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JPRS Report

East Asia

Southeast Asia
Vietnam: TAP CHI CONG SAN
No 11, November 1991

East Asia Southeast Asia

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JPRS-ATC-92-004

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15 April 1992

[This report is a translation of the table of contents and selected articles from the monthly theoretical and political journal of the Vietnam Communist Party published in Hanoi. Notations in the table of contents indicate articles previously published or not translated.]

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The Lasting Brilliance of the October Revolution

BK1612150191C Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 2-6

[Article by Vu Bien]

[Text] This year, the October Revolution anniversary comes in a very special situation and juncture. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the socialist system has collapsed, many communist parties have disintegrated, and the administration in many places has belonged to opposition elements. In those countries, the slogans of reform and socialist reorganization have been gradually replaced by others such as: "Socialism is no longer needed!"; "Freedom and not socialism!"

Many articles have appeared in the Soviet press to distort and smear the October Revolution. Many people have blown the nature and significance of the "February Revolution" out of proportion. These people say that it is legal, creative, and humanitarian. Conversely, they have fiercely attacked the ideal and noble cause of the October Revolution. They have turned black white and considered the October Revolution a mistaken experiment and an irrational and utopian revolution which reverses the development of human society(!)

Those who oppose Lenin and intend to blacken the history of the October Revolution country are appearing in the Soviet Union itself. Their goal is becoming clearer every day: To get rid of Lenin's revolutionary doctrine, slander the communist party and retaliate against its members, and advance ambiguous arguments aiming in fact to reject the socialist path and restore capitalism. Resentful and disregarding usual ethics, extremists in some places have pulled down Lenin's monuments and statues of his contemporaries.

In the West, belligerent imperialist forces have unremittingly hurled antisocialist themes such as socialism has collapsed completely, recent developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are revolutions against the October Revolution, socialism is in its death throes, the October Revolution has been eliminated, and so on.

This defeat can be said to be the heaviest and most painful to the communist parties, people in socialist countries, and progressive people in the world since the victory of the October Revolution. Anyhow, the October Revolution has not lost its global historic significance because of this.

1. The October Revolution was an important breakthrough that created a change in the order of the development of the social ladder.

Studying the history of mankind, Marx generalized it through the development of successive production methods. According to Marxist viewpoints, there must definitely be conditions for one socioeconomic structure to replace another. The old one has lost all its capability of spontaneous development and has become a social resistance force. Capitalism will inevitably be replaced

by socialism and this will happen in those countries where capitalism has reached its peak of development.

Before the October Revolution, capitalism in Russia was still in a low stage of development. There should be more development for capitalism there to create premises for the new society. Therefore, quite a number of Russian socialist democrats maintained that, first of all, civilized premises should be created for socialism and only then could the working class gain the power and build socialism. Lenin proposed a change in that usual order by having first of all the working class take over the power and then rely on its own power to promote socioeconomic development.

This proposal of Lenin had a practical basis. Czarist Russia was much more backward than other capitalist countries and its society was extremely corrupt. Moreover, being driven into the imperialist war, it encountered even more difficulties. Although the basic contradictions of capitalism in Russia were not really sharp, the revolution already appeared because contradictions in the heart of society had been extremely acute. This was the contradiction between the ruling class and all strata of the laboring people and soldiers. The slogan: "Turn the imperialist war into the revolutionary civil war" was a creative one. The October Revolution broke out and succeeded. The "October Breakthrough" began a new trend of the world history. Russia was faced with a great challenge of history: Scientific socialism went beyond the theoretical field to enter in fact an underdeveloped war-torn capitalist country where feudalistic vestiges still prevailed. It had to find creative solutions to a series of unprecedented problems.

2. The October Revolution created a strong impulse to change the world.

The development of human society in the wake of the October Revolution has demonstrated the very great contributions of the Revolution.

Before the October Revolution, the world belonged to capitalism. In Europe, after defeating feudalism, capitalism expanded to all over the world with its unprecedented economic, political, and military forces. Developed capitalist countries became the center of the universe to control all aspects of international life. The October Revolution broke out victoriously, chipping a large fragment in the capitalist system. Oppressed nations became wide awake and burst out with a new impetus. Developed capitalist countries could no longer expand at will and were free to compete with one another for profits through conflicts, including world war. Without the October Revolution, how could there be socialist countries, the great and strong international communist and worker movement, the total collapse of the colonial system and the liberation of a series of countries in the world as it had happened in the past few decades?

The October Revolution created a new possibility for the development of nations and a new counterbalance for

world equilibrium. Before the October revolution, the capitalist regime existed like a fate. Small, poor and backward countries, and colonies were scared after looking at the real status of suzerainty states. Capitalism developed with the blood and tears of workers. Capitalist accumulation is both an accumulation of wealth and difficulties. First, Soviet Russia and then other socialist countries became a large mirror and a strong attractive force. Although socialism has not brought about more riches than capitalism, because of its too low departure point, it has achieved more than capitalism in eliminating oppression and injustice which is the aspiration of mankind. Therefore, it was not by accident that nations that had just escaped from colonialist domination usually chose the socialist path.

No one can deny the truth that socialism was once a world system. With 10 or more countries of 1.5 billion people—one country ranked among the superpowers and one of the two powerful economic, political and military blocs—socialist realism was for a long time a counterpoise to be reckoned with by capitalism. It was mainly due to this counterpoise that the world could maintain a definite equilibrium, avoid imposition, pressure, and threat from the once world-dominating imperialist forces and, prevent the disaster of a nuclear war. Socialist realism is not only an essential factor of peace and stability in the world but also an indispensable condition for small countries to enjoy true independence and freedom.

The October Revolution even brought about necessary changes in capitalist countries. That capitalism can have stayed firm and developed thus far is because it has changed much more now than before. Modern capitalism is adjusted and adaptable capitalism. Why does it have to adjust and adapt itself? It is because of the effect of both inside and outside factors. At present, the question of whether or not the epochal scope is a transition to socialism on the global scale still remains a very controversial matter. Nevertheless, one point is certain: An important factor has now existed to help decide the developmental trend of the era. That is socialism. Capitalism cannot have survived "by itself" but must survive "for itself." Changes in capitalism in terms of economic and political strategies and the policies of social welfare benefits, wages, security, . . . have all resulted from the struggle of the laboring people together with the impact of socialism.

The world has witnessed unprecedented changes over the past decade. Some of Lenin's predictions have not come into being whereas large numbers of achievements which the October Revolution has directly brought about have collapsed.

First of all, it should be asserted that the October Revolution cannot be held responsible for this collapse. Nor is the collapse a ruin of socialism and the October Revolution. The October Revolution was one thing and its undertaking thereafter was another. Europe, after a series of bourgeois revolutions, has not become purely

bourgeois. In France, only a few years in the wake of the bourgeois revolution, the monarchic and feudal forces still experienced upheaval. The October Revolution is consistently a historic milestone signaling a new trend of development of mankind.

The October Revolution has set forth specific tasks and has achieved its mission. Its achievements though being tested cannot be denied by any force. The present crisis and collapse of the socialist system is due to many causes, some objective and some subjective.

The objective causes are:

The October Revolution has a relatively special character. It was not identical with the socialist revolution according to Marxist theory. It was not a revolution to eradicate the capitalist society that had reached the peak of development and whose internal contradictions had become acute to the point of irreconcilability. It was a revolution against the imperialist war in a backward European capitalist country. This was the main cause that placed the subsequent revolution before unprecedented difficulties. If there were no great efforts nor appropriate steps and methods, it would have been difficult to avoid paying a high or even heart-rending cost.

Not only does the system of socialist countries have to overcome the big inertia of a really backward and poor socioeconomic status far behind that of the developed capitalist countries but socialist realism also has to regularly face the frenzied and vindictive sabotage by capitalism. Resorting to all economic, political, military, cultural, and ideological maneuvers, the imperialist forces have constantly pressed, weakened, and then disintegrated many socialist countries. It was no accident that President Bush said the recent developments in the Soviet Union were beneficial to the United States.

The subjective causes are:

Over the past many decades, the leaderships of communist parties in socialist countries have committed many shortcomings and mistakes along with their achievements and good points. The ruling communist parties usually committed the following mistakes:

First were their voluntarism, rigidity, and subjectivism. Parties, once having seized power, usually set forth principles, rules, and models of unique modality and single style, and then forced themselves to move around within a framework and after a prescribed pattern. So, how could socialism avoid being sluggish, stereotypical, and unscientific; losing its creativity; exhausting its inherent potential; and becoming more and more backward every day and inferior to capitalism in all respects?

Moreover, if the rulers are voluntaristic, rigid, and subjective, they will be easily led to despotism, arbitrariness, paternalism, personal cultism, and bureaucratism which drive them away from the masses and toward considering themselves above the party and the working

class. Once such "multiple mistakes" have been committed, the ruling party will gradually lose its strength and the people's support and it will not be able to stand firm against the demagogic schemes and pressure of all kinds by hostile forces.

Second, some of the cases of violation against, deviation from, and rejection of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialism can be cited below:

Reorganization and renovation is required to enable socialism to overcome harmful metamorphoses. However, if we consider reorganization a revolution, it is tantamount to revolutionizing the October Revolution and deviating from the socialist goal.

Although new thinking is necessary as a law to develop knowledge, one cannot in the name of new thinking reject everything, namely the viewpoints, working class stand, and even revolutionary doctrine of Marxism-Leninism.

Democracy is a need, an aspiration and a pressing demand of a civilized society. However, widespread and unrestricted democracy will become anarchy.

We cannot help but remain vigilant against political pluralism and multi-opposition parties. Quite a number of communist parties have lost their power just because of adopting the system of pluralism and multipartyism and now they cannot benefit at all from the system they established.

We can derive some major lessons from the aforementioned situation:

In the lesson on principles, we must learn to avoid both extremes: On the one hand is the irresponsible practice of making everything a principle, a law, and a rigid model. On the other is acting against and at variance with the principles, denying principles, and performing without any principle.

President Ho Chi Minh used to say: "With invariables we can handle variables." There must be fixed principles. This is the Communist Party leadership over socialist construction and the defense and consolidation of the people's administration. One must be able to tell what are principles, orientations, and measures. The communist movement must carry on the October cause but it is not blind to past experiences. It remains always creative and open to step along the seething situation of today's era.

The lesson of renovation shows that socialism is constantly evolving and should be renovated. Our renovation process should be carried out regularly and continuously. It must also be oriented and guided. Renovation is inherited creativity and not total rejection. It must be carried out in a stable situation of assured order and discipline and not in chaos and anarchy.

The lesson of vigilance indicates that the mere success of the revolution does not suffice. Nor is it sufficient for the

revolution to stay firm after it has endured some ordeals. We all know that the October Revolution had vigorous vitality. Socialism in the Soviet Union defeated fascism. The Soviet Union had built powerful technical bases and become a leading world power. Now we are faced with a collapsing and chaotic Soviet Union in a serious crisis which is begging for capitalist assistance. As a result, we must be constantly vigilant against several types of political and ideological enemies who are pressing us from the outside and eroding us from the inside. We must also remain vigilant against the belligerent reactionary forces that never relinquish their cruel scheme of eradicating socialism to regain their lost position.

We must also be vigilant against ourselves, against such ills of rulers as bureaucratism, corruption, and communist haughtiness. These ills constantly lie in wait for us and can always spread out to weaken the party, making the party lose the people's confidence and support and easily even its power because of the demagogic maneuvers and frenzied attacks of hostile forces.

The Vietnamese people used to say: "One must remember the source when drinking the water." We must always remember that thanks to the October Revolution, our people have found the liberation path. Thanks to the Soviet Red Guards' victory over fascism, we were able to lead the August Revolution to success and establish our state. Thanks to the great assistance of the Soviet Communist Party and people, and the communist parties and peoples of all near and distant friendly countries, we have defeated two major imperialists, reunified our country, and built socialism as it is today. President Ho Chi Minh said: "The more we think of the shameful days of losing the country, the more we reflect on every step of the revolutionary struggle rife with sacrifices, dangers, and hardships but full of glorious victories, the more grateful are the Vietnamese working class and people for the great merits of Lenin and the October Revolution." [Footnote 1] [Ho Chi Minh: Regarding Lenin and the October Revolution, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1985, page 206]

Marxism at the Turning Point of the Age

*BK281121591C TAP CHI CONG SAN No 11, Nov 91
pp 7-10*

[Article by Nguyen Dang Quang]

[Text] In mankind's ideological history there are many doctrines that have had a great impact on social progress. However, none of them has had as tremendous an impact on the destiny of mankind as has Marxism. For more than half a century now Marxism has won the hearts and minds of billions of people in various nations and on various continents and became a historical prime-mover in the modern age. The liberation movement of the proletariat and various oppressed nations of the world have found their weapons and spiritual strength in Marxism. In turn, Marxism has found in the liberation movement a force by which to materialize its humanitarian ideas.

It is a common practice that every time the revolutionary movement meets difficulties, commits a mistake, or suffers a temporary setback while capitalism enters a stage of stability and development, a wave of offensives against Marxism emerges, offensives which try to show that Marxism is outdated and bankrupt. One can recall certain cases: At the turn of the last century when capitalism entered the stage of peaceful development, Lenin observed: The world socialist movement is experiencing a stage of ideological vacillation.

So far, the doctrines of Marx and Engels have been regarded as a solid groundwork for revolutionary theory. But now everywhere there are people claiming that these doctrines are insufficient and outdated. Criticizing these people for their negative and erroneous stance at a time when Marxism was at a turning point, Lenin wrote: As for the science that Marxism and Engels have urged us to develop, we will not be able to achieve any further progress if we continue to decry and reject it.

Around the end of the first decade of this century Marxism also experienced a difficult ordeal. Following the failure of the 1905 Revolution, the Russian Revolution entered a declining stage. Lenin wrote: One can see this change through grave disintegration, confusion, and vacillations of all sorts. In a word, this was an extremely serious crisis within Marxism. Drastic action against such disintegration is necessary—namely, a resolute and persistent struggle launched to safeguard and renew the fundamentals of Marxism. Fully aware of the severity of the situation and calling things by their correct names, or in other words, knowing how to explain them in a scientific fashion on the basis of remaining confident in the potential development of Marxism, Lenin analyzed: Marxism is not a rigid dogma nor a fully complete, ready-made, and unchangeable doctrine but rather a vivid beacon for action. It is for this very reason that it cannot but reflect the particularly tremendous changes in social activities.

With a correct stance and methodology, those hardline Marxists who devote themselves to the cause of liberating society and mankind have helped Marxism overcome various crises and enabled it to achieve repeated, great successes over the past half century, both in theory and practice, and to become a beacon for many parties and nations in the world.

Now a similar situation is repeating itself while all mankind is facing a sudden and serious turning point. A great setback—the gravest crisis of the socialist movement—has forced Marxism to stand an extremely difficult test. What is new this time is that besides the traditional foes of Marxism there have also been a number of communist parties with not a few Marxists bluntly declaring their decision to renounce this doctrine, which they consider outdated and which they blame for the failure of the socialist movement.

A Soviet doctor of philosophy raised this question: Can Marxism survive its restructuring? He wrote a meticulously analytical article in which he concluded: I think its survival is impossible. Too many aspects of Marxist philosophy belong to the 19th century. Isn't it true that Marxist philosophy is reducing itself into a vestige of history?

To answer this doctor's question, we need a well-written article. Also, to argue with a huge number of publications now critical of Marxism, we need to deploy many scrupulous projects with a compelling power and a highly scientific character. It can be said that we are witnessing a dialogue of centennial importance between Marxism and our time. Dialogue, debate, and polemics help develop Marxism. Within the framework of this short article, I would like to say something as part of this debate.

Let us return to the aforementioned question of whether Marxism is being consigned to the museum of history because there are so many aspects of this doctrine that belong to the 19th century. From a scientific perspective, can this argument be considered scrupulous? Generally speaking, can this standard be used to decide the life span of a scientific theory?

It seems that in our scientific circle there have been people patterning their arguments after this Soviet doctor. Euclidean geometry, which was invented many thousands of years ago, is still taught at schools and applied in real life. Newtonian physics, which came into being several centuries ago, has continued to be a theoretical premise for efforts to explore outer space. Darwin's doctrine of evolution as well as the rules on preservation and transformation of energy all belong to the 19th century, but should they be consigned to the museum of history because of that fact?

Marxism also came into being and grew in the 19th century as a doctrine dealing with conditions for liberating the proletariat. It is a doctrine spawned from the idea of heavy industry and the consequences of heavy industry, from the existence of the world market and the uncontrollable competition due to the existence of the world market. These are the things Engels said after 1847.

Today these problems continue to be the center of attention of all mankind and to be even more acute and urgent than before. So how can Marxism be eliminated? The correct attitude now is not to reject it but instead correct, supplement, and develop it to the level required by our time.

There have been many theories discussing various aspects of social life. But as a most general doctrine based on the development of society, Marxism has a rather perfect and close-knit structure unparalleled by any other doctrines. Furthermore, Marxist doctrine also raises the question of how to develop society without having to sacrifice any human being, without destroying the environment, and without being preoccupied with

the interests of a particular class, but rather with the cause of liberating all mankind.

Just like other scientific theories, Marxism is also subject to historical restrictions. And when it comes to being integrated with the motivation movement of a dozen countries with people belonging to hundreds of nationalities whose development level is quite different, deviations and mistakes in its conception and application cannot be avoided. With its correct application and creative development, the socialist movement has transformed this doctrine. And now we are striving to overcome difficulties in drawing on a necessary lesson for our theoretical work. But can we avert and put an end to the dogmatization of this doctrine and to a move to distort it—both intentionally and unintentionally—over the past 10 years while we were perceiving and applying Marxism?

According to the doctor of philosophy candidate whom I mentioned above, this is a process of decline. He is not the only one who has determined that it is impossible to avert the process of decline. This is because, according to him, the decline of Marxist philosophy has an unchangeable inherent logic: The causes of self destruction have been present within this philosophy from the outset and the victory of the October Revolution only further accelerated the pre-determined process at a certain point. This philosopher was of the view that the victory of the October Revolution saw Marxism with the eyes of Medusa—meaning it was turned into stone. He posed this question: Should we revive this stone or would we be better off crushing it. And it is only until the end of his article that he answers the question himself: We are better off consigning the stone to the museum of history.

Is it right that Marxism contains the seeds of its own self-destruction? In general, people usually put forth the following three main arguments:

1. As Marxism is an ideological system bearing an unscientific religious character, it needs to be rejected.

This suggestion is incorrect due to misunderstanding, or else due simply to the blaming of irrelevant mistakes on Marxism. But this ideological system is incidentally scientific because it is an integrated experience of mankind brightened by a profound philosophical outlook and extensive historical knowledge.

Some people hold that Marxism stems merely from the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist class. Therefore, Marxism lacks scientific objectivity. This assessment is wrong.

Of course, Marxism has its roots in the class struggle of the contemporary proletariat and also in other contemporary economic relations. But Marxism and the above two factors exist side-by-side, with one being unable to spawn another, as they come to life from different premises. Marxism came into being on the basis of

profound scientific knowledge, but the profound scientific knowledge can only be the result of a total knowledge of all mankind.

2. Each theory can only be correct and play its role in a given period of time.

As Marxism is over 100 years old, it has become outdated and our party should not take it as its ideological system by saying that these people do not clearly understand the inherent character of Marxism as a science. Lenin said: The entire spirit of Marxist doctrine requires us to examine it from each of its various fundamentals. For instance:

a. From the historical aspect.

b. From its relations with all other principles.

c. From the actual experience of history.

Thus, it is an internal requirement of Marxism to constantly develop, constantly upgrade, and constantly renew itself. With its theoretical nucleus as a sole dialectical methodology, Marxism inherently bears a critical and revolutionary character.

3. Today science has developed ten times greater than what it was during Marx's period. Our party should rely on other sciences instead of continuing to cling to Marxism.

This is an incorrect observation of the interrelationship between mankind's civility and Marxism. The cause of liberating the working people always needs a guiding theory about conditions for liberating the laboring people. This theory can only be Marxism-Leninism.

If we base ourselves firmly on the stance and methods cited above, we can feel safe to discuss more profoundly the deficiencies and deformations of Marxism and can, considering the new circumstances, supplement and develop Marxism to a new level. We should urgently get into action now because, in fact, over the past 70 years for many reasons we have driven our theoretical work into a state of stagnation, confusion, and aloofness from real life. And once again, with its critical and revolutionary nature, it is certain that Marxism will be able to overcome its crisis and develop to a new qualitative level, and continue its mandate of liberating mankind as it enters the 21st century with a new, appealing power.

Lenin and the Crisis in Russia in 1921

923E0006A Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 11-13

[Article by Lam Son, M.A. in economics, Marxist-Leninist Institute]

[Text] With time, we are gaining a deeper understanding of the historical significance of the stratagems used by Lenin to overcome the crisis in Russia in 1921.

That crisis was manifested in both the lines and policies and in their implementation. The wartime communist policies, together with the incorrect viewpoints on socialism (no commodity exchange, with everything controlled by the central state) and many other reasons in implementation, led Russia to the edge of the abyss. The peasants' dissatisfaction with the system of requisitioning surplus grain exploded into violent demonstrations. A typical example was the uprising staged by tens of thousands of peasants in Tambov Province (a large wheat-growing province in Russia). Following that, in March 1921, there was the mutiny in Kronstadt. Many Red Army soldiers abandoned their positions to defend the fatherland, returned home, and joined the uprising, demanding that the administration be toppled. The thing to note is that this crisis took place just after the Soviet administration had won a glorious victory over the forces of the imperialist countries that were coordinating things with internal enemies.

Lenin affirmed that "in 1921, after successfully getting through the most important stage, the stage of civil war, we are now embroiled in a political crisis within Soviet Russia. In my view, this is the greatest crisis." [Footnote 1] [Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, volume 45, page 327] At the 10th Congress of the Russian (b) Party, Lenin stressed that "the crisis has become particularly serious, dangerous, and destructive." [Footnote 2] [Ibid., volume 43, page 14]

In the face of this very complex and serious situation at that time, Lenin, using his creative talents and political skills, found the correct path to lead Russia out of the dangers. Lenin gave much attention to the causes within Russia. He observed:

1. After the civil war, everyone hoped that life would quickly improve. But in reality, the quality of life of many laborers, particular the peasants and workers, declined. "This crisis has caused great dissatisfaction not only among many peasants but also among the workers." [Footnote 3] [Ibid., volume 45, page 327]

2. The policies of Soviet Russia to that point had proven to be ineffective and outmoded and rigid. They were not in accord with economic laws, they squandered the limited potential of the country, and they could not satisfy the development needs (particularly the wartime communist policies and the investment policies in production).

There is much evidence to show that Lenin recognized the mistakes of the old line. He gave much thought to how to change the socialist construction line. But he said that the situation must be allowed to ripen. Thus, in 1923, in his article "On the Cooperative System," he announced that "We must recognize that our entire viewpoint on socialism has basically changed." [Footnote 4] [Ibid., volume 45, page 428] As it turned out, the forces that proved to be the most difficult to persuade were party members and people who had been inspired

by the military victory, who were imbued with a spirit of an "offensive storm," and who wanted to advance quickly to communism.

Lenin organized many discussions and resolutely tried to explain things. With political acumen and a spirit of renovation, Lenin put forward a suitable policy, the New Economic Policy (NEP), which was accepted by the party and people. A few years later, in a situation that was "even more dangerous than the struggle against the White army and other reactionaries," Russia succeeded in moving out of the crisis and scored good achievements.

From the realities of the crisis in Russia in 1921 and the "steering" by Lenin, we can draw several valuable lessons:

First, every economic and social crisis springs from theoretical backwardness. If communists have a spirit of criticism, a revolutionary spirit, and the ability to understand the objective laws and if they respect objective reality, they will be able to overcome the crises on the path to socialism.

In every country, whenever there is a crisis, the country must boldly renovate theoretical views and adjust those views that are not in accord with socialism. It will not be possible to find a way out if people continue to hold to the old viewpoints, implement outmoded (economic, political, and ideological formulas), and remain aloof from real life.

In 1921, Lenin strongly criticized dogmatism and rigidity in the thinking of communists: "For a true revolutionary, the greatest and perhaps the only danger is to exaggerate the revolutionary spirit and forget the limitations and conditions in making effective use of the revolutionary methods." [Footnote 5] [Ibid., volume 44, page 276] Lenin resolutely tried to get each person to understand and implement the NEP, and he was very open and frank with those who were still bound by the old views and who did not want to take the new path. He said that "they must be 'freed from their work' and put in the Bureau of Archives so that they cannot do any more damage, because they don't want to or can't see what the special characteristics are in the present stage of the struggle." [Footnote 6] [Ibid., volume 44, page 133]

Second, there are many conflicts in a socialist society. If an incorrect management policy that is contrary to the laws of development of society is implemented, those conflicts could explode and lead to turmoil. The subjective capabilities of the leaders and managers are always in conflict with the requirements of the tasks and do not keep pace with the development of the situation. Those capabilities must be strengthened and developed. If this is not done, these people will become backward, and they will not be able to solve the complex problems of life, particularly now that life is in a crisis. Lenin decided that the task of the tax cadres was: "On one hand, this is a task concerning taxes. The faster and more efficiently taxes are collected, the better. On the other hand, this is

also an economic task. We must strive to guide the cooperatives, help small industry, and exploit the independence and creativity at the bases..." [Footnote 7] [Ibid., volume 43, page 279]

Of the social conflicts, attention must be given to resolving the conflicts directly concerning the interests of the laborers. In Russia in 1921, Lenin gave particular attention to the conflicts within the peasant forces. Thus, the core of the NEP was to correctly handle the relationships in the economy between industry and agriculture and in society between the state and the peasants.

Third, the crises cannot be solved just by looking for correct solutions. This also requires putting forth policies at the right time and implementing them resolutely. The existence and development of regressive phenomena and crises usually follow a process, if the policies that are implemented are in accord with the wishes of the people, if they are supported by the people, and if they bring clear social results, they will be very effective measures for blocking and putting an end to the regression and crisis. For example, the grain tax policy and the policy on strengthening commerce and trade with the peasants attracted the peasants and helped Soviet Russia to purchase a large quantity of wheat, notably increase grain yields, and create a rather large grain market in society.

Fourth, it is difficult to distinguish clearly between economics and politics in the policies to control the crisis. The mutual relationship between economics and politics is a multi-faceted relationship. The realities of the 1921 crisis show that in the final analysis, politics is determined by economics. There can be no socialism unless the laborers are given the freedom to work, seek a happy life for themselves, and fulfill their obligations to society. However, the role and independence of politics must be manifested in the process of resolving crises. That is the only way to gradually regain the trust of the people. Along with implementing a series of economic policies, Lenin gave much attention to solidifying the party organization and regime and restoring the apparatus. He harshly criticized and severely punished those who acted in a bureaucratic manner and accepted bribes. Lenin handled the interwoven and complex class relationships correctly. In particular, steps were taken to enable the bourgeois class to contribute to building the country. However, Lenin's position on this problem was very clear: "We will allow you to trade and grow rich, but we will also triple your obligations. You must be loyal." [Footnote 8] [Ibid., volume 44, page 489] Internally, Lenin was even more strict: "The Moscow and Petrograd Soviet people's committees must, within a week, draft a resolution on shifting the civil servants (everyone concerned with economics) to a system of dividing the profits based on the amount of business and profits. At the same time, they must be severely punished if business suffers losses or they are lazy. They must pledge to answer questions about trade within three to six hours. If they don't, they will be imprisoned for a minimum of five years." [Footnote 9] [Ibid., volume 44, page 524]

Today, the above lessons provide practical hints to help us solve our economic and social problems and get our country out of its present crisis and move forward toward socialism.

Unity of a Political System

923E0006B Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 14-15, 19

[Article by Tran Dinh Huynh, deputy director of the Party Building Institute, Marxist-Leninist Institute]

[Text] Our country's political system was organized and operates in accord with a mechanism to guarantee the rights of the people under the leadership of the party. This system includes party and state organizations, the Fatherland Front, and people's mass organizations.

In operation, each element of the political system carries out separate functions. But as a whole, they exist with the credentials as elements of the political system that move in the same direction and that together form an integrated force focused on the common goal.

Every element of the political system has separate rights and responsibilities. But those rights and responsibilities do not conflict with each other. The political system is characterized both by dialogue, exchange of opinions, and debate and by cooperation and mutual support. In this, each element operates relatively independently, but each is still unified with all the other elements for the sake of the whole and the good of the nation and people.

1. The unified nature of the political system does not permit the position and role of any element in the system to be made absolute.

The party is the leadership organization of the political system. The party leads by putting forth programs, lines, strategies, and major positions and policies. At the same time, it controls and supervises the implementation of these things. The party cannot replace the other elements in the political system. The leadership method of the party is to persuade and set an example.

The state is the organization that manifests the will and power of the people. It manages the entire country and every aspect of social life. The state organizes things and operates in accord with the principle of democratic centralism and has adequate power entrusted to it by the people.

The Fatherland Front, the mass organizations, and the social organizations are self-governing organizations that operate based on the principle of cooperation and fairness. They have the right to participate in managing the country, supervising the activities of the state organizations, and examining things and making proposals to the leadership and management organizations.

Making the leadership position and role of the party absolute will result in the party replacing the other elements in the political system. The party will be

"turned into a state." The party, a political organization and the leadership core of the entire system, will be transformed into a "ruling party" with the power to manage and control society.

The above situation has actually happened to varying degrees in many socialist countries over a long period of time. [In those places], the party has organized an apparatus to operate above the state power apparatus. The boundary between leadership and power has disappeared. The leading role of the party has been transformed. The entire organizational system of the party, from top to bottom, has been turned into a super powerful apparatus, a power organization above the state. With respect to the legislative, administrative, and judicial aspects, the state operates under the control and management of the party.

When the party is the power organization, it will naturally become bureaucratic and remote from the people. It will no longer be the representative of democracy or the "servant of the people." Instead, it will become the "master of the people."

If the party is the power organization, the entire political system will become a bureaucratic mechanism, with the various elements all depending on each other. The party will use the state like a tool in order to implement dictatorship. The state will have the qualifications of a juristic entity, but it will not have the power to make decisions. It will have to wait for the ideas of the party. The mass organizations and the social organizations will become administrative organizations lacking initiative and creativity. They, too, will depend on guidance from the party.

Thus, the party will "encompass" everything. The entire political system will become a bureaucratic mechanism. The result of this is that the leadership role of the party will be transformed, and real power will slip away from the people.

Making the position and role of the state absolute will also lead to infringing on or abolishing the position and role of the other elements in the political system.

The Communist Party is the leadership core of the political system. It is the political vanguard unit of all of society. This is a principle that cannot be rejected. This principle openly affirms the class nature of the state. At the same time, this includes the creative use of Marxist-Leninist theory on the state and gives this a modern viewpoint in accord with the development of the infrastructure during the transitional period to socialism. This is a period of growth of many economic elements and many forms of ownership of the means of production, in which all-people ownership and the state economy play a guiding role.

The party must lead the political system to ensure that the alliance between the workers, peasants, and intellectuals becomes the foundation of society and the strength of the state. Only with this strength will the state really be

able to serve as the power organization of the people. The state will really be of the people, for the people, and by the people. That state will not reject the dictatorship of the proletariat but will develop and improve it. That state will not be a classless state or a state that stands above society as bourgeois scholars have said. Thus, making the position and role of the state absolute means rejecting the leadership role of the party and doing away with the independence of the other organizations in the political system.

If the positions and roles of the party and state cannot be made absolute, then neither can the positions and roles of the Fatherland Front, mass organizations, or social organizations.

2. The unity of the political system does not permit making the position and role of any element in the system absolute. On the other hand, it must be affirmed that the leadership role of the Communist Party and the power of the state depend on the people. This is the only way to build a democratic society in which the material and spiritual production capabilities of the various social classes are exploited. At the same time, this will ensure that that society has a strong foundation, that is, an alliance between the workers and the peasants and intellectuals. This is the only way to eliminate dictatorship by one class and eliminate all forms of pluralistic politics and extremist democracy.

The Vietnamese political system stipulates that leadership of an integrated structural element of the system belongs to the Communist Party. At the same time, state power belongs to the people. This is a democratic state in the full sense of the term. Thus, even though we are still in the transitional period, we have begun to build and implement a democratic system that is advancing toward a perfect and humanitarian democracy based on greater and greater production strength and suitable organic relationships. Our country's political system provides the framework for the superstructure. It is a dynamic and sensitive reflection of our country's social infrastructure during the transition to socialism. Thus, it is essential to affirm the leadership role of the party and the powers of the state in the political system.

The leadership of the party and the powers of the state must be affirmed legally. Rejecting this point will destroy the structure and unity of the political system and lead to social disorder. The masses will lose their sense of direction, and the powers of the people will not be maintained.

3. The political system is the people's tool for implementing democracy. Thus, the unity of the political system requires that each element in the system be a democratic element.

When talking about the party, on many occasions President Ho recommended that within the party, there must be broad democracy. Because only if there is broad democracy will it be possible to implement the principles concerning party building and solidify and expand party

solidarity and unity. Because the party leads the political system, democracy within the party is the precondition for democratizing the entire political system.

The state will be able to survive and remain strong only if it is a democratic element. The vertical and horizontal relationships of the state organizations are very complex. These organizations are closely related to each other, but at the same time, they are independent of each other. (An example is the relationship between the legislative, administrative, and judicial organizations.) Because of this, the state must implement democracy firmly using a system of laws.

The mass organizations and social organizations cannot be organized administratively. As voluntary organizations of the people, the mass organizations and other

organizations must operate in a democratic manner; otherwise, sooner or later, they will disintegrate.

The unity of the political system can survive only if each element in the system is truly democratic and if the relationship among the elements in the system is a democratic relationship. This relationship must be one of equality in which there are no ranks. As an element in the system, no element can be above the others or issue orders to the other elements. The party leads the political system using its own separate methods. It must not lead as if it were an upper echelon issuing orders to lower echelons.

It is essential to clearly define the unified nature of the political system and the conditions for maintaining that unity. Because if the unity of the political system is destroyed, it will be impossible to renovate the political system.

Social Justice in a Market Economy

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 11, Nov 91 pp 16-19

[Article by Luong Son; not translated]

On Why the U.S. Dollar Has Increased in Value and Measures To Overcome This

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 11, Nov 91 pp 20-22, 26

[Article by Nguyen The; not translated]

The Poor in the Countryside and the National Program Against Poverty

923E0006C Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 23-26

[Article by Bui Ngoc Trinh]

[Text] During the years that we have been implementing an open-door economic policy in accord with the new mechanism, some of the people have grown rich quickly, and their standard of living has clearly improved. But for various reasons, other people have become poorer, and among these, many people who used to enjoy an average standard of living are now living in poverty.

There are no official statistics for the country as a whole, but initial surveys conducted in a number of provinces representative of the regions and areas such as Hoang Lien Son, Ha Nam Ninh, Binh Dinh, Dac Lac, and Hau Giang have shown that the percentage of people with small or no incomes has increased to 30-35 percent of the total population. With the natural disasters and loss of crops, in some provinces, half of the population is underfed. In a country with more than 60 million people, of whom 20 million are living at the poverty level and of whom 2-3 million require help each year to save them from starvation, these serious problems have a social nature and also pose a major challenge to economic development. Raising the standard of living of the poor and quickly limiting the scope of poverty is not only a humanitarian target that is closely related to the nature of our system but also the leading solution in the strategy for stabilizing and developing the economy and society from now until the year 2000. With this way of viewing things, helping the poor is not just a matter of appealing to charitable feelings and providing aid in times of unexpected difficulties. This has also become a major policy of the state. Fighting poverty must become a central theme of our social policy and a national program.

Like the poor in many other underdeveloped countries in the world, the majority of the poor in Vietnam live in the countryside. When speaking about the poor, people immediately think about the poor in the countryside (the cities also have poor people, but they account for only a small percentage of the total population of the country). The United Nations considers countries that have an

annual per capita income of less than \$500 as poor countries. Today, Vietnam ranks as the 15th or 16th poorest country in the world. Per capita income in our country is below \$200 based on UN calculations. This is debatable. But the fact that our people are poor is no longer arguable. Today, almost 80 percent of the people in our country (approximately 50,630,000 people) live in rural areas. Agricultural laborers account for more than 70 percent of our social labor force, but they contribute only 50 percent of the national income in the material production sphere. This means that the peasants in our country are in general very poor. Based on this, about 15-20 million people are poor (the number varies year-by-year depending on natural disasters and crop losses). They must wage a daily struggle to obtain food and clothing. It is difficult for them to maintain a minimum standard of living to say nothing of enjoying a happy and cultured life.

A major survey on the economic situation and life in the rural areas was conducted by the Statistics General Department in 1989-1990 with the participation of tens of thousands of cadres and specialists from many ministries, boards, and sectors at both the central and local echelons. This survey showed that based on 1989 base prices, the monthly per capita income of the peasant households was only 21,428 dong, which was 80 percent of the monthly per capita income of low-income households in the administrative sector. As for the poor, the monthly per capita income was below 10,000 dong. Thirty percent of the people in poor households had hardly any income at all. Reality shows that almost the entire income of the poor peasants is spent on food, but this is still not enough. Each year, depending on the region, approximately 20 percent of the households lack sufficient food for four to six months, and 30 percent of the households lack sufficient food for two to three months. In places that have suffered natural disasters, droughts, and crop losses, lack of food is a problem for 70-80 percent of the households, and they usually lack sufficient food for seven to eight months. The daily requirement is 2,100-2,200 calories a day for people engaged in ordinary labor and 2,400-2,700 calories a day for those engaged in heavy labor. But the daily meals of our peasants average only 1,900 calories. And in the poor rural areas, only 23 percent of the people average 1,500-1,800 calories a day. The rest take in less than 1,500 calories a day. Because of this, malnutrition is fairly widespread. In 1990, 90 percent of the children suffering from malnutrition in our country lived in the countryside. Because of malnutrition, the youths of our country are losing weight. Their growth is being stunted, and they are not stable in work.

Because incomes are too low, the poor spend very little on medical care. On the average, each year, the poor households spend only about 0.9-1.0 percent of their gross income on medical care (the figure for middle-class and wealthy households is 6 and 9.1 percent respectively). Most poor households do not have the means to prevent contracting diseases. Sanitation is very poor.

Today, on the average, out of every 100 households, only 61.2 have thatched huts, only 44 have beds, only 14 have mosquito nets, and only 24 have blankets. [Footnote 1] [See "Economic Problems and the Standard of Living Based on Agricultural, Industrial, and Housing Surveys," Statistics Publishing House, Hanoi, 1991]

Expenditures for education and cultural activities by the poor households are also very low. In 1990, the average per capita income of the poor households was only 7,724 dong per month. Because their incomes were so low, they usually had to reserve 80.3 percent for food, using only 1.9 percent for medical care and culture and education. That explains why hundreds of thousands of poor children of Level-I school age have to leave school and remain illiterate and why very few of the poor who live near large cities ever get a chance to enjoy cultural entertainment or read a newspaper.

For many years now, in our society, there have been two conflicting viewpoints regarding the poor. Most people think that the poor are the "center of what is good" and that the "truth is emitted from under thatched roofs." There are aspects of this that are correct. During the national democratic revolution, the party viewed the poor as both the target of support and as the motive force of the revolution. The party viewed the poor as people on whom it could rely. Conversely, many people think that the poor pose a heavy burden on the people and country. Most of the evil in life springs from the poor. Putting too great an emphasis on this or that aspect is wrong. In reality, the first viewpoint leads to "element-ism." Attention is given to only the basic elements, with the other elements discriminated against. The second viewpoint leads to disdain for and a lack of social responsibility with respect to the poor. To varying degrees, these two opposing viewpoints have left marks on the economic and social policies and on cadre work. But it would be a great mistake for anyone to conclude that today's poverty in the rural areas is the result of erroneous economic policies in the cooperativization movement of the past several decades. Just the opposite is true. It's true that because we were impatient and subjective and because management was weak, the cooperativization movement failed to increase production as we had hoped. But that movement certainly did not create more poor people than before in the rural areas. Thanks to this movement, by implementing average grain subsidies for an extended period and a number of other social aspects, we were able to reduce malnutrition and poverty.

Actually, poverty in our country has origins deep in the history of building and maintaining the country. During the period of Chinese domination, the country had only several dozen wealthy officials and generals. During the time of the Dinh, Ly, Tran, and Le, the country was still very poor. During the wars of the 18th Century, the fields and villages were abandoned. From the capital to Hai Duong and Haiphong, a distance of hundreds of miles, the area was completely deserted. [Footnote 2] [See "Hoang Le Nhat Thong Chi," Van Hoc Publishing

House, Hanoi 1984] During the period of French colonialism, about 80-85 percent of the households in the country were poor. After the revolution, during the land reform, in the rural areas about 60-70 percent were poor. Thus, throughout our history, the problem of the poor has been a major problem of the country and people.

The prosperous feudal dynasties of the past used harnessing the people's strength and promoting agriculture as the national policy. After seizing power, our party and state gave attention to this problem. As compared with before the revolution, the countryside today has changed greatly. The number of poor people and poor hamlets and villages has declined greatly. However, for many reasons, we still don't have a perfect national policy regarding the poor. We have not invested a suitable amount in agriculture or rural construction. We have switched to a new mechanism, freed the production strength in the rural areas, and strongly encouraged people to earn wealth, but we do not have suitable and timely policies for "regulating those at the top and gradually raising those at the bottom," aiding the poor in production, and providing them with social insurance. Thus, there is a new polarization between rich and poor. Up to 1990, this gap was not very large, but it is growing wider. And it will continue to widen unless the state increases investments in agriculture and implements a national antipoverty program.

In my view, the poor in our country have several special characteristics to which attention must be given when determining the direction of investment and formulating policies. Geographically, most of the poor live in areas where the arable land or climate is unfavorable (the northern border areas, the Central Highlands, the central coastal areas, and the remote Nam Bo lowlands areas). In terms of capabilities, these people lack both capital and manpower. They lack the ability to raise crops and do not have experience in earning a living. Socially, although they have contributed very little to material production, they made great contributions during the revolution and wars of resistance (many are revolutionary families and families of war invalids and war heroes). Thus, when formulating and implementing a national antipoverty program, economic policy must be coordinated with social policy in order to strengthen the economy and stimulate social progress.

In investing in agriculture, it is essential to reserve a portion of the money for these areas and targets. The state must give attention to building main communications routes and large water-conservancy projects, bringing electricity to the highlands and remote areas, and creating a favorable environment for production and circulation. The major policies that have a strong impact on the rural areas (such as the land and product distribution policy, the tax and credit policy, and the price subsidy and agricultural guarantee policy) must be used in a flexible manner, with favorable treatment given to the areas that have many difficulties. Those with the ability to do so much be encouraged to start farms, laborers must be encouraged to exploit the hills and

forests and fellow coastal areas, and commodity production must be organized right from the beginning without waiting until all their material needs are satisfied based on the previous self-sufficient model before engaging in commodity production. The state must reduce or completely do away with taxes on people in these special zones. Aid should be given to the farms and individual production households in the form of price subsidies. Their products should be introduced to consumers, and they should be given help in circulating their products both here and abroad. The central coastal areas are frequently hit by floods. Each year the people have to spend a large sum of money (in some years, some places have to spend up to 60 percent of gross income) on rebuilding or repairing their houses after the floods. For the poor, houses built of bamboo are easily damaged. This burden is becoming heavier and heavier. In the past, the Council of Ministers recommended helping these areas build durable houses on small plots, with each household having approximately 10 square meters, in order to keep the people and grain safe during storms. Along with state investments, each year, other sources of investment must be attracted, the area must gradually be expanded, and the problem of durable housing must be solved for those areas that are usually hit by natural disasters every 10-15 years.

In recent years, many neighboring countries such as China, Thailand, India, and Bangladesh have formulated and implemented antipoverty programs and achieved good results. They have learned lessons, lessons that we need to study. In every country, the decisive factors in fighting poverty are money, science and technology, and organization and implementation. These three factors must be tied closely to each other in the unified national antipoverty program from the central region to the localities.

Vietnam's Ministry of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Welfare has begun drafting a national antipoverty program and clearly determined the sources of strength in the process of implementing this. This program emphasizes the role of national finances, the policy of giving priority to investment capital, credits, and taxes with respect to the areas that are experiencing many difficulties, and the establishment of a central antipoverty fund. The program also stresses the role of science and technology and emphasizes introducing high-yielding new varieties to the rural areas and guiding the people in working and expanding broad fields. It is essential to have policies that give preferential treatment to those scientific and technical cadres who volunteer to work in the countryside. Together with the mass organizations on the spot, these forces will launch an "offensive on poverty" movement, disseminate the experiences of the families that are making a good living, and encourage the families to gain wealth legitimately.

The program clearly defines the role of the state organizations in organizing and implementing things. The emphasis is on having the people organize things themselves and help each other. People in the same hamlet and village and friends and relatives must all help each other so that the poor households will have initial capital. Other countries, private organizations, and kind-hearted individuals must be encouraged to provide aid in the spheres of public health, culture, and education to support the poor so that the poor can, within a short period of time, increase their level of consumption with respect to public health and cultural services to the level of average and wealthy households.

In order to put the national antipoverty program into practice, formalism must be overcome. Wherever investments are made, inspections must be made to see if the desired results have been achieved. If this is not done, reducing the number of poor households will just remain a matter on paper.

State Leadership, a Fundamental Function of the Party

921E0006D Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 11, No 1 pp 27-30

[Article by Pham Van Huynh, specialist with the Party Building Institute, Marxist-Leninist Institute]

[Text] After a regime was established, the task of organizing and building the new society required the party to go through the state organizations in order to implement its leadership. This is the basic function of the party, the function of state leadership.

The most important and most effective forms to enable the party to carry out its state leadership function are the activities of the party members in the state organizations. These ranks must be knowledgeable about the organization of the state apparatus and the national administration and about the use of social and economic management tools.

To date, history has proven that "if the party of the working class loses its state leadership powers, the regime will not remain in the hands of the people, and the social system will change." [Footnote 1] ["Documents of the Seventh National Congress of Delegates," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1991, page 123]

The party leads the state and holds power, but all power belongs to the people. That is a scientific and unified viewpoint. It incorporates the democratic values of previous progressive revolutions and overcomes the shortcomings of the bourgeois democratic mechanism, a democracy in which there are only a few wealthy people. The laboring people are the theme of social power, but by themselves, the people cannot organize the state apparatus. Instead, they must do this through the classes and party. If the people entrust a particular party with the power to organize a state apparatus, that party will become the party that holds power. In the true sense of the term, "holding power" means using the social power given by the people to control the country and society and restore independence, freedom, and happiness to the people. Because the targets and struggle ideals of the Communist Party are in accord with the legitimate needs and aspirations of the laboring people, the people have voluntarily entrusted the party with social power. Because the party holds power, it has both powers and political and social responsibilities with respect to the daily lives of millions of people. That is a very heavy and difficult task.

Here, power should not be equated with violence or oppression. With respect to the Communist Party, power is manifested above all in organizing and controlling the new society, because organizing and controlling society have become the central task of communist parties once they have seized power. However, the party does not do this directly. Instead, it carries out this task through the state. The administrative factor must be coordinated in a

flexible manner with the party factor in the state apparatus. This includes every organization regardless of whether it is at the central echelon or in a locality. Only in this way will it be possible for the party committee echelons to implement their resolutions through the state apparatus.

To carry out its leadership function through the state apparatus, the party must find concrete, lively, democratic, and effective forms in order to avoid becoming bogged down in the work of the state organizations and to avoid "party rule" type oppression as has happened in various places. Extremist views that demand a clear demarcation of the spheres of activities of the party and state are not appropriate in terms of either theory or practice. The view that the party and the state should be kept separate is too rigid, mechanical, and metaphysical and will reduce the party's prestige and influence among the people and keep the party out of the sphere of social movement and development.

In his "Appraisal" on the occasion of the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam on 3 February 1930, Nguyen Ai Quoc stated that the struggle target of the party was to "establish a worker-peasant-soldier government." After complete power was gained in 1975 and we began to build the country, the guiding view of the party became: The leadership of the party must be manifested in the state and implemented "mainly through the activities of the state." The party affirmed that improving the party's organizational capabilities is tantamount to improving the party's capabilities in building, perfecting, and exploiting the state. The party has issued many resolutions and directives in an effort to improve state management. In particular, after the sixth party congress, with the new laws on organizing the National Assembly, people's councils, and administrative committees, the role of the state and various echelon authorities was strengthened, and the real effects of the elected organizations were increased. The initial renovations in the state apparatus contributed to improving the democratic atmosphere in society, maintaining political stability, and creating favorable conditions for economic reform. That is the result of putting the state leadership functions of the party into law. However, in recent years, a number of shortcomings and limitations have appeared in regulating this function. These weaknesses are manifested on the following fronts.

First, there is a lack of unity at many party echelons regarding the role of the state and various echelon authorities in implementing the party's lines. Thus, little attention has been given to organizing and building the state apparatus. There are few concrete and lively forms to enable the party to provide effective leadership through the state apparatus and through the various echelon authorities. Because of simplifying and rushing things, many times, party organizations have been used directly in place of the state organizations, with the result that these organizations have become bogged down in specific problems of management and administration.

Second, in managing the state and society, more attention is given to the directives and resolutions of the party than to the laws of the state. People have failed to see that the resolutions of the party and the laws of the state are both unified and dissimilar and that they cannot be used interchangeably. When trying to solve a specific problem, state organizations often seek the views of party committee echelons instead of relying on the state documents that have been promulgated or the official decisions of the elected organizations.

Third, we lack a scientific theory on state management and a correct viewpoint on the national administrative apparatus. Thus, even though we have a system of administrative schools from the central echelon to the provinces and districts, the training courses focus only on general theories of state control and on political viewpoints and guidelines. They do not move beyond the party's resolutions and macrocosmic management policy.

Fourth, although we have built a legal system, it has not been perfected and lacks unity. Thus, it has not had an effect in setting directions for the movement and development of society. The inclination to "interdict" and "block" is still the guiding idea in formulating laws.

Fifth, no distinction has been made between standards for party cadres and standards for state management and economic cadres. Because political standards have been raised too high, political standards have been used in place of managerial standards. There have been many instances in which experts have been ignored, with party committee members and party members viewed as the only authority for assigning and promoting state and economic management cadres. This has led to the creation of a rank of cadres who, when confronted with a specific task, must either rely on the collective and higher echelons or issue a general decision "without rewards or punishments." People don't see that in conditions in which the party has an administration and the party holds power, party members who are state cadres must be people who are excellent political leaders and who have technical expertise in their positions.

In our country, in recent years, particularly since the sixth party congress, scientific research on the party, the state, and the political system has made valuable contributions. The party has proposed new leadership formulas for society in general and for the political and social organizations in particular, for doing things in place of others and direct management to leadership mainly through education and persuasion and indirect management. This is a contribution worth noting.

It must be recognized that if the party is to have an influence on each member of society through education and persuasion and through setting an example, each party member and each party organization, from the central to the primary level, must struggle and train seriously. Thus, the party's immediate task today is to renovate and perfect itself. This is the only way for the

party to become the intelligence, conscience, and glory of the working class, people and Vietnamese nation.

Because party leadership has been viewed as general political leadership, during the past period, some people have wanted to separate the party from the state and mechanically separate the activities of the party and administration, demonstrating the independence and separation between the activities of the party and the state. For example, concerning functions, they have said that the function of the party is to lead (only political leadership) and that the function of the state is to manage (reality has shown that "leadership" and "management" are not independent concepts). As for modes of activity, they have said that the party must educate and persuade. The state, on the other hand, must use laws and regulations. As for leadership and management contents, they have said that the party must propose lines and policies while the state must organize and implement things. The party must solve the "major" problems while the state (the administration) must solve "specific" and "daily" problems. These views have had an effect on the life of the party. A number of party committee echelons have limited the scope of their activities and, depending on whether a job is "big" or "small" and on whether this is of "political significance" or "simply economic," they have turned over tasks and gradually transmitted decisions to the authorities. This situation can be seen easily in the present types of party organizations, agencies, and enterprises.

Based on the concept of mechanically drawing a line between the leading party and the managerial state and between the leadership apparatus of the party and the management apparatus of the state, a number of people have put the party in opposition to the state. They view the CPV [Communist Party of Vietnam] Central Committee as being in opposition to the National Assembly. The Politburo and Secretariat are viewed as being in opposition to the Council of State and Council of Ministers. Departments are in opposition to the ministries and so on. They say that the party must be separated from the state. But reality in many party and administrative organizations during the past years has given us a different view. The localities and bases where there have had good mass movements, where the economy has grown, and where society is stable are localities and bases where there is solidarity and unity between the party and administration and where they attend to and manage things together. Stated another way (could it be that in those places, the party organizations have learned how to coordinate the two basic functions of the party when leading and managing things? In these places, has the party found concrete and lively forms to carry out its leadership through the administration? These are questions that must continue to be studied and summarized.

Concerning the relationship between the party and the state, the seventh national party congress affirmed that there is no opposition between elevating the leadership role of the party and strengthening the effectiveness of

the state. There is no need to sacrifice one for the other. There is unity. The strength of both can be increased.

The Issue of Moral Education for Students

(Original: Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 10-12)

[Article by Le Trung Tran, not translated]

Grassroots Administration and Land Management

(Original: Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 11, Nov 91 pp 11-13)

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[Text] I. Land Management and Use

The party and state have implemented many positions and policies to build a management apparatus and legal system aimed at bringing order to land management and use. Recently, the state announced a land law and promulgated a decree clearly stipulating the functions, powers, and tasks of the land management sector in general and transferring responsibility for managing land use to the primary level authorities. However, this work is encountering many difficulties and obstacles. In a number of places, complex changes have taken place. This is clearly manifested on the following fronts.

The amount of land used for production (including forest land and good agricultural land) is declining seriously.

Not enough money is being invested in improving and preserving the quality of the land.

The principles in transferring fields and forest areas are being violated.

In many places and in many spheres, land is being used for commercial purposes and to make profits illegally.

A point worth noting is that there are disputes over arable land. There have been disputes and conflicts among the people over land, which has weakened stability in social life in a number of places.

There are many reasons for the above situation. One of the reasons is that the role of the primary level authorities has not been implemented properly. Reality has shown that in places where the primary level authorities are weak and where there are many negative phenomena, land management and use often encounter many problems. In order to define the position and elevate the role of the primary level authorities concerning land management and use, the following viewpoints must be understood clearly.

1. Arable land is the basis. Arable land is a means of production that cannot be "abandoned" or transferred from the primary level. It must be used for beneficial

purposes at the primary level. Arable land relationships spring mainly from the primary level.

2. The village-level authorities—who are the direct representatives of the state in the locality, who monitor and supervise every activity related to the arable land of organizations and individuals, and who implement the land decisions and policies of higher echelons—are responsible for legal matters in this sphere. Based on the decentralization system, villages must establish, solidify, strengthen, and maintain the arable land relationships in line with renovating economic management, constantly expanding production, and gradually improving the economic and social effects of the arable land.

To do this, the tasks of the village authorities on this front are:

They must provide initial data and documents in order to prepare a system of land record books and land maps from the primary level to the central echelon. Those data must be compiled, checked, and inspected based on grasping the amount and quality of the land. The village authorities must formulate projects and plans for using and developing the farm land of their village.

The land administration data of the villages must be systematic and scientific. These are important legal documents for organizations and individuals owning and using land. In order to help the villages carry out this task, there must be professional cadres who are experts in the law and who have a thorough grasp of land management. They must understand the local land distribution situation, possess specific scientific and technical standards, and have integrated standards. These must be land administration cadres who have been trained and whom higher echelons have appointed to help the villages carry on land management in accord with the law. If people are used to doing this work in a slipshod manner and they are assigned this along with their other tasks, they will not be able to complete the tasks. This may even be more expensive and led to unnecessary waste.

They must inspect and control land management, promptly discover and propose ideas to handle violations of the law, and deal with petitions and complaints concerning land relationships in their sphere of power.

They must propagandize and widely disseminate the land positions, policies and laws so that everyone understands and implements them. The villages must actively select problems that are in accord with the actual characteristics of the locality and concretize the requirements of the land law using village rules and regulations so that the land law system gradually becomes a part of life.

II. Resolving the Land Disputes

Land disputes frequently occur in this and that place. But since the policy on renovating the management mechanism in agriculture was implemented, land disputes have become more common and more complex.

Because the specific situations are very different, the disputes take many different forms. But the following phenomena have occurred in several large regions:

Nam Bo. There have been disputes between peasant households and between peasant households and state-operated units, state organizations, and military units.

The Red River Delta. There have been disputes between hamlets and cooperatives when dividing the "Contract 10" land or when dividing the cooperative. There have been disputes about fields and river banks. There have been land disputes between local people and state-operated units and state organizations.

The Bac Bo mountain area. Ethnic minority peasants have demanded the return of land that belonged to their ancestors and that was turned over to people from the lowlands who had come to work new economic zones and to highlands households who had come to settle down.

Former Zone 4. There have been disputes between the old hamlets in the countryside and between the peasants and the state-operated units.

The Central Highlands. There have been disputes (over both land and forests) between tribesmen and ethnic Vietnamese who have come to build new economic zones and state farms and forests.

In a number of other places, there have been disputes over the location of the village, district, or provincial administrative boundaries.

According to still incomplete data, during the past three years, approximately 200,000 petitions and complaints have been filed regarding land disputes (the largest number of disputes have occurred in An Giang, Dong Thap, Minh Hai, and Song Be).

These land disputes have led to criminal acts, resulted in people being injured or killed, and resulted in the destruction of hundreds of houses and tens of thousands of fruit trees. In a number of particularly serious disputes, the state has had to use armed force to resolve the matter. Some disputes have dragged on for several decades and have still not been resolved.

There are many reasons for the land disputes. Some have historical reasons, and others have arisen just recently during the renovation movement. But regardless of the reason, the state, above all the primary level authorities, must play a role in dealing with these disputes.

Most of the disputes have to do with disputes between individuals or between individuals and some organization and land use rights. According to Article 21 of the Land Law, such disputes must be resolved by the village

and town people's committee (in the place where the dispute has arisen). At the subprecinct level, disputes must be handled by the ward and city people's committees.

Thus, if the primary level authorities use the powers given them, almost all of the disputes can soon be resolved right at the local level. It won't be necessary to send petitions and complaints to higher echelons, which is a waste of time for the interested parties and which could result in the matter becoming even more complex.

Why have the primary level authorities in many places failed to carry out this task well? Here, I would like to focus on the organizational mechanism and its relation to land management. Reality has shown that the regulations must be perfected, and the various echelon administrative apparatus must be organized in accord with the requirement of renovating the economic management mechanism. For example, in the rural areas today, peasant households are both land use units and economic units. They have asked the primary level authorities to directly manage things and resolve the land disputes (from discussing and arbitrating disputes to preparing files and formulating initial procedures and from conducting investigations to promptly resolving the disputes). For a long time now, land management at the primary level has been the concurrent responsibility of a committee member, along with his other duties concerning communications, water conservancy, and labor. Thus, it has been impossible for that committee member to do everything. Furthermore, it is usually the chairman who signs the legal documents concerning administration processing. Thus, from now on, will the chairman or vice chairman of the committee be directly responsible for land management problems?

Today, many places do not have land administration cadres with sufficient standards to help the village people's committees. As a result, many obstacles and problems have been encountered in compiling files and handling procedures. Reality has shown that to resolve land disputes satisfactorily, at least three conditions are required: The people responsible for resolving the disputes must understand the law and the actual land situation in the place where the dispute has arisen. There must be sufficient data. Finally, the masses there must voice their opinion. But today, many places do not have these three conditions. In particular, they have not kept documents or grasped the contents of the land laws. Also, some places have avoided things and failed to implement measures to investigate those administrative cadres who have not carried out the functions and tasks assigned them by the state in the sphere of resolving land disputes. Because people fear taking responsibility and prefer to shift responsibility to higher echelons, land management in many places has achieved very little and generated unnecessary confusion.

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(0000000) Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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[Article by Tran Van Gia, not translated]

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[Article by Doan Hue, not translated]

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[Article by Nguyen Huu Cat, not translated]

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[Article by Van Tai, not translated]

Literature: Renovation and Development

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[Article not translated]

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[Article by Hoa Cuong; not translated]

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[Article by Trinh Tai Dat; not translated]

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DATE FILMED

29 April 1992