However, the various sectors and levels have not given appropriate attention to these forecasts nor have they taken positive measures to eliminate the threats to the lives of the people.

III. Some Urgent Measures Aimed at Resolving the Grain Shortage in the Next Several Years

In many respects, the state of our country's economy today is abnormal. If we suffer the serious consequences of natural disasters in the half of the cycle which is not favorable for agricultural production this year and in the next several years as we have predicted (which is a

virtual certainty, cannot be avoided and is not at all dependent upon the subjective desires of anyone!), the difficulties and challenges facing our country's economy in the coming period will be exceedingly serious, especially with regard to providing food for all society.

Paddy and rice are the most essential need in the everyday lives of our people. The experience of more than 30 years in the North and more than 10 years nationwide permit us to reach the following conclusion, a conclusion tantamount to a principle:

To stabilize every aspect of socio-economic life, it is first of all necessary to firmly resolve the grain problem.

Some persons raise the question: what is meant by firmly resolve the grain problem? In view of our country's current conditions, we understand this to mean the following: first, there must be enough grain to eat (300 kilograms of grain in paddy equivalent per capita per year) and secondly, there must be a reserve of at least 2 months of grain per year (50 kilograms of grain in paddy equivalent per capita per year).

Thus, with a population of 60 million, the above conditions demand that we have 18 million tons of grain, in paddy equivalent, to eat and 3 million tons of grain in reserves. That is, with a population of 60 million, firmly resolving the grain problem under current conditions requires that we have 21 million tons of grain, in paddy equivalent.

One question inevitably arises: even in years in which the weather and climate are relatively favorable for agricultural production, that is, in the favorable half of the cycle as presented above, we only manage to reach the threshold between a shortage of food and a temporary sufficiency. Where are we to obtain reserves?

Nationwide, the situation described above truly does exist. Because, in recent years, the highest output achieved has been 18.38 million tons of grain, in paddy equivalent (1986). Therefore, if we do not change the structure of the diet, the structure of production and the structure of property and thoroughly revamp the economic management mechanism within agriculture, it will be difficult to create grain reserves through our country's agricultural production. However, if we carefully examine the uneven distribution of grain between the two zones of the country, we see that it is still possible, through macro-regulation, to put enough grain into the hands of the state to create short-term reserves in order to improve the tense situation caused by the shortage of grain which almost always occurs in the North, particularly during that half of the cycle which is adverse for agricultural production.

In fact, since 1984, annual grain output in the North has always been more than 3 million tons less than output in the South (see chart 2). Meanwhile, the population of the

North is nearly 2 million persons greater than the population in the South. As a result, all the state needs to do is maintain discipline in management and take a number of appropriate economic measures to lessen the difference mentioned above. Then, the grain situation will not be as bad as it has been for many years.

On the basis of the above analysis, we feel that it necessary to take the following several urgent measures to correct the shortage of grain in the years ahead, specifically:

1. Between now and 1990, the state should temporarily assume exclusive rights in the procurement and distribution of grain nationwide with a view toward ending the disorder and anarchy that have long existed in the procurement and sale of grain and, in this way, concentrate the necessary quantity of grain in the hands of the state on the basis of guaranteeing the legitimate interests of grain producers in order to mobilize and encourage them to produce much paddy and rice for sale to the state, create grain reserves and help to stabilize rice prices in the major consumer markets, such as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and the industrial complexes. This job can be assigned to a single organization that is nationwide in scope (for example, the Grain General Corporation), an organization which has ties to the marketing cooperatives in the countryside and rice sales agents in the cities, an organization which is a tightly organized and highly disciplined as an army in time of war.

This organization would be responsible for controlling all grain derived from agricultural taxes and guaranteeing the procurement of quantities of grain sufficient to match the goods and materials delivered by the state. It would be responsible for organizing the storage, processing, procurement, sale and business in grain in exact accordance with state regulations.

2. It is necessary to clearly define the personal responsibility of the leadership cadres within the administration on the various levels with regard to insuring the full collection of agricultural taxes for delivery to the Grain General Corporation. In any locality which fails to fulfill its obligation to the state in the collection of agricultural taxes, the chairman of the people's committee in this locality must be held accountable to the state and appropriately disciplined. In especially serious cases, he must be prosecuted under the law in order to maintain discipline and order within this field of vital importance to the country.

3. Every possible step must be taken to promote the immediate adoption of a plan to create a national grain reserve. Between now and 1990, we must have at least 1 million tons of grain in reserve each year. A significant amount of foreign currency absolutely must be set aside to import grain, additional money must be borrowed to import grain, we must seek grain in aid, etc.

4. Appropriate investments must be made in the stage following harvesting with the aim of limiting the losses, both quantitative and qualitative, of grain to the lowest possible level. We maintain that in view of the fact that agricultural production in our country is still encountering many difficulties, investing in the post-harvest stage must be a matter of high priority because it demands much less capital than investments in the pre-harvest stage, guarantees that there is food to eat and provides the highest economic returns of any form of investment. For many years, we have only been giving our attention to investing in the pre-harvest stage. We have given little attention to, and even ignored, the post-harvest stage. As a result, we have been incurring losses of roughly 2-3 million tons of grain per year, enough paddy and rice to support some 10 million persons for 1 year. This is a significant figure. It reminds us that we must soon adopt a new investment strategy and immediately seek technical and financial assistance from the World Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with the post-harvest stage in order to quickly improve upon the results we achieve in the pre-harvest stage.

5. Insurance work must be accelerated within grain production in order to create state-controlled reserves through voluntary contributions by farmers with the aims of promptly overcoming the consequences of natural disasters and helping to rapidly stabilize production and the everyday lives of farmers.

6. We must thoroughly revamp the material supply system and commodity trade between the state and farmers in the following two ways:

—The state should deliver materials and essential consumer goods to the business corporations within product sectors on the basis of economic-technical quotas and the guidelines of the state plan so that these organizations can directly sign trade contracts with farmers on the basis of trade at price parity;

—The state should permit the business corporations within product sectors to use exports-imports and economic integration to create a supply of materials and goods to trade at price parity with farmers and, on this basis, procure products from farmers at negotiated prices.

We should prohibit the procurement, sale or trading of agricultural materials with private merchants and administrative organizations which do not have a business function.

Above, we have only presented a few pressing measures aimed at resolving immediate difficulties. Over the long range, if we dare to squarely face the truth, bravely

abandon dogmatic concepts concerning socialist transformation, thoroughly revamp the economic management mechanism within agriculture and establish a correct relationship between the state and farmers on the basis of guaranteeing the proper interests of laborers, we can rapidly and firmly resolve the grain problem in our country.

Footnotes

1. TAP CHI CONG SAN, Number 11-1986.

2. TAP CHI CONG SAN, Number 7-1987.

Concerning the Law on Foreign Investment in Vietnam

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 24-27

[Article by Luu Van Dat, director of the Foreign Trade Economy Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Trade

[Text] Today, the scientific-technological revolution in the world has entered a new period, a period of remarkable achievements and enormous prospects. The trend toward the internationalization of economic life on the basis of an international division of labor, specialization and cooperation is steadily growing. Mutual economic dependency among countries is increasing. Consequently, economic and scientific-technical cooperation among countries, including countries with different socio-economic systems, is considered an objective demand of our times.

The experience of many countries has shown that acquiring capital and advanced technology from foreign countries is a necessary prerequisite to building and developing the economy. This is even more important in the case of economically backward countries which seek to develop at a rapid rate.

The 6th Congress of the Party drew some important lessons. Namely, "we must combine the strength of the nation with the strength of the times within the context of the new conditions that exist today" and "we must make good use of each possibility for expanding our commercial relations and economic and scientific-technical cooperation with the outside to support socialist construction."¹ At the same time, the congress also set forth guidelines and forms governing cooperation with the outside and set policies which encourage foreigners to invest in Vietnam and encourage Vietnamese who have settled in foreign countries to help build the country.

The Investment Law ratified by the 8th National Assembly on 29 December 1987 codifies the new policies of our party and state concerning economic cooperation between our country and foreign countries and foreign

investments in Vietnam. It contains many new points and important revisions compared to the Statutes on Foreign Investments in Vietnam promulgated by our government in 1977.

As recorded in the Law, an investment is understood to be a direct investment, to be the act of a foreigner bringing into Vietnam capital in the form of foreign currency or any other property acceptable to the government of Vietnam for the purpose of producing or doing business through forms of organization stipulated within the law (business cooperation based on contracts, the establishment of a joint enterprise, the establishment of enterprises using 100 percent foreign capital). The various forms of indirect investment (aid, the extension of credit and so forth) are not regulated by this Law.

According to the spirit of the Law, direct foreign investments and economic cooperation with foreign countries must be based on equality and mutual benefit with a view toward effectively developing the natural resources of the country, creating jobs, accelerating exports, expanding services which generate foreign currency revenues and helping our country to more effectively participate in the international division of labor, particularly within the community of socialist countries, and gaining an increasingly strong foothold within foreign markets, most importantly the socialist market.

These being its objectives, the Law applies to all foreign organizations and individuals that seek to invest in Vietnam. The Law stipulates: "On the basis of the principles defined within the Law, the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam can sign with the government of a foreign country cooperation and investment agreements that are compatible with the economic relations between Vietnam and that country." In this spirit, on 29 October 1987, our government and the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics signed an agreement in basic principles on the establishment and operation of joint enterprises and international federations and organizations.

As regards Vietnamese who have settled in foreign countries, due to their special situation, the Law is very flexible and permits the government to promulgate specific regulations aimed at creating favorable conditions for Vietnamese who have settled in foreign countries to invest in Vietnam and help to build the fatherland. Of course, these regulations must also be based on the principles set forth within the Law.

Through the Investment Law, our state welcomes and encourages foreigners (economic organizations that have the status of an individual under the law and private individuals) to invest capital and technology in Vietnam and cooperate with Vietnamese economic organizations that have the status of an individual under the law (private Vietnamese have the right to pool capital with Vietnamese economic organizations) on the basis of the principles of the foreigner respecting the independence

and sovereignty of Vietnam and observing Vietnamese law and guaranteeing that the parties are equal and benefit mutually. The Law stipulates that our state shall guarantee the ownership of investment capital by foreign countries and satisfy their legitimate aspirations, such as insuring the fair and appropriate treatment of foreign investors, guaranteeing the security of their capital as property of theirs, guaranteeing that investors may transfer to a foreign country investment capital, profits earned or distributed to them and financial accounts and property under their lawful ownership and guarantee that the two cooperating parties have the right to present disputes between them to any arbitration organization or hearing agency agreed upon by the two parties.

Our state also guarantees that it will create favorable conditions and establish simple procedures for foreign investors. This is seen in the following several areas:

1. The fields of cooperation and investments: foreigners may invest in any field of the economy in Vietnam (agriculture, industry, communications-transportation, construction, the services, etc.).

On the basis of the special features of our country's economy, the line on building the socialist economy and the trends of the world economy and world market, the policy of our state encourages investments in the following fields:

- The implementation of major economic programs (in the immediate future, the three programs in grain-food products, consumer goods and export goods), the production of exports and the production of goods to replace imports;
- The use of high technology and skilled workers; investments in intensive development aimed at developing and making full use of the capacity of existing economic units and increasing their capacity;
- The use of many local laborers, raw materials and natural resources;
- The construction of infrastructure projects;
- The performances of services which generate foreign currency revenues (tourism, airport services, port services and other services).

In view of the above, the foreign investor has a broad area in which to cooperate and invest and enjoys favorable conditions with regard to choosing the make-up of cooperation and the object of investment because they are diverse.

2. The forms of cooperation and investment: the policy of our party is to not exclude or limit any form. Of the three types of cooperation and investment stipulated by the law, one is very diverse and widely applied in many

countries of the world. It is business cooperation based on contracts. Compared to the joint enterprise form of cooperation and investment, its implementation is relatively simple.

The two parties have the conditions they need to effectively cooperate in many fields, especially in the development of natural resources and the production of shared products and to negotiate with each other concerning the object and specifics of their business and the rights and obligations of each party as well as the relationship between them. The legal basis binding the two parties is the business cooperation contract, which is approved by a state foreign investment management agency.

As regards the joint enterprise form of cooperation and investment, the policy of our state is to create every possible condition for the joint enterprise to take the initiative in its business and operate an effective business while granting broader rights to the foreigner in business activities. Compared to the 1977 Investment Statutes, some important amendments and revisions have been made this time. The law stipulates a number of specific ways that capital can be pooled and gives the two parties the authority to negotiate any other form of pooling capital. The Vietnamese party has the authority to agree with the foreign party to include in legitimate capital natural resources and the right to use arable land and water surfaces, including the surface of the sea. This important amendment is consistent with our Land Law and with international law.

The Investment Law also does not place a maximum limit on the amount of legitimate capital invested in a joint enterprise by the foreign investor, only a minimum limit (no less than 30 percent of legitimate capital, which differs from the 1977 Investment Statutes which set the limits on the amount of capital invested by a foreigner in a joint enterprise as a minimum of 30 percent and a maximum of 49 percent of the enterprise's capital). This revision satisfies the desire of some foreign investors to contribute more than 49 percent of legitimate capital and is also consistent with our country's current economic conditions and with the trend in many developing countries. As regards the amount of time that a joint enterprise is in operation, the Investment Law sets no minimum limit, only a maximum limit of 20 years. In necessary cases, the cooperating parties can agree to a period longer than 20 years. Only such a period of operation provides the conditions needed to operate an efficient business, as in the case of extracting natural resources.

The policy of our state is to create the conditions for the foreign investor to extensively participate in the management and operation of the joint enterprise with the aim of insuring that the joint enterprise operates efficiently and that both parties benefit. This is reflected in

the provisions of the law on the organization and authority of the management council, which is the highest leadership body of the joint enterprise, and on the organization and management of the day to day work of the joint enterprise.

As regards enterprises which are established with 100 percent foreign capital, our state has accepted this form of organization since 1977. It is consistent with the concessions policy advanced by V.I. Lenin in the early 1920's. A 100 percent foreign capital enterprise has the status of an individual under Vietnamese law but its capital and assets remain under the ownership of the foreign investor. The foreign investor is allowed to manage the enterprise by himself and enjoys the rights set forth in his investment permit but is under the control of the state foreign investment management agency and must fulfill all the obligations set forth in his investment permit. The foreign investor can select an investment plan that is suited to his capabilities, conditions and interests.

The interests of the foreign investor, in addition to the safety of his capital, are mainly to earn an appropriate profit (in the case of the socialist countries, it is also that we satisfy the requirements regarding supplying the products produced through cooperation) and to enjoy favorable operating conditions. The provisions of the law related to this matter are based on our country's specific economic conditions. At the same time, they take into consideration the foreign investment situation in the countries of Asia-Pacific.

The Investment Law also provides incentives to joint enterprises, particularly an exemption from or reduction of income tax. This exemption or reduction is based on the field in which the investment is made, the amount of capital invested, the locality in which the investment is made, the volume of export goods produced and the nature and length of operation of the joint enterprise. The state foreign investment management agency can waive or reduce export and import tariffs in individual, special cases.

As regards the use of arable land and water surface, including the surface of the sea, the enterprise in which foreign capital has been invested and the foreign investor cooperating in this business on the basis of a contract must pay a lease fee. If they are extracting natural resources, they must pay a royalty.

In the case of a foreign investor who reinvests his profits, the tax agency will refund the taxes paid on the reinvested profits.

To make it unnecessary for the foreign investor to communicate with many different echelons and in order to have one agency that is fully authorized to solve

problems related to cooperative operations and investments, our state has established a state foreign investment management agency to act upon matters raised by foreign investors and decide and inspect matters related to cooperative operations and foreign investment.

The recently announced foreign investment law reflects our adoption of new economic thinking and new legal thinking. With its generous and flexible provisions which conform with both reason and sentiment, the law has begun to be favorably accepted by world public opinion. However, in order for foreigners to actively invest in Vietnam under this law, we still must solve very many problems. We must create a favorable political-legal and socio-psychological atmosphere. In particular, we must dismantle the management mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies and establish the new, dynamic economic management mechanism and truly apply socialist business principles and cost accounting. We must make appropriate investments in the rebuilding of the infrastructure, beginning in areas that are favorable for cooperation and investment by foreigners... Only in this way can we meet our established goal.

Footnote

1. The Political Report of the Party Central Committee at the 6th Congress, TAP CHI CONG SAN, Number 1-1987, p 30.

Some Thoughts on Openness

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 28-32

[Published in FBIS-EAS-88-166, 29 Aug 88]

Promoting Initial Health Care in the Northern Border Provinces

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 33-36

[Ho Thai Thanh; Article not translated]

Developing Vietnamese Cinematography in the New Situation

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 37-41

[Pham Ngoc Truong; Article not translated]

K. Marx, F. Engels, V.I. Lenin and Ho Chi Minh on Choosing and Assigning Cadres

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 42-46

[Article not translated]

Research-Exchange of Opinions

Research: Let Us Summarize the Cooperativization Line of Our Country

42100011b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 47-52

[Article not translated]

Labor Cooperation With Foreign Countries

42100011c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 6, Jun 88 pp 53-56

[Article by Hong Long, vice minister of higher and vocational education]

[Text] In keeping with the spirit of the resolution of our party's 6th Congress with regard to "expanding our labor cooperation with foreign countries," allow me to make the following several proposals concerning this matter to the party and state.

The exportation of labor began several decades ago and has steadily been expanded in the world with the aim of achieving many different objectives, mainly earning foreign currency. Many countries have generated rather large foreign currency revenues through the exportation of labor. Each year, India earns 6-7 billion dollars, China 3-7 billion dollars, Thailand 850 million dollars (1983)... Cuba, a country which does not have surplus labor, still exports labor and earns a significant amount of foreign currency. Since 1980, China has signed 16 contracts with other countries and annually exports millions of laborers throughout the world. At present, the exportation and importation of labor are being done by many countries in many different ways: project contracting, the exportation of specialists and skilled workers, the exportation of local labor, etc.

Many developed capitalist countries have a very large need for imported labor. Consider, for example, the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1955, this country began to import labor. By 1971, it had eight labor recruiting offices in eight countries. By September 1973, the Federal Republic of Germany had imported 2.6 million laborers along with their wives and children, another 1.8 million persons. In 1982, it imported 4.7 million laborers. It has been forecast that the Federal Republic of Germany will import 7 million laborers by the year 2000 (11.8 percent of this country's population). The countries which export labor to the Federal Republic of Germany are: Turkey (1.5 million), Yugoslavia (800,000), Italy (600,000), Spain (170,000), Greece (300,000), Portugal (100,000), the countries of Asia (250,000), etc. The laborers arriving in the Federal Republic of Germany (73 percent of whom are unskilled) are distributed in the following sectors: 11 percent in the building sector, 12 percent in the repair and construction of water projects, 8 percent in the public services, 14 percent in mining, 21.6 percent in fishing and food processing, 3 percent in administration, etc.

In addition to the capitalist and developed countries, the countries of the third world are also large labor markets. These countries usually import labor through contracts for the construction of bridges, communications projects and housing, for the development of mines, for public projects, water conservancy projects, agriculture, etc. Many countries import labor from other countries and export labor of their own to other countries.

Since 1980, our state has been sending persons to participate in labor cooperation and serve as specialists in foreign countries, mainly in the socialist countries. This is a correct position, is an important policy in the foreign affairs line of our party and state, one aimed at implementing an international division of labor and labor cooperation and developing the enormous potentials that lie in our country's labor. To date, although some socio-economic returns have been achieved, these returns, generally speaking, are still very low and not commensurate with our requirements and capabilities. The income of the state per laborer is low compared to the rest of the world. For example, in some countries, at U.S. dollar exchange rates, we are only earning 38 dollars per person per month. If we convert this money into trade, we are only earning half as much, that is, 19 dollars. Meanwhile, an unskilled laborer from Thailand working in a service overseas earns 450 dollars per month (150 of which goes to the state). A college educated specialist of ours working in an African country returns to our state 750 dollars per month. One working in Iraq returns 250 dollars per month.

In the process of putting labor cooperation into practice, many negative phenomena have occurred (both at home and overseas), which have posed obstacles to efforts to expand international cooperation and have adversely affected the prestige of the Vietnamese.

In summary, our effort to send labor and specialists overseas has developed very slowly. The scope of this effort is narrow. The number of persons involved is small. The forms of organization employed are simple. Organization, implementation and management are still marked by confusion. We still do not have a complete set of clear regulations and procedures. There are still many shortcomings and weaknesses.

There are many reasons for the above situation. Most importantly, it is the result of our failure to fully understand the tremendous importance attached to this matter and the benefits derived from the exportation of labor. We have also been hesitant to expand our labor cooperation with foreign countries, particularly with non-socialist countries. Because we have not clearly understood this matter, implementation has been marked by wavering and confusion and we have yet to adopt a long-range strategy. We have yet to adopt procedures and policies in the nature of state regulations. Some requirements are inconsistent, are subjective in nature, are very restrictive and cumbersome...

Now, in the spirit of adopting a new way of thinking and working and together with the Foreign Investment Law, the party and state must concretize their position and expand our labor cooperation with other countries. The line and views of the party must be clearly expressed in specific actions. Even the concept must be correctly and properly defined. In our opinion, we should call this the exportation of labor (and with the socialist countries,

labor cooperation). On the basis of this concept, we can define, to some extent, the objectives, functions and tasks of those agencies that perform this work, etc.

If the party and state feel that this is a consistent and correct path to follow, is a strategic guideline, they must immediately begin taking steps to prepare for and organize implementation. We feel that we currently possess the capabilities needed to move in two directions: first, exporting local labor and, secondly, exporting labor overseas.

I. Exporting Local Labor

This is a rather universal approach, particularly in the case of the underdeveloped countries. If we do this well, we will be able to absorb much labor, provide jobs, lay the groundwork for acquiring advanced technology, earn foreign currency, etc. In our country, the exportation of local labor can be divided into four stages.

—Stage 1: we provide the labor to perform the contract production, manufacturing and assembly of various types of goods with equipment, technology, raw materials and finished materials imported by developed countries. We would also have the task of training workers, sending them overseas for practical training and then bringing them back to work in contract production, processing, etc. The resulting products bear the traditional seal of the investing country.

—Stage 2: the same as stage one except that we would be permitted to sign contracts to train technical workers in these sectors and trades for countries with different levels of development.

—Stage 3: we gradually learn technology and move toward economic integration with investing countries. We contribute manpower, technology and some local raw materials.

—Stage 4: we establish joint businesses with countries in fields in which we have natural resources, labor and technology.

II. Exporting Labor Overseas

In view of our current labor capabilities, we are fully capable of exporting labor overseas on every occupational level to the socialist and non-socialist countries.

1. Exporting college trained specialists in many fields: public health, education, trade training, agriculture, building, communications-transportation, etc. Our more than 370,000 college trained cadres and 6,000 Ph.D.'s and holders of Masters Degrees possess all the necessary personal qualities and are qualified in their special field to participate in labor cooperation with foreign countries. Through their work in a number of countries, our

corps of specialists has won the trust, a high degree of trust, of friendly countries. The only problems remaining are organization and implementation.

2. The exportation of labor crews through contracts to construct capital construction projects, communications-transportation projects, etc.

Step 1: our friends provide all blueprints, raw materials, supplies, machinery and construction equipment. We are responsible for all manpower (manual workers, technicians, engineers, holders of M.S. degrees, management cadres, construction commanders and so forth), for the quality of work performed and for meeting the project construction deadline.

Step 2: our friends supply all survey data and all raw materials, supplies, machinery and construction equipment while we undertake the design and completion of projects as permitted by our conditions and capabilities. We could sell some of the blueprints produced by us or sell raw and finished materials produced by us.

Through the realities of project construction work in a few countries, it can be asserted that we are fully capable of performing this work: quality has been assured, projects have been completed on time and some countries are continuing to sign contracts with us to export labor crews.

3. The exportation of skilled labor. This is the best approach to take. We have trained some 1.5 million technical workers, enough to meet the development needs in each field of our country's economy. The system of 300 vocational schools with its 11,000 teachers and management cadres, which annually trains some 80,000 to 90,000 students in 390 trades, is a very large potential which we have yet to fully tap. This young, able-bodied and trained work force exerts a very good impact when sent overseas. After working and learning advanced technology overseas, they are competent and experienced when they return home.

Today and in the future, we can send skilled labor overseas without any limit to the number sent. The trade training sector is also capable of exporting local skilled labor or accepting contracts to train technical workers for foreign countries.

4. The exportation of unskilled workers. This is also an important direction to take. Many countries in the world have a very large need for unskilled labor to work in agriculture, construction, communications-transportation, social services and so forth. For example, Malaysia annually imports some 300,000 to 400,000 unskilled laborers from Thailand. A national corporation of Italy has signed a contract to accept 400,000 unskilled laborers from China over a 5 year period. In addition to money for food, shelter and a round-trip airplane ticket, each worker of China received 290 to 430 dollars per

month. Our unskilled work force (from 18 to 35 years of age) is very large. Consideration must be given to expanding the exportation of this type of labor in an appropriate manner.

In order for the plans described above to become reality, many conditions must be established in full. At the same time, effective measures must be taken to implement these plans. As regards the state, it is necessary to establish a labor export corporation. This corporation could be called the "Vietnam Labor Insurance and Job Corporation." It would be a multi-national corporation that is autonomous from the standpoint of its business, practices cost accounting and pays taxes to the state in foreign currency. This corporation would be directly subordinate to the Council of Ministers and have the authority to sign contracts with foreign countries on exportation of labor. In the non-socialist countries, this corporation could sign contracts with private companies or with the governments of these countries. It should also have representatives in our embassies in other countries or the state should assign embassies the task of serving as economic "antennas," finding needs for labor, etc.

The Ministry of Overseas Economy should not sign specific contracts, only sign contracts in general principles and serve as the middleman in the exportation of local labor, in the search for markets, etc. To avoid mistakes and to avoid harming our own interests, the signing of specific contracts must be carried out by a specialized corporation.

The State Planning Commission should balance the labor needs proposed by the "Labor Insurance and Job Corporation" and create favorable conditions for this corporation to fulfill its business accounting function.

The exportation of labor must be carried out on the basis of a state law. This law should set clear and specific regulations on organizing, managing and carrying out the exportation of labor; on selecting labor; on approval ratings and selection standards; on the rights and obligations of the laborer, of the sector and locality and of the laborer's family; on the distribution of income; and even on the buying of goods and sending goods back home.

When the exportation of labor has reached sufficiently large proportions, the sectors, the provinces and the municipalities directly subordinate to the central level can establish branches of the national corporation and receive a certain percentage of the foreign currency earned. On the basis of the state law and the signing of contracts with the national corporation, the ministries, provinces and municipalities can establish relations with other countries and be allowed to sign bilateral agreements with these countries in the exportation of labor. We should encourage the specialized sectors to export local labor, undertake contracts for the construction of projects, for the training of technical workers, etc.

One other matter that must be addressed is no matter how well this effort is organized and managed, it will still be impossible to avoid cases in which people of ours flee the country and remain in a friendly country, establish families with foreigners, engage in unlawful trade and so forth. But these persons account for only a very small percentage (about 3 to 5 percent).

The above is only an initial draft and limited to the scope of broad guidelines. We must continue to study this matter and concretize our approach on the basis of actual facts that have been proven by clear economic documentation. However, we also maintain that this is a realistic draft which, if accepted by the party and state, will surely yield large socio-economic returns.

Exchange of Opinion: State Management of the Economy

42100011c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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[Le Hong Hanh, Tran Quoc Buu; Article not translated]

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Fashion

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No 6, Jun 88 pp 63-66

[Published in FBIS-EAS-88-169, 31 Aug 88, pp 75-77]

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[Article not translated]

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[Hang-ri An Lech (Vietnamese phonetics); Article not translated]

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[Published in FBIS-EAS-88-119, 21 Jun 88 pp 56-59]

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[Published in FBIS-EAS-88-122, 24 Jun 88 pp 35-42]

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42100011c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 7, Jul 88 pp 18-21

[Ha Huy Giap; Article not translated]

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42100011c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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[Nguyen Van An; FBIS-EAS-88-178, 14 Sep 88 pp
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42100011c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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[Ha Quang Huy; Article not translated]

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42100001c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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Some Thoughts on Improving Foreign Trade in the Years Ahead

42100001a Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 8, Aug 88 pp 24-29, 18

[Article by Nguyen The Uan, M.S. in Economics]

[Text] Since the 6th Party Congress, our country's foreign trade activities have continued to follow the same old path.

First, foreign trade has yet to free itself from the control of a planning mechanism in which plans are imposed from above.

The foreign trade plan set forth at the start of the year is unstable in many respects because of the lack of important economic-financial factors as well as corresponding policies and laws to insure that the plan is balanced. Export and import norms are assigned to units on an uncertain basis because some of the capital and materials to be supplied by the state for exports are still hypothetical.

In addition, our export-import plans continue to be formulated without the necessary factors, that is, without a logical process of development within the production of export goods. Consequently, the problems of this year's plan spill over into next year's plan and accumulate, thereby insuring that the difficulties encountered under next year's plan will be worse.

On top of this, in the process of implementing their export-import plan, foreign trade organizations as well as units which produce exports must deal with a tax by the market in the areas of prices and products at a time

when the state's new management mechanism has yet to come into existence and the price-wage-monetary levers available to the state are in chaos. Foreign trade activities are encountering many difficulties, both abroad and at home.

Secondly, the foreign trade sector has yet to go beyond self-production and self-marketing. The turnover of capital is very limited and inefficient.

With exports of less than 1 billion rubles and U.S. dollars dispersed among many different sectors and localities, each of which produces and markets its own products, foreign trade activities cannot be profitable. This method of operating divides sources of capital and does not create the conditions for concerted investments in large-scale and modern production of export goods. It impedes the turnover of capital because every sector and locality is permitted to establish a balance on its own and meet its import needs on the basis of how much it exports. As a result, the overall capital turnover rate of the national economy is limited. The use of capital is often at variance with the economic development targets of the entire country and is, from the perspective of the whole, inefficient. The decentralization (to some extent) of foreign trade leads to competition in procurements and sales on the domestic as well as the overseas market because each sector and locality thinks only of its own interests and gives little attention to national interests. This poses an obstacle to efforts to balance foreign trade, especially to efforts to correct the serious imbalance of payments.

At present, in the case of the ruble, which is an area of foreign trade in which virtually all exports and imports are controlled by the central level, the turnover of capital is very slow because the ruble is a "book entry" currency. As such, capital can only be turned over within the framework of a structure based on the agreements negotiated by the two countries. However, deserving of attention here is that because the conversion of export and import prices in rubles of the socialist countries into Vietnamese dong is inaccurate, domestic value decreases and must be offset by increased deficit spending as the turnover of the ruble increases.

In the area of foreign trade in which free currencies are used, export-import capital turns over at a much faster rate than the ruble. In particular, the free foreign currency in the possession of the localities is used under a flexible mechanism, that is, a self-balancing mechanism under which the turnover rate is higher and a rather important percentage of the price differential is collected to balance the local budget. By this path, free foreign currencies, especially the U.S. dollar, have an opportunity to strongly attack the Vietnamese dong and pose an obstacle to activities based on the ruble.

Thirdly, we face towering foreign debts which exceed our ability to repay, especially debts due now and overdue debts.

When debts cannot be paid on time, it becomes very difficult to borrow additional money. When additional money cannot be borrowed, production and life at home stagnate. This forces us to look for every way to borrow money and, under these circumstances, foreign traders charge whatever prices and interest rates they wish. Despite this, more than a few imports are used in the hunt for the domestic price differential and cannot be used to accelerate production and increase our exports. Consequently, the more the dong is turned over, the smaller the volume of money being turned over becomes. This is one of the important causes of the inability to repay debts.

Today, as everyone knows, all short-term debts to foreign countries must be paid in valuable agricultural and forest products, such as rubber, coffee, peanuts, shrimp, squid, etc. Therefore, it can be said that importing goods through foreign credit places a heavy burden upon exported agricultural and forest products.

The policy of borrowing money on a short-term basis to import fertilizer and repaying these loans in rice has not been reviewed for many years so that we might gain experience. Borrowing money on a short-term basis to import consumer goods in order to profit by the difference in domestic prices is a dangerous policy. On the one hand, it creates areas of turbulence on the domestic market, disrupts prices, wages and the monetary system and causes chaos in circulation and distribution. On the other hand, it places the burden of debt upon exported agricultural products. Competition in procurements and sales occurs mainly with agricultural products because these are the products used to repay short-term loans.

Fourthly, the structure of exports and imports has yet to undergo bold reforms with the aim of insuring that export-import activities yield practical returns. The features of this structure remain virtually unchanged.

As regards exports, we have yet to attach importance to evaluating exports from the standpoint of returns, especially returns in the form of foreign currency and the returns from each product and product group.

As regards imports, we must re-examine the structure of imports nationwide in order to achieve uniform state control. At the same time, full attention must be given to returns from the use of exports. For example, we should not import machinery or equipment if existing machines and equipment are not being used to full capacity or are lying in warehouses. We should also re-examine the practice of importing fertilizer through short-term loans, discontinue the importation of luxury goods, etc. In addition, we should examine the export-import ratio between ruble-based and U.S. dollar-based goods as an important policy factor.

In our country's foreign trade, trade based on the ruble is very large. However, trade with the capitalist market is no less important because without a certain amount of money in the form of free foreign currencies, many of the difficulties being encountered in the reproduction process at home cannot be resolved.

At present, trade with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, has a direct impact upon efforts to rebuild the structure of production. Trade with the capitalist countries should be coordinated with trade with the socialist countries with the aims of augmenting and refining the overall structure of the national economy and creating favorable conditions for the domestic reproduction process to develop. But a considerable portion of the free foreign currency earned through local exports and imports is being used to blindly pursue the price differential, thus not only adversely affecting the economy, in general, but also exacerbating the contradictions between the field of trade in rubles and the field of trade in U.S. dollars at home.

Fifthly, from the standpoint of the economy, democratic centralism in the field of foreign trade is in a state of upheaval.

Each year, the volume of imports is very large but the state does not convert the value of the ruble and the U.S. dollar into corresponding domestic value. Consequently, although the state should be earning very large revenues through imports, especially imports acquired through foreign loans, it is not only failing to earn these revenues, but must subsidize imports as well. When the state budget is forced into such unreasonable deficit spending, the financial resources needed to increase our investments in the production of exports do not exist.

In the case of the socialist countries, a very strict two-way balance, one considered to have the force of international law is established through agreements signed on the government level. Domestically, however, because the state does not effectively regulate exports in order to fulfill commitments, imports are also unstable. In the case of the capitalist countries, a very large percentage of revenues is concentrated in the localities in accordance with the principle of balancing exports and imports on their own. The state cannot deeply intervene in these activities. Because trade with the capitalist countries is mobile and can provide larger profits through the price differential, valuable export goods are being rather strongly drawn into trade with the capitalist countries and are tightly bound to the "buy now, pay later" mode of trade, that is, exporting goods in order to repay debts.

Because we have not been effective in our efforts to control goods and money, the centralism of the state in the field of foreign trade has been steadily declining. Under such conditions, the more foreign trade is decentralized, the more disorderly it becomes and the more it

loses its direction. The two basic functions of the state foreign trade monopoly, protecting and developing the domestic economy in a planned manner, surely cannot be fulfilled.

The above impediments have been and are causing foreign trade activities to encounter difficulties and stagnate. If this momentum persists, the difficulties of foreign trade in 1988 will be much greater than the difficulties experienced in 1987.

To correct this situation and open the way for the balanced and planned development of foreign trade in the years ahead, we must concentrate on taking the following steps, steps which will bring about a breakthrough:

1. Re-examining and resolving the problems associated with the international balance of payments are a very pressing demand in our country's foreign trade.

The international balance of payments occupies a very important position within a country's foreign trade because, in the final analysis, all trade of goods and services with foreign countries must be reflected in the country's international balance of payments.

In our country, the international balance of payments is a matter very deserving of concern today and will continue to be so in the years ahead. If exports remain at current levels, the entire value of exports and imports will not be enough to pay debts. It will be very difficult to pay debts if we attempt to do so by using only the net income from exports. In particular, commercial loans are steadily increasing and are being used for purposes which do not yield returns. For example, we buy fertilizer on credit in order to invest in agricultural production and then must repay this debt in rice. We buy luxury goods on credit in order to profit by the difference in domestic prices, etc.

Because our ability to pay debts is very limited, even to repay loans that are long overdue, the foreign trade sector is increasingly losing the confidence of foreign customers.

Therefore, to correct the international balance of payments, a number of tough measures must be taken:

—We must thoroughly implement the principle of the exclusive control of foreign currency by the state.

Foreign currencies, in general, especially free foreign currencies, are the most mobile supply of goods that a country has. The state must manage all foreign currency received from all sources in order to implement a unified plan aimed at "successfully supporting the restructuring of production and investments" in keeping with the spirit of the resolution of the 6th Congress.

We must economize on the use of foreign currency by limiting and eventually ceasing the importation of luxury goods and products which can be produced domestically. At the same time, we must increase the efficiency with which imports are used in order to reduce our imports.

Imports are a very important source of initial investment capital. They are a direct production factor and can very effectively augment the consumer goods of the national economy.

The purpose of controlling imports is to control the most basic element of foreign trade because, in the final analysis, exports are only the means, imports are the end. In other words, imports are the most critical valve of the national economy to the outside. Opening and closing this valve in a way which benefits the national economy are extremely important. When domestic production is still at a low level of development, the opening and closing of this valve must be centrally regulated in order to protect production and develop it in a specific direction. If imports are not regulated and the overseas market is allowed to monopolize the domestic market, the disorder in circulation and distribution will not be corrected and might even pose the danger of becoming worse and placing an additional heavy burden upon production.

On the other hand, it must also be realized that exclusive control of foreign exchange can only be achieved when the state manages all imports. In particular, in view of the facts that our country is experiencing a scarcity of foreign currency and that a very large percentage of imports are based on foreign loans, the centralized management of imports by the state is of very important significance and is an entirely objective demand in the transition from small-scale to large-scale production.

—Together with regulating imports in accordance with a central plan, the state must increase its investments in the production of export goods. Here, making investments of foreign currency, that is, investing through imports, is of utmost importance. Using imports to stimulate exports is a guideline that is very well suited to our country's current economic circumstances because, without adequate imports, it is impossible to maintain production and, without production, there are no exports.

We must correct the problem of having to export goods as though we are living "from hand to mouth" and stop competing in procurements and sales, which disrupts the market. A plan must be adopted for producing exports, the spirit of which must be that we concern ourselves with matters of first priority immediately and with matters of second and third priority over the long range. Attention must be given to eliminating products which do not yield returns in the form of foreign currency.

—The most important measure in correcting the international balance of payments is to rapidly improve the structure of imports.

As regards exports, we must concentrate on accelerating the development of the contract production of exports, which is the most appropriate approach for our country to take.

Together with the contract production of export goods, it is necessary to make investments in the intensive development of two important product groups, agricultural products and light industrial and handicraft goods. As regards light industrial and handicraft goods, attention must be given to products which are produced mainly from domestic raw materials. In the case of exported agricultural products, attention must be given to the matter of internal consumption. With grain in short supply at home, exporting grain serves no purpose because what we export must ultimately be imported. But exporting little and importing much also puts us at a disadvantage. Costs rise and prices are usually squeezed on both ends.

Because domestic grain production does not meet demand, the state must import grain. The other sectors that are directly related to exports must have a grain obligation. For example, on the basis of foreign trade prices, one kilogram of shrimp is, on the average, the equivalent of 34 kilograms of rice; 1 kilogram of coffee equals 10 kilograms of rice; 1 kilogram of pepper equals 26 kilograms of rice, etc.¹ Thus, would it not be more profitable, quicker and less haphazard to invest much more in 1 ton of these non-grain agricultural products in order to perform our urgent grain task (of course, this approach must not affect the policy of our party and state of endeavoring to achieve self-sufficiency in grain)?

As regards imports, it is necessary, in the case of means of production, to selectively reduce the importation of machines and equipment which are not deemed necessary so that we can increase the importation of raw and finished materials for production with the aim of making maximum use of the capacity of existing machinery and equipment and creating jobs for millions of laborers.

As regards consumer goods, appropriate attention must be given to essential consumer goods, most importantly grain. Because, to stabilize production as well as achieve stability in the field of prices-wages-money, it is first of all necessary to guarantee a supply of essential consumer goods. Importing grain is a measure of utmost importance. To obtain the foreign currency needed to import grain, it is necessary to sharply reduce the importation of luxury goods for the purpose of profiting by the domestic price differential.

2. We must improve foreign trade planning in the direction of proceeding from production and returning directly to production.

The foreign trade plan must be formulated on the basis of contracts for the sale of export goods and the procurement of import goods between basic production units and foreign trade organizations with price parity between the state and the producer. We must avoid going through many unnecessary middlemen, which distorts supply and demand and causes chaos in prices.

The state must formulate its plan on the basis of export-import commitments with other countries. Therefore, in the case of the socialist countries, the state must take steps to balance finances and materials in order to implement this plan. Under conditions in which the state is encountering difficulties with finances and materials and basic production units must establish this balance on their own, the state must adopt an appropriate price policy to provide capital and insure a profit for basic production units. In the case of the capitalist countries, attention must be given to value. The state will exchange foreign currency at reasonable rates for foreign trade organizations.

Foreign trade planning must insure the establishment of the export-import structure which is most conducive to improving the balance of payments in the years from 1988 to 1990.

While adopting the export-import plan for 1988, appropriate attention must be given to investing in the production of exports for the years 1988 through 1990 and beyond. This is a new approach in foreign trade planning, one designed to overcome the phenomenon of formulating plans from a very passive position, a position of "constantly living from hand to mouth," for which we usually pay a very high price.

In addition, long-term as well as short-term plans must take debts to foreign countries into consideration so that we can formulate an effective plan for repaying these debts. When borrowing money, consideration must be given to our ability to repay loans. It is of utmost importance that we keep a separate accounting of the proceeds from foreign loans so that we can adopt a plan for regenerating foreign currency and repay the loan on time.

3. All exports and imports must be traded at domestic price parity.

The current domestic price policy concerning exports and imports is incorrect. As a result, deficit spending is required to subsidize exports and imports. This has caused the state to encounter many difficulties in regulating exports and imports. The more we export and import, the greater our losses become.

Foreign trade is a part of circulation. It neither creates the value of goods nor causes the value of goods to decline. Its only task is to realize the value of goods. Thus, why must we subsidize foreign trade through deficit spending and then rebalance the budget by means of inflation?

In our country's foreign trade, the total value of exports is still much lower than the total value of imports. A very large percentage of imports must be purchased through loans from foreign countries. Therefore, imports must be divided into two components: imports acquired through trade and imports acquired through loans. The trade component is balanced through the exportation and importation of goods and services. The loan component is a matter of importing goods before exporting other goods. This is the component which ties up foreign capital. When bringing the difference between domestic and foreign prices into balance, the corresponding value of 1 ruble or 1 U.S. dollar must be the same domestically for exports and imports. Capital formation through foreign credit must be higher because attention must be given to the interest rate carried by imports.

From a domestic standpoint, the difficulty of foreign trade today is the export-import financial balance. This difficulty has persisted for many years and is becoming increasingly serious but there is no way for us to extricate ourselves from it. The main reasons for this situation are:

—The use of two different rates of exchange for exports and imports, the purpose being to stimulate exports and also to stimulate imports. The state must subsidize both exports and imports, which causes major difficulties for the budget. In particular, with the "explosion" of many localities exporting and importing goods in accordance with the principle of balancing exports and imports on their own, these difficulties have multiplied. It is necessary to establish a single, combined rate of exchange for both exports and imports at an early date.

—Allowing the localities to balance exports and imports on their own is essentially a matter of giving the localities the freedom to set the rate of exchange or, in other words, allowing the rate of exchange to "float" for the localities. The rate of exchange of the locality is hidden within the prices of exports and imports set by the locality itself on the basis of negotiated prices, essentially free market prices. Under these conditions, the state's rates of exchange are locked in very bitter struggle with a host of local "underground" rates of exchange. Therefore, the rates of exchange of the central level cannot, in practical terms, exist and exert an impact in view of the fact that the state does not effectively control goods and money. In order for the lever that is rates of exchange to exert an impact, the state must effectively control exports, imports and domestic foreign currency and insure balance between two opposing elements: use value and value in this field.

If we continue to allow the localities to balance exports and imports on their own as they are doing now, it will be difficult to achieve a realistic rate of exchange. In this case, the state must regulate the movement of exports and imports by means of other appropriate economic-financial measures, such as prices, taxes and various

fees, in order to balance the difference between foreign trade prices along lines which do not subsidize the rate of exchange through inflation, as is being done today.

4. To create favorable conditions for foreign trade work in the years from 1988 to 1990, the state must quickly improve the foreign trade organizational and management mechanism in a way which centralizes foreign trade and establishes uniform procedures nationwide, a way which avoids dividing the foreign trade organization into very many centers, as is the case today, and causing many difficulties for state management.

Footnotes

1. Based on export-import prices for the first 6 months of 1987.

Lenin's Method of Assessment and Attitude Toward Truth

42100001c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 8, Aug 88

[Nguyen Bang Tuon; Article not translated]

The Theater—Its Facts and Problems

42100001c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 8, Aug 88

[Tran Anh; Article not translated]

Effectively Improving the Utilization of Scientific Potentialities

42100001c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 8, Aug 88

[Vu Cao Dam; Article not translated]

TAP CHI CONG SAN in the Renovation Process

42100001c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 8, Aug 88 pp 58-60

[Ha Xuan Truong; Published in FBIS-EAS-88-212, 2 Nov 88]

Research-Exchange of Opinions

New Awareness on Socialism

42100001b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 8, Aug 88 pp 47-52, 37

[Article by Nguyen The Phan, editor-in-chief of TAP CHI THONG TIN LY LUAN]

[Text] In recent years, the fraternal parties in the socialist countries have been attaching very much importance to restudying and developing a new awareness of socialism in order to lay the theoretical base for economic reform and reform of the political system. These parties maintain that it is an objective requirement of the times and of the effort to correct the important, subjective shortcomings in the

work of building the new society that we must develop a new and truly correct and scientific awareness of socialism. Only with a correct awareness is it possible to adopt a correct platform for building the new society. Thus, what is the new awareness of socialism at which the fraternal parties have arrived? The main features of this awareness are as follows:

The Need To Develop a New Awareness of Socialism

What did the classical authors say about socialism? In the works of K. Marx and F. Engels, most importantly in "Critique of the Goethe Program," "Communist Manifesto," "The Fundamentals of Communism" and a number of other works, we see that these two gentlemen did not present a complete model of socialism. They only gave us some of this society's basic characteristics. It is a society based on "collectivism," "the abolition of private ownership," "national ownership," "planned" production, "centralism" and "distribution in accordance with labor." There is no money or trade, class differences are abolished, the state no longer serves the function of suppressing, the people are the masters...

The Soviet Union, the first socialist country, basically adopted the ideas mentioned above. However, it established two forms of ownership, implemented the governing function of the state, trade in money and goods... As time passed, the Soviet Union strengthened its state apparatus and emphasized centralism, which led to bureaucracy, to "state-izing" the economy, culture, society, mass organizations...

Following World War II, socialism became a world system. The concept of socialism was still the same as described by the classical authors and the approach of the Soviet Union was the model. To do otherwise was considered heresy, considered revisionism.

Actually, a careful reading of the classical works shows that Marx and Engels did not set for themselves the task of defining the model of future socialist society. They only made some brilliant predictions. Moreover, their predictions represented a highly abstract version of future society in a number of the most developed countries, where production forces were the most highly socialized.

However, real socialism has not enjoyed these conditions. From the Soviet Union to many socialist countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America, the conditions for building socialism have differed very widely from the abstract theory of Marx. The specific circumstances of each country are also exceedingly diverse. But the basic approach remained patterned after the abstract instructions of these gentlemen and based on the approach of the Soviet Union. As a result, real socialism, besides many strengths, has also revealed many weaknesses. In short, the superstructure was rigid, the economic base did not develop and there were serious contradictions between the superstructure and the base. Production

relations and production forces were not compatible, and were even in very sharp contradiction. This led to stagnation, even to economic, social and political crises.

These are facts that cannot be ignored. Meanwhile, socialism has not been able to accept the challenge of the times. Thus, what must be done? We must develop a new awareness of socialism based on each of its theoretical and practical aspects. Only by correcting mistakes in our awareness can we take correct actions.

A Hungarian leader has said that real socialism is at an "epochal turning point," one which forces us to change our concept of socialism. The draft report of the CPSU Central Committee presented at the 19th Plenum of the Party stated that a "revolution in awareness" is occurring and that we must "abandon dogmatic concepts of socialism," "must create the new face of socialism."

Building and Refining Socialism is a Long and Exceedingly Difficult and Complex Historical Process

Capitalism took 200 to 300 years to form and develop. Thus, can socialism, which is a higher socio-economic form than capitalism, complete a similar historic task in the space of just several decades? It does not have this ability. The long, difficult and complex nature of the cause of building and refining socialism lies in its basic goal. This goal is to achieve a labor productivity which is higher than that of capitalism, which, as Lenin said, is what will ultimately determine the victory of the new system.

This nature is also determined by other factors, such as the very low starting point of practically all the socialist countries. A price has had to be paid for natural disasters, enemy attacks and even subjective mistakes. Sometimes, decades have been needed to rectify but one mistake. This nature demands a scientific and serious attitude when determining when one period ends and another starts. We must accurately assess the current situation and set forth targets to be met in the current stage and the coming stage. We must outline, on the basis of scientific forecasts, the periods and stages that will be experienced in the work of building and refining socialism in our country. Lenin once said that socialism involves thousands of small transitional steps. Establishing long-range guidelines is necessary. However, of prime importance is that these guidelines not be for just several decades. Of greatest importance is the need to define the transitional stages that will occur. Diversity and special features form through these transitional stages.

A Common Goal and Separate Paths, or the Dialectical Combination of Universality and Diversity

All socialist countries share the same goal, successfully building socialism and communism. This is universality of goals. However, each country proceeds toward this goal by its separate path, a path consistent with its particular economic, social, cultural and historical conditions. This path is divided into several different stages.

Which goals are to be met during each stage, by which means and methods these goals are to be met and so forth, all these things are determined by each country on its own. There is, therefore, a diversity of paths. And, the dialectical combination of the universality of goals and the diversity of paths is the moving force behind development. Within this combination, the first element sets the direction for the second and the second concretizes the implementation of the first. This combination, therefore, is well balanced and organic. In past years, universality was stressed and diversity was given light attention. Today, diversity has been acknowledged. We now talk about many "models" or "shades" of socialism. In light of the current situation and trend, it is of key importance for each country, on the basis of its specific historical situation, to express the universal in diverse ways. Without diversity, universality will be negated.

The essence of this matter, in my opinion, is that diversity must lead to socialist results. The success or failure of a model or "shade" is evaluated on the basis of the final results it produces. These results are reflected in the following: gradually rising labor productivity, a gradual acceleration of the development of production forces and a gradual improvement in the standard of living. And, of course, these results are also reflected in whether socialist factors are strengthened and consolidated or are weakened and gradually disappear. Once the period of socialist construction has begun, it cannot be said that we are achieving socialist results if the above mentioned improvements are not being made.

A Dynamic and Modern Economy

The primary goal of socialism is to build the most highly developed economy in history. This is the principal base, is the most important premise for turning utopian socialism into real socialism.

However, the current state of development is still far from this goal. Because, many mistakes were made in our awareness of socialist economic theory, which led to mistakes in economic line and policy.

Achieving a new awareness concerning the various forms of ownership is one of the most important issues. Today, there are several new perceptions concerning the forms of ownership, such as the following:

a) In history, there has never been a pure socio-economic form, only a single system of ownership. What we have seen for the most part has been a dominant form of ownership and other secondary forms. The same applies to socialism.

b) The collective-cooperative form of ownership plays a very important role. This is a system of ownership which holds large potentials. It is compatible with many different levels of development of production forces. It can exert a large impact over a long period of time.

c) When analyzing pre-socialist societies, Marx distinguished among ownership, control (management) and use. Why have these concepts of Marx not been applied within the national ownership or cooperative ownership of socialism? Many socialist countries are now distinguishing between ownership and the right to do business. That is, without changing ownership, they have granted the right to do business to others in various ways: leasing, contracting, shares...

As regards the management mechanism, the economic reform trend now under way in the socialist countries involves combining planning with the use of market relations. These countries have attached importance to using the strengths and the effective elements of central planning while also availing themselves of the advantages of the market in order to regulate production and circulation. No longer do we conceive of the plan as needing to be legally binding. But the plan still must guide and direct. In addition to the plan, greater use must be made of economic policies, such as policies on prices, profits, interest rates and so forth, to regulate economic activities.

In distribution, as is the case with permitting many different forms of ownership to exist, the lawful existence of many forms of distribution and many forms of income will serve to spur production. The principle at work here is: distribution in accordance with labor is the predominant form of distribution. The various forms of non-labor income which arise from the need to develop production cannot affect the dominant position of income from labor.

Only by permitting many forms of income to exist is it possible to mobilize each source of capital within society for the purposes of developing production and increasing the social product. Otherwise, this capital will be diverted into personal consumption. This is a heavy burden, an invisible loss to society.

The above are some misconceptions that became factors impeding the economy.

Developing a new awareness, dismantling the mechanism that has impeded the economy and opening the economy in order to give it dynamism and vitality are also a matter of making it possible to modernize the economy more rapidly.

Dynamic and modern are pressing and inseparable requirements of the economy. And, only socialism has the strength and the ability to win victory in the effort to build such an economy. Dynamism is the premise to, is the moving force behind becoming modern. Becoming modern demands greater dynamism. This is a dialectical relationship.

A Dynamic Economy Demands Dynamism in Thinking and in the Various Political Structures

The commodity nature of the economy and private labor activities are recognized and developed. The economy is managed on the basis of a mechanism which combines the plan and the market. The establishment of different styles of cooperatives is encouraged. Contracts and economic emulation are widely employed. The principle of distribution in accordance with labor is strictly applied. At the same time, many other forms of income are permitted to exist. All the above, in conjunction with abolishing the producer's monopoly over the consumer, dismantling sweeping state subsidies and so forth, will cause the economy to extricate itself from stagnation and become dynamic. A dynamic economy with many strong moving forces will inevitably demand of economic and social management agencies and state management agencies a dynamism of thinking, rapid and precise management decisions and a streamlined, effective apparatus staffed by fully qualified cadres who know how to work with everyone and with regulations and procedures which facilitate work.

Such an economy will also demand the re-examination of the leadership function of the party as a vanguard political unit. The party cannot embrace or take over everything. The functions of party and state agencies and social organizations must be clearly defined in order to increase the effectiveness of party leadership, state management and the activities of social organizations and overcome organizational duplication and stagnation in work.

In summary, reform of the economic base must be closely tied to reform of the political and ideological superstructure. Otherwise, economic reform will come to a standstill and even its initial results will be eroded away.

The most important direction to be taken in the reform of political structures is to thoroughly democratize every aspect of social life, beginning with democratization in the economic field. Democratization is not a means, but a goal. Of course, in the end, democracy through the state will disappear. However, between now and then is still a very long time. Moreover, before this "disappearance" occurs, a high level of development of democracy must be achieved.

Producers and businessmen must have the right to attend to and be responsible for their work without petty and gross intervention by state management agencies. The policy of self-management and financial autonomy of enterprises and cooperatives are designed to achieve this end.

As a worker, each citizen must have the right to be remunerated in accordance with the results of his work. As consumers, they have the right to be able to select goods and services on the basis of quality and price. As creative persons, they have the right to receive full, accurate information and directly participate in the

discussion of all important issues of the country as well as their locality and unit. The various forms of direct democracy must be more widely developed and elected agencies must truly be the organs of highest power. We must truly respect the freedoms of the citizen.

Democratization must also be closely tied to the effort to combat bureaucratization, an extremely dangerous phenomenon which has caused socialism to become distorted and has thwarted the creativity of tens of millions of persons among the masses.

Man Must Truly Be the Center of Socialism

"Everything for the happiness of the people," "everything for the free and full development of man," etc. Beautiful words such as these have been recorded as golden lines in many socialist declarations, platforms and constitutions.

Despite this, the human issue in socialism remains the foremost issue of restructuring, reform or renewal. Why is this? It is because man has yet to be placed in his proper position. There is still a wide gap between liberated man and man as the "master of himself" and "free man." There are still numerous problems to be solved and jobs to be performed.

Even today, we are perhaps still somewhat "unbalanced" in our perception and handling of the human factor under socialism. For example, we only view man as the object of management, as the one who performs all tasks, not as a manager, as someone who participates in management. We view man only as a worker or consumer, not as a creative person, etc. As a result, efforts to meet the needs of man are also one-sided: we concern ourselves only with food, clothing, shelter, medicine and so forth but give little attention to the needs to be educated, to receive information, to be able to discuss and debate issues, to be able to think freely, to have the conditions needed to make discoveries and be creative, etc. However, we have also not done much to satisfy material needs. In many socialist countries, the life of the worker is still fraught with difficulties.

Besides the above, there is, in practice, still a denial of the rights and freedom of the citizen, a simplistic equalization of the personalities of people, a "fervent" preaching about an abstract model of the socialist man who does not exist in real life and a trampling upon the legitimate aspirations of man in the name of the collective, the state and the nation. And, things have even been "turned upside-down" within the system of social values (the income of doctors and engineers is less than the income of sales persons at state stores).

The restructuring, reform or renovation campaigns that have been under way in the socialist countries in recent years have also brought out into the light of public opinion the cancers of a cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus. These include rogues who have been accustomed to enjoying special rights and privileges and who trample upon the basic rights of man, upon public opinion.

In the situations described above, ordinary, law abiding people feel diminished because they are treated with contempt and offended. As a result, they withdraw. The social activism of man declines and socialism loses much of its creative potential.

We must activate the human factor and return to man his worthy position as the center of socialism. To accomplish this, we must modify and augment economic, political and social structures along lines which bolster everything that is beneficial and abolish everything that is harmful to the development of man as the worker, the consumer, the master and the creator.

We must create a system of strong incentives and interesting forms of organization in order to gain everyone's participation in social activities. We must make determined efforts to abolish all special rights and privileges, vigorously denounce arrogance and authoritarianism and harshly punish violations of human rights.

We must study ways to correctly build the system of social values and make these values the strong spiritual forces of all society.

In the relationship between the individual and the collective, we must, of course, combat individualism and the attitude of disregarding the collective. However, we must also realize that the collective is only strong when each person is strong and that each person has a personality which must be respected. It is impossible to "equalize" everything to create models of persons who live and work in accordance with a form of collectivism. Personality should not be understood as individualism. Personality is the sum of the traits of man: his will, emotions, ideology, ability to work, ability to perform practical actions and attitude. Thus, personality encompasses the physiological, psychological and social aspects of man.

The personality of each person must be guided and developed in the correct direction. Nationalities differ in ethnic traits. Individuals differ in personality. The essence of character is creativity. Without the creative activities of each person, there would be no history. The long held dream of great politicians, including the founders of scientific socialism, has been to achieve a society in which each member can fully develop his or her personality. Capitalism is concerned with the material interests of the individual and stimulates the personality and activism of the worker. This we do not deny. But capitalism is no where near achieving the full development of the personality. Perhaps only socialism can do this. But 70 years have passed and we have yet to find the best way to develop the creative person, which we consider to be one of the strongest forces in building socialism.

Those aspects of socialism concerning which we must develop a new awareness are being debated, tested and implemented in the socialist countries. The ones summarized above are surely not all that there are. In my opinion, however, they are the most important aspects.

Roundtable Conference

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[Van Thien; Article not translated]

About the Housing Policy

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[Pham Tri Minh; Article not translated]

Experiences

Xuan Tien and Its New Contract System With Households

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On the Reform of the Present Political Institution in Hungary

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