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Vitality of Socialism

923E0007A Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 2-6

[Article by Nguyen Trong Thu]

[Text] In the face of the very complex situation in the Soviet Union, those who oppose socialism are saying that socialism has collapsed. Along with praising capitalism and viewing this as the permanent order, they maintain that socialism was "the wrong choice of history." They are mocking and insulting the remaining socialist countries and making wild guesses about the fate of these countries. Many people who used to be sympathetic toward socialism have, in the face of this situation, begun to have doubts. One question that has been posed is: "Has socialism now come to an end?"

Since 19 August, the Soviet Union has entered a new stage. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has ceased all activities, the assets of the party have been nationalized, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics faces serious challenges. The imperialist forces are "groping for fish in muddy waters," hoping for a "god given" opportunity, and doing everything possible to ensure that the Soviet Union moves in a direction beneficial to them. Socialism, a historical achievement scored by the Soviet people during the past 74 years, is in danger of collapsing. In the coming months and years, it is very difficult to say what will happen there, because the situation there is very complex. Many times, what has happened has surprised everyone. But regardless of what happens, it cannot be said that socialism, as a theory or political system, has collapsed. That is not an arbitrary statement but stems from many things:

1. For a long time, socialist ideals have been the hope and aspiration of mankind. Socialism has, to a degree, satisfied those hopes and aspirations.

With his conscience, man has dreamed of a society with a developed economy and social fairness and a society in which some people do not exploit others and in which one nation does not oppress and exploit another nation. In man's process of development, those dreams first appeared as a feeling and gradually developed into concepts and an ideological system. As many theorists have explained, utopian socialism arose based on those dreams. The utopian socialists sharply criticized the capitalist system of oppression and advocated eliminating capitalist ownership and socializing the means of production. But their mistake was that they hoped to replace capitalism by appealing to the "hearts" of the capitalists, and they advocated building a socialist model within the framework of the capitalist system.

Scientific socialism has become a revolutionary theory of persuasive power because of its scientific and practical nature. To date, even though bourgeois theorists have tried to attack this theory, no one has been able to bring it down. Of course, because "today is different from yesterday" and because understanding is a process, there

are various features of scientific socialism that must be developed or reinterpreted in accord with the development of history. But the principles that are the backbone of scientific socialism have never been refuted. Even in the face of the great changes now taking place in the Soviet Union, there have been calls to defend socialism in the press and in the activities of the mass organizations. I would like to cite one of the many examples. In a recently published article titled "Thinking Cannot Be Banned," four Soviet intellectuals (A. Butrenko, Ph.D. in philosophy; P. Volobuev, Ph.D. in history; V. Danilov, Ph.D. in history; and V. Kele, Ph.D. in philosophy) wrote: "The collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the party apparatus does not mean that socialist thinking in our country has been annihilated. Naturally, this is what many of the enemies of communism and socialism now think. But they are just dreaming and are fooling themselves.

"Socialism, regarded as an ideology and social movement, cannot be destroyed. Socialist thinking will survive as long as countries allow economic and social injustice, some people oppress other people, and people must defend the principles of fairness for society. And there is no avoiding the fact that socialist thinking goes hand in hand with the development of modern civilization." [Footnote 1] [Supplement published in "The Soviet Union Today," published by the RIA-NOVO XTI News Agency in Hanoi, No 27, October 1991, page 31]

During the development process, socialism has satisfied some of the hopes of mankind. Even though many people are now intentionally distorting history and trying to tarnish the image of socialism, those who have remained loyal realize that on its path forward, during the past 70 years socialism has scored notable achievements. Who made the most important contributions to defeating fascism during the Second World War? Who was the pillar for the national liberation movements, with the result that in just several decades, almost every country in the world that had been a colony for hundreds of years was able to win national independence? Who provided the foundation for the struggle movement of the international working class and the movement to protect world peace? The answers to these questions are quite clear.

As for economic development, even though quick action was not taken during the 1970s, for which the price must now be paid, it is difficult to deny the economic achievements scored by the socialist countries, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. For many decades, progressive people praised and expressed great confidence in the achievements of socialism. Even in the capitalist countries, articles and books by bourgeois writers have affirmed the strength and persuasiveness of the international socialist system. The balance of power in the world benefited socialism and the progressive forces.

Because of this, capitalism grew worried and looked for ways to oppose socialism. At the same time, it had to make adjustments itself in order to survive. Today, some are perhaps intentionally trying to forget these things, but history will never forget. If socialism did not have strength and did not create social progress, how could the above situation have occurred?

Those places that have denied the achievements of socialism have had to pay the price. Recently, the Western press has mentioned the fact that since socialism was toppled in Eastern Europe, millions of people, when confronted with having to switch to capitalism, have become despondent. Their opposition to life today is increasing, and they are beginning to regret the loss of the wonderful things brought by socialism. Many of those who once enthusiastically expressed opposition to the communist party and the socialist state now truly regret their actions.

2. The collapse of a number of socialist countries is the collapse of just a number of specific models. This cannot be viewed as the collapse of socialism. Socialism is still a political reality in the world.

Ever since it became a world system, socialism has been built based on general principles and universal laws. At the same time, it has had to be in accord with the special characteristics of each country. There is only one scientific socialism, but there are many paths that can be taken to arrive at it, and there are many models to manifest it. Thus, socialism as practiced in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Cuba, China, Korea, Vietnam, and other countries has points in common and also differences. Because the communist parties in each country came into being and expanded within the framework of the nation, along with sharing common features, they also have differences and their own traditions. In particular, through the years of reform and renovation, the differences in lines, steadfastness in leadership, and measures for implementing things have resulted in the socialist countries undergoing different changes. Some countries have begun to overcome the mistakes and errors and move forward while other countries continue to make mistakes and remain mired in crisis. Thus, the collapse of socialism in this or that country is the collapse of just a specific model. It certainly doesn't mean the collapse of scientific socialism or of socialist ideals.

Among the various reasons for the collapse of those models, there is one very important reason that must not be overlooked. I am referring to the understanding and actions of party and state leaders, particularly during the most decisive moments of history. Because, in the face of the shortcomings of the socialist model in use, there are different ways of handling things. Once it is realized that socialism is the necessary path for the country and people, based on seeing the mistakes and shortcomings of the old model, an effort must be made to build a new model that is in accord with socialist ideals and the realities of the situation in the country and the world.

That is how those who have maintained their beliefs act. Another way is to lose confidence, reject socialist ideals, and look for another path which really means returning to capitalism.

Today, few countries are adhering to the socialist path. But with the survival of those countries, socialism is still a reality encompassing billions of people. And along with those countries, tens of millions of party members of the various communist parties and leading parties in other countries in the world, together with the laboring people in their countries, including the developed capitalist countries, remain loyal to socialist ideals. The point that must be stressed is that during this crisis facing socialism, the laboring people in the capitalist countries realize the need to make an effort to defend socialism, because they are the direct victims of capitalism.

3. Although actual socialism has serious weaknesses and has made serious mistakes, if those weaknesses and mistakes are seen and a serious effort is made to overcome the weaknesses and correct the mistakes, socialism can advance and regain its strength.

In recent decades, the actual models of socialism have exhibited very serious weaknesses and mistakes. Many of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and many of the principles of scientific socialism have been misunderstood and distorted, and this has resulted in things being done incorrectly. Things have not been done in accord with the specific historical circumstances of each country. Impatience, subjectivism, voluntarism, and conservatism have done much damage. Along with the achievements, there are also many wonderful things that people are waiting for socialism to bring about or that have been implemented only partially. This is why the communist parties and socialist forces are taking a serious look at themselves and are resolved to make reforms and carry on renovation.

A question that arises is, through reform and renovation, can socialism overcome the serious crisis of today? The first point that needs to be discussed is developing the economy and increasing labor productivity. Previously, with the bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies system, a number of socialist countries were slow to develop their economies. But today, in quickly switching to a state-controlled market mechanism, expanding the activities of the economic elements, including the private economic elements, stimulating cooperation and wholesome competition, and opening the door to other countries and participating in the world market, some socialist countries have made notable progress on the economic front, which has earned praise even from Western observers. It must also be stressed that the scientific and technical revolution does not belong just to capitalism. Once socialism sees the terrible effects and causes of the lost months and years and appropriate reform and renovation methods, it will quickly adjust to modern technology and make leaps in production.

What is the possibility of democratizing society? Many people in the West say that democracy is impossible in the socialist countries, because the communist parties there monopolize leadership and refuse to allow opposition parties. Actually, talking about democracy, the first thing that needs to be clarified is "democracy of whom, for whom, and by whom?" Is it for the majority of the people or only for the rich and some elements of the middle class? In the capitalist countries, the various parties replace each other in power based on the election results, but most of those parties are simply different political organizations of the exploitative class and of the ruling clique. Thus, in the socialist countries, if the communist parties really represent the interests of the working class and laboring people, that is, if they represent the great majority of people in the country, the fact that these parties hold power is not unreasonable. Democracy is not manifested just in places where there are opposition parties. If those parties don't represent the interests of the laboring people, the disputes between those parties are actually aimed at protecting the various factions of the ruling cliques.

The decisive factor that will enable socialism to get out of the present crisis is that the communist parties in each country must resolutely reorganize and renovate themselves. Along with preserving their nature and maintaining their targets, these parties must keep up with the changing situation in the world and in their country and formulate appropriate strategies and tactics. They must oppose conservatism, sluggishness, and extremism. This will not be easy for those parties that dislike new things and that are deceiving themselves with past glories or that lack unity among the ranks and that have organizational divisions. But capable parties that have firm ideals and ideological unity, that are strict with themselves, and that are resolved to correct things will be able to do the above things.

4. Rejecting socialism means a return to capitalism. But capitalism still has many conflicts. It still has many bad aspects and cannot serve as a foundation for social fairness, freedom, or real democracy.

As compared with feudalism, capitalism represents an important step forward in history. In recent decades, thanks to using the achievements of the scientific and technical revolution and of the science of management, capitalism has enabled labor productivity to increase rapidly. That is a major contribution to the development of mankind.

But even so, capitalism still has many shortcomings. During the past several decades, in order to get out of the crisis, capitalism has made adjustments. But even with those adjustments, instead of declining, the exploitation of the classes and the oppression of the people has actually increased, although in a more subtle form.

In the developed capitalist countries, although the standard of living is high, it's clear that the class conflicts are

becoming more and more serious. The monopoly capitalist cliques are using the scientific and technical revolution as a tool of exploitation. The rate of exploitation is increasing. In Japan, in certain places, this rate has at times reached 700 percent. Laborers have many worries. They are afraid that they will be dismissed and not have work, and they are worried that they will be reduced to poverty. Because of working too hard, the number of workers who have suddenly died at work has increased. At the same time, the owners are growing richer and richer. One percent of the richest Americans now have 36 percent of the wealth as compared with only 27 percent 15 years ago.

In the developed capitalist countries, political power is in the hands of the monopoly cliques. Bourgeois democracy is suitable only for the wealthy. The restraints in the laws on who can vote and run for office have stripped the laborers of their right to participate in managing the state. Freedom of speech is just a form, because most reporters work for the owners of the newspapers. During the 46th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September 1991, the premier of Malaysia said that the type of democracy that the developed capitalist countries, particularly the United States, want to impose on the world is unacceptable, because that democracy confers the "right to bear arms, to display sexual desire, to slight the bonds of marriage, to smash the wonderful aspects of the community in the name of individual rights, to destroy morals and create false institutions, destroy society, and ruin the economy and international relations." [Footnote 2] [Report by the Vietnam News Agency, 30 September 1991]

Along with the increase in domestic exploitation, modern capitalism is increasing the exploitation and oppression of other peoples. By expanding multinational corporations, the capitalists have earned huge profits from the countries in which they operate. The debt owed by the undeveloped countries is increasing and has now risen to almost \$1.5 trillion. Along with this are the political and military pressures. The unruly actions taken by the United States in the Gulf War, in the embargo on Cuba and Vietnam, and so on provide concrete proof of this. Through such actions, the imperialists plan to draw other countries into their orbit of control and block the right of self-determination of other peoples.

It must also be said that after hundreds of years of capitalism, to date, the number of developed capitalist countries with a high standard of living can be counted on the fingers. More than 100 other countries that are following the capitalist path or that are in the capitalist orbit are still very poor. Stated another way, in the capitalist world, there are two poles: the very few rich countries are becoming richer and richer while the large number of poor countries are growing poorer and poorer. According to a development report of the World Bank, during the past 30 years, several dozen capitalist countries have failed to raise their per capita national income.

That is, they have not improved their standard of living, and in certain countries, the standard of living has even declined.

Today, a legitimate concern is gnawing at many people: Without socialism to serve as an opposing force, the imperialists will be able to do whatever they want. The international working class, progressive forces, and small nations will have to endure more injustices and suffer more tragedies. The situations already mentioned show that in the face of the difficulties now facing socialism, losing confidence and trying to return to capitalism is the wrong way and goes against the current of history.

Socialism is facing a serious crisis. But with concrete analyses, we have a basis for affirming that with its vitality, socialism cannot be destroyed. Through this crisis, the socialist forces will learn useful lessons. Socialism will certainly overcome the losses, meet the challenges, and recover its strength. This will not be easy, but nothing can prevent that.

New Thinking on National Defense Tasks

923E0007B Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnam, se No 12, Dec 92 pp 7-10

[Article by Quang Can]

[Text] The new thinking on defending the fatherland is a difficult and complex problem. Examining the preconditions and basis of this, we see that this must start from the renovation line in the socialist revolution and in socialist construction in Vietnam and from the actual situation and special characteristics of the country and the world today. Also, we must correctly evaluate the destructive and aggressive plots of the enemy powers. We must inherit and further develop the military tradition of the Vietnamese people of "the entire country as one and all the people attacking the enemy." In particular, we must utilize the rich experiences of the decades of war to liberate the nation and defend the fatherland. We must utilize the newest military and technical achievements of other countries, have a deep grasp of history, understand the causes of victory and defeat, and grasp the multifaceted lessons of recent wars (such as the wars of aggression waged by the United States in Grenada and Panama, the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War, and the war in Yugoslavia). We must understand and explain the major and minor conflicts now taking place in a number of countries.

The new thinking on defending the fatherland also requires unified understanding of some basic concepts: Of what does the fatherland consist? In defending the fatherland, who and what are being defended and how are they to be defended?

The new thinking on defending the fatherland is manifested in the speed and manner in which we predict, evaluate, and handle various situations and changes and the unexpected incidents that occur in the work and in our country.

Here, I would like to discuss just several initial thoughts on this important task.

After many decades of waging war to liberate and defend the fatherland, our people are finally at peace in an independent and free country. Building the country has become the central task of the revolution. This is a very difficult and fierce struggle to oppose poverty and backwardness, bring happiness to the people, and make the country strong in all respects.

The Vietnamese people have always cherished peace and been loyal to friends. We sincerely want to be friends with everyone. We don't want to fight or spill blood. We don't want to engage in a civil war. Instead, we want to be able to concentrate the nation's potential on building the country and building a new life.

However, that is a subjective desire. The reality of today is that there are enemy forces who are working both secretly and openly to destroy and block our nation's development. They want to topple the socialist system in our country, do away with the achievements scored by our people after years of struggle, and suppress, either indirectly or directly, our nation's sovereignty and independence.

The enemy is not the same in peacetime as in wartime. That is, the enemy is not always easy to spot. Hiding behind this or that mask, they are infiltrating the peaceful and wholesome lives of our people. Some who are by nature opposed to us still have relations with us in order to destroy and make use of us. Also, our plans for maintaining the country in peacetime are different from those in wartime. The renovation line of the party and state makes it very clear that we must make full use of the strengths of the age and enter into relationships with, cooperate with, and strive for the help of friends in the interests of peace and development. At the same time, we must not become negligent. Instead, we must remain vigilant and resolutely defeat the black plots of the enemy. Based on our strengths, both ready to cooperate and resolved to struggle, our people and military are prepared to deal with those actions aimed at destroying the peaceful building of our country, and they are ready to defeat every war of aggression.

Thus, it must be affirmed that regardless of the situation, defending the fatherland means defending the independence, freedom, and sovereignty of the fatherland, protecting our land, air, and sea areas, defending the peaceful working lives of the people, protecting the abundant natural resources of the country, and protecting the material and technical base and the fruits (even though still few) of socialism. The concept of "fatherland" has a very broad but very concrete meaning: From the land and sea boundaries (natural borders) to the factories, work sites, streets, and villages everywhere in the country, defending the fatherland at a time when we are expanding the commodity economy, operating based on a market mechanism, and opening the door to other countries are very important and

brand-new tasks that cannot be fully delineated all at once. We must implement things, gain experience, and gradually revise and perfect things. But the fundamental principles already defined are immutable. On the military front, the experiences and traditions in waging a people's war, exploiting the strength of all the people, and creating an integrated strength to preserve the country must be studied and developed in accord with the new situation and tasks.

World socialism is now in a serious crisis. The revolution is in decline. Imperialism has temporarily gained the upper hand. The imperialists are aggressively promoting an anticommunist crusade. They have arrogantly announced the liquidation of the "orphans of Marxism" and the death of socialism in this century.

Gaining experience from a number of countries, outside forces are promoting the process of "peaceful change" in Vietnam. They are coordinating political-ideological, economic, and cultural offensives with armed attacks, disturbances, and military threats based on the theory of "low-intensity conflicts," which does not exclude war on various scales, including wars of aggression (such as the Gulf War).

The outside forces of aggression are coordinating things with the reactionary and traitorous forces within the country. They are working together very closely and making use of our people's renovation movement in an attempt to move this in the direction of capitalism. They are trying to make use of the mistakes and shortcomings of the party and state and the negative aspects within the ranks of our cadres and party members. They are inventing demagogic slogans and promoting bourgeois democracy and "political pluralism and opposition parties." They are trying to separate the party from the masses, create splits within the party, and stir up political turmoil in an attempt to expand the socioeconomic crisis in our country into an all-round economic-political-social crisis. They want to topple our socialist system and put our country in another orbit. Thus, they are trying to destroy socialism from within and "win without having to go to war." When necessary, they can still coordinate this with other forms of armed aggression or wars of aggression on various scales.

Clearly, the new thinking on defending the fatherland must above all recognize the enemy. We must not be under any illusions or waver but must resolutely defend socialism and protect the fruits of the revolution and the people's regime. The relationship between defending the fatherland and defending socialism must be clearly recognized. We must criticize the view that it doesn't matter what system it is as long as the country is prosperous and can maintain its national sovereignty and independence. At first glance, this view seems to make sense, but its real intention is to separate the national problem from the class problem, separate the struggle to liberate the nation and defend the fatherland from the struggle to free the working class and liberate the laboring people, and separate true independence and freedom from socialism.

Because of this, if we are not vigilant, we will fall into the orbit of another class, the orbit of capitalism. We cannot be under the illusion that without socialism, we can still maintain our national independence and sovereignty, maintain our country's territorial boundaries, and preserve the peaceful and happy life of the people. Honest people with a conscience who have experienced the lessons of history recognize the faces of those who are calling for the "elimination of the Communist party" and the "elimination of the socialist system." They are the ones who were only recently licking the boots of the imperialists and aggressors who were trampling on our country. They are the tiny minority of dissatisfied people in our ranks who arrogantly think of themselves as the "minority group of superior intellectuals." This has led to them deserting and betraying their fatherland and nation. One truth that is becoming clearer and clearer is that only by defending the people's regime, protecting the party and state, and defending the socialist system will it be possible to maintain our nation's independence and freedom.

We know that there are patriotic Vietnamese who truly love their country but who do not approve of socialism. This is easy to understand, because the socialist model that we have been building has serious defects even though it has scored achievements. Because of this, we must carry on renovation in order to gradually build socialism in accord with its nature and manifest its superiority.

Naturally, the struggle to defend the socialist system will not be simple. This will take place on the political, ideological, economic, and cultural fronts and in the military and diplomatic spheres. Attacking foreign enemies must be linked to attacking domestic enemies. Building our national defense must be tied to solidifying national security, and defending the fatherland must be linked to preserving peace. The important problem is to resolutely correct the mistakes, overcome the shortcomings, struggle against negative phenomena within the state apparatus and society, maintain political stability, and gradually achieve success in the renovation movement and bring practical material and spiritual benefits for the laboring people. The party must be renovated and reorganized, the confidence of the people in the leadership of the Communist party must be restored, and the solidarity of the entire nation, which is the firm foundation for defending the fatherland and building the country, must be solidified and strengthened.

Defending the fatherland is a constant problem for the entire party, all the people, and the entire military and for every sector with functions in society. The first thing is to promote a struggle on the theoretical front and in the political and ideological spheres. We must expose the cunning arguments that distort the truth, that intentionally try to sully socialism and history, and that insult the material and spiritual values that we have respected and held dear for so long.

We must closely coordinate defending the fatherland with building the country. National defense must be coordinated with the economy, and a strong all-people's national defense must be built based on establishing strong defense zones (especially in the key areas) and ensuring that each base, each locality, and the entire country actively defeats the plots to destroy and disrupt things (including wars of aggression). To thoroughly understand and develop the party's and President Ho's concept of people's war, we advocate coordinating the strong defense zones with the strong main-force corps [binh doan], coordinating the forces on the spot with the mobile forces, building national defense and people's security centers in each locality and throughout the country, and actively dealing with each situation. The Gulf War, which showed that the United States has "put the Vietnam syndrome behind it," has posed a number of new problems for our people and military.

To fully answer the question of how to defend the fatherland, we must clarify the task of building a people's Army. Only if we have a strong Army will we be able to defeat the enemy and defend the fatherland.

Here, I want to correct the view that the only function of the military is to train in order to defeat aggressors. Reality has shown that internal turmoil is always the "fifth column" for outside aggression. Our armed forces and military (particularly the main-force units), which must be of a suitable size, which must be disciplined, and which must be capable of rapid deployment, must operate in unison with the people's public security forces in order to maintain political security and social order. The people's armed forces (consisting of the three branches of service) and the people's public security forces are the activist forces of all-people's national defense and national security in defending the fatherland. Only if there is close coordination between those two forces will we be able to predict the situation, deal with things in a timely manner, create integrated strength, and deal effectively with major and complex problems.

In building a regular revolutionary Army and gradually modernizing the Army, our Army has switched to organizing a peacetime Army. Using small but highly efficient regular forces in conjunction with having powerful reserve forces that are well trained and well managed, our people's Army will be well prepared for combat if that should be necessary. We must review, study, and develop the military arts of Vietnamese people's war and satisfy the complex requirements of defending the fatherland in accord with the new thinking. We must improve the quality of military training by focusing on what is basic and real based on a spirit of independence and self-reliance. The party and state have formulated a correct policy for building the military, including both standing forces and reserve forces, training and maintaining the officer corps, looking after the rear area,

teaching the spirit of responsibility of the people and sectors, and concentrating on every aspect in order to solidify and build the Army at a time when the country's economy faces many difficulties. The military must resolutely correct the shortcomings and solidify and build its organization so that it has the strength to fight and win.

Developing the Army politically and using that as the basis for organizing and building it in all respects is a matter of principle in building a revolutionary Army. The people's Army must have strong political capabilities and must adhere to the socialist path in accord with the program put forth by the party at the seventh congress. It must be capable of acting skillfully and resolutely in complex situations. It must actively participate in the political, ideological, and theoretical struggle against hostile arguments, criticize erroneous ideological tendencies, participate in mass mobilization activities, and defeat the plots of the enemy aimed at fooling and winning the support of the masses. It must actively participate in productive labor and in building the economy and the country.

We must criticize the alien idea of "depoliticizing" the Army and of having a "neutral" and "classless" Army and of having an "Army only of the country and nation." Throughout history, when there have been classes, states, and armies, the state and Army have always had the class nature of the national ruling class. The recent collapse of socialist countries has shown that advocating "depoliticizing the Army" and having a "neutral Army" will "nullify" the Armed Forces and enable the enemy forces and reactionaries to topple the socialist system. Then, after the opposing forces have seized power, they will again "politicize" the Army based on a different political orientation.

The Vietnam People's Army is committed to acting in accord with the teaching of President Ho: "Be loyal to the party and filial to the people and be prepared to fight and make sacrifices for the independence and freedom of the fatherland and for socialism. Every task can be completed, every difficulty can be overcome, and every enemy can be defeated."

Several Problems With the Market Economy in Our Country

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Apr 91 pp 11-14

[Article by Thanh Son; not translated]

Competition and Emulation

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 15-17

[Article by Tran Xuan Truong; not translated]

Ownership During the Transition to Socialism in Vietnam

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 18-21

[Article by Luu Van Sung; not translated]

Power Belongs to the People: A Basic Principle of the Constitution

923E0007C Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 22-25

[Article by Nguyen Van Thao, director of the Legal Sciences Research Institute, Ministry of Justice]

[Text] In their constitutions, many countries have declared that "all power belongs to the people." Our three constitutions of 1946, 1959, and 1980 all mention this basic principle.

The problem today is to correctly understand the relationship between citizens, society, and the state, a relationship of a supportive nature that creates the unity and strength of power. Based on this, power must gradually be organized and controlled (in accord with today's conditions) so that power belongs to the people both in the legal documents and in reality.

I. Citizens, Society, and the State

In the history of the formation of states, regardless of the state, the first task is to grandly announce the rights of the people and citizens and promise to implement measures to protect those rights.

In the final analysis, the power of the state originates from the people, specific people who have a material and spiritual life, willpower, and profound hopes concerning their rights. The desire for freedom and dream of a just, humanitarian, and disciplined society is natural, like an eternal ideal. The irony is that after several thousand years, man has not yet hit that target, and in reality, no country has ever been able to fully implement the principle of "all power belongs to the people." Only by waging a struggle to liberate man and create a new political and economic system and a new state, that is, a state of the people, by the people, and for the people, will it be possible to actually implement that sacred principle. As Marx said long ago, "the problem is to transform the world." But man cannot gain his rights simply by improving himself or by waiting for others to show pity or express feelings of brotherhood. The struggle to gain rights for people with the credentials of individuals and citizens is a stubborn and on-going struggle.

Today, in the movement to renovate the country, the concepts concerning social reform, economic development, class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the establishment of democracy, and so on are actually tools and means aimed at reaching the goal: everything from the people for the people. The important question today is how to handle the relationship between the

people and the state and between individual people and the people as a whole so that the roles of these subjects are equal and mutually supportive and so that they develop together.

In Vietnam, for many years the relationship between the state and citizens in general has been detailed in the legal documents. But in reality, there has been and still is a tendency to make the role of the state "absolute." On one side are citizens and on the other is the state. Equality with respect to powers and mutual obligations is not clear. People seem to think that the state must have power while citizens have obligations. When specific violations are being prosecuted, the state rarely considers common rights. This phenomenon has led to a widespread psychology: Citizens don't see their role, and they have lost confidence in themselves. They have even lost confidence in the state and in society.

In the relationship between the collective and individuals, there is a similar tendency toward extremism and absolutism. With an ideal concept of a pure society, the relationship between the individual and society is conceived of as the "dissolution" of personal traits. The individual must "submerge" himself in the collective and submit to the will of the collective. If there is a difference of opinion, the individual cannot "rise above the collective." This concept has led to the loss of individual uniqueness and dynamism, narrowed the broad horizon of people's thinking, and stifled innovation and creativity. At times, people have fooled themselves and even others using the screen of the "collective."

The truth is, each person, with the credentials of a member of the collective, is always concerned about his rights, particularly work rights (production, business, services, research, creativity, and so on) and ownership rights (ownership of materials, property, housing, and so on) within the framework of the law. Rights in economic and creative activities are considered to be very important, because these create life (both material and spiritual) based on the capabilities of each individual. These are the preconditions for implementing other rights such as political, cultural, and social rights. Previously, for this and that reason, people have often failed to give attention to passing legislation concerning these activities. Increasing the capabilities and creativity of individuals and citizens today is not a way of disguising selfish individual aspects or encouraging people to become rich at any cost. Rather, the purpose is to encourage people to make useful contributions and take responsibility for society and the collective. On one hand, this has resulted in the social product gradually increasing, and the state has selected talented people. On the other hand, citizens have a mechanism for manifesting their capabilities and implementing their powers.

With a spirit of vigilance, by taking the initiative and formulating plans to resolve the relationship between citizens, society, and the state, we will quickly see the appearance of a civil society and jurisdictional state.

Unless we gradually raise the level of understanding concerning these relationships and act like masters, our dreams for a civil society and jurisdictional state will be just an illusion and lack either a theoretical or practical basis.

The constitution is the official document that defines the legal rights of people and citizens. But the decisive thing is that the constitution also puts forth ways to organize things, divide the labor, allocate powers, and ensure that those powers are effectively implemented.

II. The Way To Organize the Powers of Our State

State organization is discussed in the constitution of every country. With respect to actual practice and political or technical aspects, even though they may or may not discuss a theory concerning the division of power, all of them raise a basic problem, the division of power and the way to organize those powers.

In solving this problem, every country starts from its own special characteristics: economic growth and stability, the standard of living, the correlation between the political and class forces, the political party in power, democratic traditions, the practices and psychology of the people, geographical location, the relationships among the races, the homogeneity of the national collective, and so on.

The bourgeois countries all follow the principle of a separation of powers. This principle is manifested to varying degrees and in different forms of state organization. However, no bourgeois state has ever implemented this principle correctly (in accord with the theory). Instead, countries have applied this in a flexible manner or twisted it in accord with the interests of the ruling class.

Unlike bourgeois lawyers, we are following the principle of having the state unify powers. Instead of a separation of powers, there is a rational division of labor and close coordination between legislative, administrative, and judicial powers. Each power manifests its own effect. A particular power does not encroach on other powers, and it is not encroached on by other powers.

The National Assembly, which is directly elected by the people, is the highest state power organization and the only organization with the power to promulgate a constitution and promulgate laws. Today, in a number of activities and in some of the bills of the National Assembly, there is a tendency to encroach on the sphere of administrative power. Conversely, in the activities and regulations of the government, there are a number of points that are actually in the sphere of legislative power. In the division among the various powers, it must be understood that the National Assembly is the organization that unifies the powers, but it does not implement all three powers. The National Assembly is responsible for promulgating laws. It does not have administrative or judicial functions.

In order to coordinate legislative activities and ensure that the laws are of good quality and can be implemented in real life, the drafting of the laws is usually done by the government, which then submits the bills to the National Assembly. The National Assembly deputies, people's mass organizations, courts, and organs of control have the right to make suggestions about legislation.

Administrative power is wielded by the government. The government is the organization that has been entrusted with administrative power. It is the supreme executive and administrative organization of state power. This division of labor is essential in order to have a national administration with the following special characteristics:

Continuous, stable, unified from the central echelon to the primary level, and effective.

Able to satisfy the needs of citizens in every sphere, serve citizens in a non-commercial manner, and maintain the life of all of society within the framework of the law.

Have a direct effect on the specific rights of people through giving permits (business, land allocation, house construction, travel, certification, and so on) and prosecuting cases (meting out punishments, suspending things, recovering things, prohibiting things, and confiscating things). Thus, the administrative organizations are organized and operate based on a unified system of discipline from the central echelon to the localities.

Based on a clear division of labor, the government is responsible to the National Assembly and must keep it informed of its activities. The National Assembly must question and issue resolutions on the work of the government. The National Assembly can express confidence or no confidence in the government or individual ministers.

Judicial power belongs to the courts and organs of control. The courts are the judicial organizations of state power. When rendering a decision, judges are independent and must obey only the law. They are not dependent on any administrative organization, organization of people's representatives, or higher echelon court.

The right to make independent judgments is a special characteristic of the justice system of modern countries. In Vietnam, the constitutions of 1946, 1959, and 1980 all mention this principle.

Regular and close coordination between the judicial, legislative, and administration organizations is manifested by having the administrative organizations control judicial administration (organization, personnel, expenditures, and so on) in order to help ensure independent judicial decisions and manage the personnel who aid judicial work (lawyers, notaries, case inspectors, and so on) in order to ensure that the judges are independent and obey only the law.

In organizing state powers, some people wonder which is more objective, the separation of powers mechanism or the unified powers mechanism. In order to examine this

question, we cannot examine only the theoretical basis but must also look at reality and the effectiveness and capabilities of each plan. In my view, regardless of which mechanism is used, it must be based on the political nature of the state, and, in particular, on inspections and controls. Those inspections and controls must be placed within the framework of the law and form a binding and scientific mechanism.

III. Power Control Mechanisms

The state formulates laws and organizes their implementation. But the state, too, must obey the laws. If the state violates a law (regardless of the individual or state organization), legal action must be taken in accord with the legal procedures.

This is a principle, and it is very clear, but in reality, this is very difficult to implement. Controlling citizens and prosecuting those who have violated the law is still not being done well. Nevertheless, the state still has an apparatus for doing this. But when the state violates the law, who will inspect or prosecute, and how will they prosecute and in accord with which procedures so that the people (the population as a whole and each citizen) feel that those responsible are being inspected and dealt with in a fair and just manner? This must start from the principle that state power belongs to no one else but the people.

There are many different mechanisms originating from the special national characteristics and the intellectual standards of the people of each country, but all mechanisms agree on one basic point: the constitution is the supreme law in the legal system. The constitution is the document that expresses the freedoms of citizens and the protections afforded them.

The power control mechanism is above all a constitutional control mechanism of the laws to ensure that the highest state organizations and senior state officials obey the laws. In order to ensure the operation of this mechanism, there can be a number of forms: a constitutional commission, and oversight council, a constitutional court, an inspection council, a committee to protect the rights of citizens along with the National Assembly, and so on.

Along with the constitutional control mechanism, we must gradually form a legal control mechanism for administrative actions, including control concerning regulatory documents under the law and the individual

administrative decisions of the administrative organizations from the government to the ministries and provincial, district, and village administrative organizations. This mechanism must be centrally manifested in the administrative jurisdictional organizations or in a semi-jurisdictional, semi-advisory organization whose task is to inspect administrative documents and administrative actions.

In the sphere of justice, the constitutional and legal control mechanisms have, with respect to prosecution activities, been clearly stipulated in the laws on legal actions. Those consist of the right of the parties concerned to fight cases and the right of the organizations of control and of the judge and deputy judge to lodge protests. There is only one question that needs to be examined: If a supreme court judge or the head of the Supreme Organ of Control violates the constitution or commits a crime, who will inspect the matter and prosecute that person, and how will they be prosecuted? A number of countries have established a separate judicial organization to handle such cases.

Finally, in the power control mechanism, the powers of the people and of each citizen must be perfected so that they can participate in this control. Through the mass media, the people have the right to express agreement or disagreement, to express their confidence or lack of confidence, and to express demands and make proposals to the state and state cadres. This is also the right of the people's mass organizations in demanding and proposing inspections of the administrative organizations. Citizens' right to make complaints must be perfected through a system of laws to ensure that every citizen can bring a state organization that has violated the law or damaged his interests before an organization with jurisdiction in accord with the legal procedures.

Naturally, we cannot point out all at once all the factors of a power control mechanism. Through the activities of the organizations concerned and in accord with the "ripeness" of the political, economic, and cultural conditions and peoples intellectual standards, the state will actively add essential articles, promptly "plug" the loopholes, and create a highly effective power control mechanism.

Is There a Need To Expand

(XXXXXXX) Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 26-29

[Article by Vu Cao Phan, not translated]

Solidify Primary Public Health in Order To Protect and Care for the Health of All the People

(00000000) Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 30-32

[Article by Pham Song, not translated]

Youth Movement and Conflicts That Must Be Resolved

9234E0007D Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 33-35

[Pham Dinh Nghiep, M.A. in philosophy and central echelon union leader, and Pham Dinh Dang, editor, TAP CHI CONG SAN]

[Text] The union movement in our country is facing various conflicts that must be resolved:

1. The conflict between theory and practice: On one hand, in order to affirm its existence, the union has taught youth union members and youths to struggle based on a spirit of communist ideals, that is, to struggle to build a new and wonderful society free of exploitation in which there is democracy, justice, and humanity. But things have not, unfortunately, happened that way. The socialist countries are now facing an all-round crisis, the greatest crisis they have yet had to face. Socialism as practiced has not proven its superiority to capitalism. In our society, the lack of democracy and fairness is still an acute and difficult problem. Our economy is still in a crisis, and so on. These are things can constantly weigh on the people, including youths. This is why we have frequently talked about the "loss of confidence," the "crisis of confidence," and the "political and ideological gap" among the youths of our country.

This conflict must be resolved, but how? Marx gave us some guidance: Ways to resolve conflicts in practice can be found in actual practice. Above all, we must talk about the leadership role of the Communist party, because the party represents communist ideals. The party must renovate and reorganize itself so that it really represents the progressive intellectuals of the modern working class and the people. The party must have a political program, put forth a clear socialist model for Vietnam, and establish a mechanism to implement the ideals in the present stage of the revolution.

As for the union, the contents and methods used to teach youths about the ideals must be changed, mainly by educating them through practice. That is, the union must become a school for democracy and a school of struggle for social fairness. The union cannot compromise with those things that are contrary to the ideals or socialist values. Because if it does, youths will not be able to become good socialist men or prepare themselves for advancing socialism, as Lenin often said. If it does, the union will not be able to serve as the school of heroism, creativity, and offensive of young communists, the combat reserves of the party.

There have been many periods when youths have been regarded simply as targets of education who do not have the ability to educate themselves or others. Reality has shown that there are conflicts between the democratic nature of the union and the inborn bureaucratic leadership methods and between the hopes and dreams of youths, who want to advance toward what is new, and the old, worn-out forms. The gap between education and action is being exposed more and more clearly and is stifling the initiative and creativity of the youths. The existence of these things and the passage of time have resulted in youths forgetting the "combat lessons" of the past. Youths are unintentionally being educated based on rigid formulas, with the result that there are many places where youths have become people who know how to move only on their knees and obediently listen to others. Only rarely do they dare to do something different or make some minor decision.

Even in the union, there have appeared "upper circles" and "middle bureaucrats" whom youths must accept. The reason why some people move up the ladder and force others to listen to them without giving others a chance to say anything is that they don't like to listen. There is the feeling that "youths are on one side, and union cadres are on the other, and both are moving in opposite directions." People have tried to correct things that give gratification, regarded desires as a picture of life, and indicated the things that should not be. But the confidence of people, particularly youths, has been eroded.

Clearly, steps must be taken to eliminate activities that are no longer suitable and do away with bureaucratism in union activities. This is the only way to mobilize the boundless creative potential of the youths and enable the union organizations to solve their problems in an active and highly effective manner.

2. The generation problem: It is no surprise that Western philosophers and sociologists are particularly interested in this problem. Of course, we do not agree with what they refer to as the "conflict between the generations." We also oppose the view that the struggle between the generations is the main motive force of history. However, the problems between the generations must be examined in a dialectical manner.

First of all, it must be admitted that there are conflicts between the generations. There has been a tendency to develop a general law of the generations: The older generation represents traditional values, and the younger generation represents change and the modern. The older generation has much practical experience, particularly political experience. Youths were born and have grown up in relatively peaceful conditions. With respect to vital interests, older people, with the credentials of those who have been around longer, don't have to worry about a job. But for youths on the threshold of life, there are countless questions: How are your studies going? What type of work have you chosen? Do you have a job? And so on. Let me cite a few figures about the job situation. In 1989, youths accounted for 47.2 percent of the work

force (76.4 percent of the youths who needed jobs). It is estimated that by the year 2000, if 85 percent of the youths (approximately 21 million people) are to have jobs, we must create another 5 million jobs. The result is a difficult problem. In just the past three school years, more than 2.2 million students left school. That means that we must create 2.2 million jobs for them. Reality has shown that creating jobs and improving housing conditions are two leading tasks for every government in order to stabilize society. The first priority, which is to create jobs, is a long-term task. It is the fruit of education. Failure in school leads to failure in society. The reason for saying this is to show that no measure is as effective as reducing the social gap in the schools (furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the right to work and to receive an education are the rights of youths). Another reason for saying this is to show that a distinction must be made between the generations on this problem. For older people, music and dance are unnecessary, but for youths, these are essential. We can point out many other differences between the generations concerning psychology and their views on life and the present situation.

However, with just a few specific examples, we can see that there is unity between the generations, but unity in conflict. The young generation has inherited the work of the older generation, but that is an inheritance of dialectical rejection. If youths find the right direction, they will perform new marvels that the older generation couldn't do because of the limitations of history and the age. Thus, the best way to resolve this conflict is for older people to self-consciously pass on their experiences, particularly their political experiences, to youths. Youths must self-consciously accept the positive values of the traditions and improve them in accord with the new situation and conditions. Furthermore, youths must self-consciously and bravely create new things. That is the only way for them to affirm themselves and move society forward. Everyone knows that "self-consciously" is just a word, but it is a pressing requirement, a requirement stemming from the views of the Communist Party and socialist state. It is also an urgent requirement for the Communist Youth Union, with the credentials of the combat reserve unit of the party and people. However, the only way to implement this viewpoint is to concretize the party-union, state-union, party-youth, union-youth, and state-youth mechanisms.

3. Another conflict that is just as serious is the conflict between the great potential of the youths of our country and the exploitation of that potential using a suitable mechanism. There are many examples showing the great potential of Vietnam's youths. Many youths have won high honors in international mathematics, music, current events, and chess contests. In international craftsmanship contests, although they were participating for just the first time, our youths have won high honors. During the past several years, some of the best youths from America and Canada have been of Vietnamese ancestry. Most of the technical and electronics vice directors in France are young overseas Vietnamese. But

unfortunately, to date, we have not exploited or used this great potential. Because as everyone knows, to date, we have not overcome the situation in which many people do things just for the sake of appearance. But they are still paid a salary and receive bonuses just like those who work hard. Average-ism, the practice of ranking everyone the same like "Luy-xi-phe" in the Greek myth has "beheaded people" to make everyone equal. Those who want to do a better job are immediately criticized. People try to gain positions and special rights and privileges.

In order to resolve these conflicts and exploit the great potential, one prerequisite is that the party and state must implement a policy and mechanism to discover, train, and make use of "talented people." The present mechanism is a type of "average-ism" mechanism that "brings people down to the same level and stunts talents, particularly the talents of the young."

For their part, youths must, through their actions and lives, prove that in our society, on the path of renovation, the material and social position of man can be determined only by labor. This is a very important point. This is the criterion for measuring the renovation of the country and of youths, and it is youths, more than anyone else, who are responsible for doing this.

However, manifesting and affirming themselves in this sphere, youths must be able to participate in the renovation process at many levels. They must be given much help so that they understand human civilization and socialism in actual activities. This is the only way for youths to educate themselves and others about the communist world view, gain a sense of national pride, understand the concern of the leaders of today and tomorrow, gain a sense of resolve, learn the principle that things are the same from the beginning to the end, and gain a thirst for knowledge and progress.

4. We can mention another conflict in today's Vietnamese youth movement. That is the conflict between the obligations and the rights of union members and cadres and association members and cadres, between the collective activity needs of youths and the very tight material expenditure conditions, and between the rich and varied cultural and spiritual needs of youths and the formulas for unifying, assembling, and educating them, formulas that have not been renovated. There is also the conflict between the rapid changes in the movement based on current trends and the very limited capabilities of the youth union cadres and association cadres, who were trained during the time of state subsidies, and of the new ranks of cadres who have been trained but who have had to change jobs because of the special characteristics of their age group.

In order to resolve these conflicts, we must not be impatient but must start at the beginning. We must redefine the role, position, functions, and tasks of the youth union and occupational associations, determine the wishes of youths, and establish a suitable mechanism.

in order to exploit the capabilities of our youths. Once again, it must be stressed that the youth problem has been, is, and always will be a vital problem for every country and people. The more scientifically we approach the youth problem, the sooner we will be able to overcome the difficulties and make progress.

The Traditional Stage and Measures To Save Literature

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 36-37

[Article by Nguyen Thi Nhung, not translated]

Minh Hai Continues on the Path of Renovation

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 38-41

[Article by Nguyen Van Dang, not translated]

Vehicle Transport Enterprise No 3 During the Process of Changing the Management Mechanism

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 42-45

[Article by Pham Van, not translated]

Literature: Renovation and Development

92JF0007E Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 46-51

[Seminar on problems that must be solved in order to promote the development of literature, summarized by Vo Dang Thien]

[Text] Phan Cu De. I would like to discuss two issues.

At the recent Asia-Africa-Latin America conference on cultural cooperation and development organized by SIDA [Swedish International Agency] in Sweden, which I attended, one of the issues discussed was: Today, who is responsible for culture, the state or the market, the individual or the collective? This is a very current problem, particularly for the developing countries. Our literature is guided literature, but it must also be realized that the market exerts great pressure, particularly on the publishing houses. They have to focus on cheap but marketable books (Western romances and stories of violence) and can't afford to publish works of value that are difficult to sell. Thus, the state is responsible for investing and providing subsidies.

Opening the door and modernizing national literature (all of culture) is correct and necessary, but the direction must be clear. Our general line on this is entirely correct, but the organizational mechanism is still weak. It seems that we are abandoning those organizations responsible for setting directions and forcing them to abdicate their responsibilities in order to survive. Thus, without suitable investments, socialist guidelines will exist in theory only.

Huu Mai: The major directions have already been set. What is lacking are the specifics. Just as in other spheres of life, freedom and democracy in culture and literature must be regulated within the framework of the law. If there are no laws, there won't be any consequences for overstepping the bounds, and those who follow the correct path will be in danger. This is a difficult and complex problem that requires much more knowledge and time. Every country in the world opposes degenerate culture, but to date, legal experts have not been able to agree on a definition of what constitutes pornography.

Nguyen Kien: What is possible and not possible in literature poses various questions.

There is the matter of "outlook" in works. We have abandoned subjective and rigid views in favor of objective views. That is correct. But this is not an easy process. This means that writers must live, ponder things carefully, and even undergo agony and pain (as in the case of Nguyen Minh Chau). The party must thoroughly understand writers, but in the final analysis, things still depend on the efforts of each individual writer.

The second issue is the effect of the market mechanism and the challenge of modern life. The book market is now undergoing a seemingly spontaneous change. Regulation by the state management organizations is very

disorganized and lacks effect in the present state of confusion. Literature is now facing the challenge of modern life and encountering pressure from the other means of information, which have greatly reduced its influence.

Thus, I recommend that theoretical researchers discover the special characteristics and unalterable strengths of literature so that literature can manifest and affirm its proper place in spiritual life. Shouldn't literature penetrate deeply into the inner lives and self-questioning and concepts of people?

Phuong Lon, associate professor and Ph.D. in literature (Faculty of Literature, Hanoi Teachers College I):

We are discussing this subject with the intention of making a positive contribution to the immediate literary situation. To do this will require that we make a subjective effort. But regardless of how much can be done, we must also see the objective limits of the situation. As for writing, obviously, there is the matter of the talent and responsibility of writers. But they can never completely escape the mood of the times. What people write today will follow from what they have written in the past. There is still an anti-American movement. But since 1975, now that many families have televisions, refrigerators, and so on, writing has changed. Conversely, if the "price, wage, currency" monster had continued to today, writers would have been much more critical of the anti-American period. People don't arbitrarily portray everything as either black or white. During the resistance against America, you could also hear the guiding tune of heroism and optimism. But there were also defeats, and some people acted in a cowardly and traitorous manner and surrendered. Thus, there are enough materials to make people sick and tired of the present situation. This negative mood will be reversed only when the present situation changes for the better.

As for enjoyment, that is, acceptance by the literary public, people must see the objective limits of this. This is what the market mechanism is like. In the capitalist countries, there is certainly no lack of "creative freedom," but many "true works" are printed only in "symbolic numbers." Perhaps we are at a point when we must use the "smaller evil" to fight the "greater evil." There are very few truly great works. I want to point out several things about such objective limits so that our "subjective efforts" can focus on another type of voluntarism.

Tran Dinh Su: Creative freedom is different in each period. Today, the topics, subjects, and methods are all chosen by the writers. No one can exert pressure on them. Thus, the responsibility of the writers is now much greater. Choices must be made, and there must be debate. The question of expanding literary criticism must be posed. In the past, criticism focused mainly on pointing out correct and erroneous viewpoints and positions. This was a propaganda tool. Today, criticism must point out what is true and good. It is the true friend of writers. This is an essential aspect of literature today.

Pham Dien Duat Given the situation of society, the country, and the world today, more than ever before, writers must ponder the matter of good and evil. The "good and evil" of today are much different from the good and evil of yesterday. In the past, good and evil were very clear. Joining the military was good, deserting was evil. We were good, the enemy was evil. But today, the old criteria no longer exist. Things are confused and very difficult to separate. Thus, writers must ponder things deeply. Real writers cannot avoid the burning questions of readers: "Where are we at? How can we live together?"

Vu Quan Phuong In our literature, several problems have arisen, which I will temporarily call "garbage truck stains."

A number of those who oppose literature that mechanically serves politics are today engaging in politics in literature in a very obvious manner. They call for democracy and freedom of speech but belittle those who disagree with them.

The paradox between "reflecting reality" and "pondering reality" in order to describe a reality is totally at odds with the reality of life. Actually, works of arts are always thoughts about reality. But to think correctly, people must rely on reality as it is. Efforts to distort reality, for whatever motive, will lead to false works of art. In the past, people criticized a "proper reality" (I am using the very precise words of Hoang Ngoc Hien), but now they are defending another "proper reality."

Finally, creative freedom is essential and very valuable, and because of this, writers must elevate their conscience and sense of responsibility. They can't, in the name of freedom, create slipshod works, become sloppy in their writing, or spread obscurantist propaganda.

Le Quang Trang With respect to arts and letters, besides following the general principles of leadership, party leadership must adhere to the following major formulas:

As for general effects, the target is literature, including setting guidelines and policies for hitting the targets and organizing things in order to exploit the creative potential.

As for particular effects, the party must encourage what is unique, respect talent, encourage creative freedom, and elevate a sense of responsibility. The targets are writers and artists, models, and work groups.

An accurate evaluation mechanism must be found. This is very important. One of the reasons for the recent confusion is the problem of evaluation. This mechanism must include an editorial and publishing system (there must be standards and specialities), a review system (we do not yet have this and must establish such a system), an arts council (which must be established based on the spirit of Politburo Resolution 05 and Directive 61 of the

Secretariat (10th Term), a system and theory of specialized criticism, and a system for gaining scientific understanding of public opinion and public tastes.

To evaluate things accurately, there must be a theoretical basis for scientific criticism. Through the theory of criticism, the leaders and public can examine and gain a deeper understanding of the substance of the works. The view of Tran Dinh Su, who said that the purpose of criticism is to find right and wrong, is, in my view, too extreme. When criticizing something, people think that they are looking at the good and bad aspects, but the weakness of this stems from the capabilities, methods, and explanatory abilities of the critics. The blame can't be shifted to politics and propaganda.

Pham Xuan Nguyen So that literature continues to develop, with respect to writers, I think that the minimum requirement (as Nguyen Minh Chau said when he was still alive) is to have an ideological and philosophical basis so that writers can create highly generalized works.

As for leadership, what writers want is freedom of thought and freedom of speech (the essential material conditions). Earlier, I said that renovation is a basis for literature. To be more specific, that basis will give today's writers greater freedom than previous generations of writers. We must create an atmosphere of debate and frank, open and democratic exchange of opinions based on adequate information. All information must be made public. Destructive rumors and insinuations must be avoided, because those could easily create "false values" and "distortions" for a number of works.

Ngô Vinh Binh I want to describe an investment method that the army is now using with 50 writers. It is not exerting pressure or asking for specific works. Instead, it is allowing them to write freely about our 30-year war. This is one solution with respect to literature today, an investment that is not aimed at immediate results but at long-term results. This is a far-reaching view. This will solve many basic problems with respect to literature, particularly with respect to those books that are encountering difficulties—the books written about the war.

I think that we must reorganize the publishing houses, determine each "separate field" with clear functions and have specific state investment guidelines.

Khuet Quang Thuy Today, there is the danger of forming an underground economy in publishing, which would have a very bad effect on future generations. Solving this problem is the responsibility above all of the leaders with their control and regulation functions.

Hoang Ngoc Hien, critic, Nguyen Du School of Writing. As for party leadership in arts and letters, I agree wholeheartedly with the view expressed recently by G. Makkop, first secretary general of the Soviet Writers Association, in VAN NGHE: "We must put up with the individuality of others." The words "put up with" are well put and quite accurate. In my view, the party is not some general body but a group of specific people who are

engaged in specific tasks (providing ideological leadership, serving as editor in chief, criticizing things, teaching, and so on). In daily work relations, people must put up with the individuality of others, because without individuality, there can be no art or literature. Individuality is not a style or manner but the individual viewpoint and opinion of each person. It is not easy to implement this, but this is a necessary development step of society, the development of aesthetics and ethics.

This means that there must be an atmosphere of dialogue, an exchange of opinions, and a respect for the opinions of others. The majority cannot be used to solve problems, particularly in this sphere.

There are always two tendencies, which are referred to as left and right, or more accurately, renovation and conservatism. The party's responsibility is to create and maintain a dialogue and an atmosphere of dialogue between left and right (opposition just leads to destruction) in order to generate development, not just in literature but also in many other spheres.

Tran Dinh Sa: My views from the very beginning have been given attention and discussed. I want to note that, when possible, I will explain my views in greater detail and try to clarify them. Here, I would like to add that my model concerns only changing literary models and styles. Each type and style of literature is limited to certain spheres of life and has only a certain capacity to accommodate reality. Reality shows that the literary model with the greatest capacity to accommodate is revolutionary literature. Like the word "revolution" understood in its broadest sense, the "new poetry" is a revolutionary phenomenon, but we call this revolutionary literature. Every name has its own historical background. I agree with Hien on the need to create an atmosphere of open dialogue. Only through open dialogue will the various ideas be able to contribute to clarifying reality and prove beneficial for renovation.

Real Renovation in Literature

921E0007F Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 49-51

[Concluding remarks at seminar by Ha Xuan Truong]

The complex problems and different ideas have generated much interest, but this seminar has been very short. Because of the position of the journal, I don't dare and don't have the ability to speak on behalf of the Writers Association, Ban Nghe, or the other professional organizations. Although it wasn't possible for more people to attend this seminar, it's too bad that others couldn't attend, because we are sure that they could have contributed excellent ideas at this seminar. I will let each person draw his own conclusions about this seminar. As the person presiding over this seminar, I would like to say a few concluding words.

Renovating literature, like renovating other spheres, is a long-term dialectical process. Saying that it began at a

certain point is to make an arbitrary decision. It's true that the sixth party congress was a decisive event for the all-round renovation of our country. But to arrive at the contents adopted by the congress, the party had to go through a very difficult process and determine what was possible and what was not possible, including the tasks since the fourth party congress. Literature belongs to the sphere of social understanding through individual writers, and it is directly and indirectly influenced by society and the positions and policies of the party. Thus, its movements are varied, sometimes slow and sometimes fast and sometimes spontaneous and sometimes progressive in nature. Prior to the sixth congress, at the beginning of the 1980s, in literary circles, there appeared "Mua La Rung Trong Vuon" by Ma Van Khang, "Cu Lao Tram" by Nguyen Manh Tuan, and "Khach O Que" and a number of other short stories by Nguyen Minh Chau. In movies and dramas, which were based on literary plays, there were "Hy Vong Cui Cung" by Tran Hoang Bach and Tran Phuong, "Bao Gio Cho Den Thang Muoi" by Dang Nhat Minh, Nhan Danh Cong Ly" by Nguyen Khac Niem and Doan Hoang Giang, and a number of plays by Luu Quang Vu. In particular, after the sixth congress, the spirit of "facing the truth squarely" that was advocated by the party stimulated the creativity of writers. Literature exhibited many aspects and manifested its superiority in revealing aspects of society and secrets of people that it had not been possible to mention during the nation's (and literature's and the writers') war for survival.

Overlooking the negative aspects, occasionally, very sad things have happened in literature because of the spontaneity of the market economy and of commodity production, which are quickly being formed in the spiritual spheres of society, without being blocked by the leadership organizations. Negative attitudes have been ignored because of the influence of the socioeconomic crisis. Although this is not a major problem, this happens in every crisis. We have also ignored the plans of a few people to use literature as a tool for carrying on political activities. This seminar has focused on evaluating the positive aspects of literature, mainly prose literature, during the past few years. Those positive aspects represent renovation in literature.

If writers are like the "willow tree that can think," how can they withstand the strong winds and even the storms of "market" methods? Not talking about flexing one's muscles, carrying out one's responsibilities as a writer is now very difficult. Writers must be people of strength and talent. Looking at the positive side, in their works, we can see that many writers have made a great effort and have a lofty spirit of responsibility. Thus, literature is clearly undergoing real renovation in all respects—subjects, themes, characters, structure, style, form, and so on. As for long familiar subjects such as war, what is new is that the writers are relating the different fates of people and the losses and pain suffered by different people in different circumstances during the war. If they didn't describe those things, how could they highlight the

sacrifices and heroism of each person so that the entire nation could win victory? Social life is again peaceful, but the situation is still not normal. Society is in a state of crisis. The negative and positive in society are in conflict with each other. Society, which lived for so long with a centralized economy, bureaucratic centralism, and state subsidies, is now switching to a market economy. The market economy, competition, and monetary power all have a good side and a bad side. Society and each person is vacillating. These phenomena, through the psychology and behavior of each individual, have led to the creation of new characters in the novels and short stories written in recent years. Light and dark, black and white, morals, love, and passion. Writers are free to make their own choices. Land reform has been a theme in dozens of novels and short stories. The thing that readers and we—writers and critics—have criticized in a number of these works is not the fact that they have focused on the negative aspects and even the tragic aspects of the mistakes that were made, but the fact that they have looked at things from only one side and distorted the entire land revolution, which led to liberating the peasants and foot soldiers who made decisive contributions to the victory at Dien Bien Phu and created a new appearance in the rural areas of our country. The atmosphere of freedom is really in the renovation movement of our country's literature. The works of literature recently given awards by the Writers Association, the short stories that participate in the competition, and the investigative reports of VAN NGHE during the past several years provide concrete proof of the points mentioned above.

But—it's good that we have the word "but"—the new in our literature is still being concealed, as many people pointed out when discussing the limitations and even the distortions of the phenomena reflected in a number of works, including works that have been given high marks. It should be noted that writers have repeated themselves and others. They have tried to avoid one extreme but have gone to the other extreme. The "new" is still the "old," even though the names of the books, the characters, and the writers are different. Furthermore, the "new" has in general stopped at talking about things that were not mentioned in the past. As Pham Tien Duat said, with respect to themes, characters, and issues, writers have not gone beyond the issues of the writers in the Self-Reliance Writers Group (Tu Luc Van Doan) and many other writers before the revolution. What is different is the country's present situation. There are new tendencies, the problems of a new age in our country's history, new characters such as new intellectuals, scientists, new peasants, new workers, new businessmen, and so on. In short, there is a scarcity with respect to the new aspects and new heroes of the age of change in our country. If they exist, they are still very vague in our present renovation literature. I think about Renaissance literature, French "Light" literature, and the struggle literature and signs for a new society of France. Along with new understand and new discoveries about the past, there must be understanding and discoveries about the

present and future of our country. Perhaps there are limitations with respect to standards, understanding, and the responsibilities of citizens that our writers must overcome in order to truly usher in a new period for literature.

Finally, I would like to talk a little about party leadership in the sphere of literature, which is an old but still current problem. During each change in the revolution, the problem posed has always been leadership and leadership methods. Politburo Resolution 05 (6th Term) put forth guidelines and a number of methods for solving this problem.

The literature of a country is determined by the writers in that country. It is the writers of a country who create the literature of that country. Of course, I do not mean to slight the literary movements of the masses. Each age has its own literature. In our age, the party leads, but that law still holds. As for party leadership in the field of literature, the party puts forth policies to encourage and create conditions to enable literature to develop based on the realities of literature. The important thing for the development of literature, and for every other ideological and spiritual sphere, is freedom. Under the domination of colonialism and feudalism, our party struggled for the right to love one's country and for freedom to create for the truth of life, and it opposed violence and oppression. After the party gained power, it naturally had to implement those freedoms using every means possible. That includes ensuring that the wholesome tendencies for socialist humanism have the strength to maintain their advantageous position in society (including subsidizing publishing and looking after the material lives of writers). Recently, there have been many directives and resolutions. But in reality, things have been relaxed. This laxity has allowed commercial and free market tendencies to spread and even overshadow real literary activities. At the same time, there has been much guidance from the top down, but this has not started from studying the realities of the situation. Party leadership regarding literature does not mean that the party controls literature or creates party literature. Instead, this refers to enabling our national literature to develop and providing those people—the writers—who create this literature with the material and spiritual conditions necessary for them to create works of art using their own talents and create the real values of socialist literature.

Tran Dinh Su talked about "revolutionary literature" and literature. A number of others also talked about this. In my view, regardless of how you explain this, such a division is not right. Revolution and evolution, the exalted and the ordinary, and the collective and the individual all have a close relationship to each other. One contains the factors of the other, and this is for that. Evolution is eternal. Revolution is not permanent, but it is necessary for evolution. In the interests of evolution, there must be revolution. But what does the word "revolution" mean? Does this mean changing the entire irrational situation or the motive factors for change? Should this be understood in political terms or from the

viewpoint of evolution? What special characteristics and criteria should be used to say that a work is a piece of revolutionary literature and that another is just literature? Themes? Characters? Writers? This is difficult to say. There are many tendencies in literature. Each writer has his own unique personality, but nothing can escape the control of history. Literary evaluations must be based on historical viewpoints. Because of this, there are divisions between periods, stages, and tendencies. Because of the limitations of this seminar, we will have to discuss this issue some other time with a greater number of participants.

As for the matter of respecting freedom and individuality, I think that the most important renovation in the party's leadership of literature is based on manifesting freedom of thought and respecting individuality based on the motto that expanding "the freedom of each person is the condition for expanding the freedom of all people." The terms "each person" and "all people" refer

to the fact that there are individuals and a collective. Freedom and individuality are not in direct opposition to and they do not harm the interests of the collective or the legitimate interests of other people. The limits of individual freedom refer to implementing democracy within the framework of the law. Vietnam is striving to become a jurisdictional state in order to ensure individual freedoms and respect the individual.

As for renovation in literature, the most important and decisive point is the look and heart of the writer. Themes, characters, style, and individuality mean nothing unless the writer has a profound view bearing the nature of the age, a deep understanding of human feelings, a pure heart, a spirit of selflessness, and a lofty concept of his function as a writer (with the writer as messenger) for man, life, and his people. Without those things, there can be no renovation. Renovating literature, which is synonymous with developing literature, depends on building the new culture of the nation.

Fellow Compatriots

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 p 52

[Article by Tam Tam Ha, not translated]

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Letters to the Editorial Staff

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Emulation Should Again Be Recognized

00000000 Hanoi *TAP CHI CONG SAN* in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 p 53

[Article by Truong Giang; not translated]

Events Leading to the Future

923E0007G Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 12, Dec 91 pp 54-57

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] **I. High-Level Meeting Marks the Normalization of Vietnamese-Chinese Relations**

During the period 5-10 November 1991, a high-level delegation led by Do Muoi, the secretary general of the Party Central Committee, and Vo Van Kiet, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, paid an official visit to China and achieved excellent results. The Vietnamese-Chinese communique stated that "both countries are pleased by the improvement and gradual development of bilateral relations. The two countries have disclosed that this high-level meeting signals the normalization of relations between Vietnam and China."

This was an important event and marked the beginning of a new stage in Vietnamese-Chinese relations. Our people are very happy about this historical improvement [in relations].

Looking at the world situation and present international trends, normalization of Vietnamese-Chinese relations is a timely and necessary step that is in accord not only with the fundamental interests of both countries but also with the need for peace, cooperation, and development in this region and the world. Thus, the above event is being discussed throughout the world. In particular, this was a very welcome event in Southeast Asia.

The five principles of peaceful life are regarded as the foundation for the new relationship between our two countries. China was one of the countries that took the initiative on these well-known principles. And China has often taken the lead and set an example in implementing these principles. Because of the historical and geographical conditions, there are many spheres, particularly the economic sphere, in which Vietnam and China can cooperate broadly based on the principle of both sides profiting. As developing countries, Vietnam and China have many things in common with respect to national development needs, international economic cooperation, and the establishment of a new international economic order. As independent nations, Vietnam and China both support other countries in their effort to defend their national sovereignty, unity, and territorial boundaries. Vietnam supports China's policies and the policies of other countries in the world that benefit third-world countries.

Vietnam and China are neighboring countries that have a long historical relationship. They have lived together through countless happy and terrible events. In modern times, the peoples of both Vietnam and China were exploited by the feudal imperialists. The peoples of both countries longed for peace, independence, and freedom. They joined together and helped each other in the struggle to gain national independence and unify the

fatherland. The Vietnamese people will always remember and be grateful for the great help given by the Chinese people.

In reality, Vietnam and China are both socialist countries with similar ideological systems. Having a political and ideological relationship will benefit both countries. Naturally, the relationship between the two parties must be built based on a spirit of independence, full equality, mutual respect, and non-interference in the affairs of the other. Vietnam and China are resolved to stick to the path that was chosen and build a new society based on the special characteristics of each country. This is in complete accord with the basic principles of the UN charter. No one has the right to force his will on someone else. No one has the right to force another person to change his concepts or use that as an excuse for establishing state relations. Today, in a world that is constantly undergoing renovation, changing, and becoming more varied, we cannot allow ideology to affect state relations. Ideological closeness to one country is no obstacle to having economic and cultural relations with another country.

We are not the type of people who think only of the past and long for things in the past that have now lost their meaning. And we are not people who will turn our backs on the wonderful things of the past. Our attitude is to adhere to concrete historical viewpoints, face the truth squarely with optimism, and always look to the future. Recently, relations between Vietnam and China have had their ups and downs. But that is just a temporary situation. In the past, Manh Tu said that "people who have been through disasters know what is right and do an excellent job." With the good will of both sides and the tendencies of the present period, the disagreements between our two countries will certainly be resolved through negotiations, creating a springboard for long-term cooperation on many fronts. In order to promote this trend, we regard gradually normalizing relations with the people and state of China and with the Chinese Communist Party as one of the most important diplomatic tasks today.

For more than 40 years, particularly during the 10 years of reform and openness, because of implementing policies based on reality and with the firm resolve of the leadership and of all the people, China has made great strides forward. This has contributed to enabling East Asia to become one of the most dynamic regions in the world. It is no wonder that people are referring to the 21st Century as the century of Asia and the Pacific. Clearly, the Chinese people have awoken and are becoming masters of their own fate. After 1913, following the revolution led by Sun Yat-sen, Lenin described the awakening of the Chinese people in an article titled "Backward Europe and Progressive Asia." [Footnote 1] [Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1980, volume 23, page 213] For more than 70 years, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, that prediction became a reality.

We have a basis for giving high marks to the restoration of bilateral relations. Our two parties, based on the tradition of friendship between the peoples of our two countries and the fundamental principles in international relations for peace and cooperation in the new conditions based on a spirit of mutual trust, will open a new page in the relationship between our two countries.

II. Council of Ministers Chairman Vo Van Kiet Visits Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore

This trip, which began just one day following the signing of the Cambodian peace agreement, clearly shows the continuity of the foreign policies of the party and state. This was a very short trip. He was in Indonesia from 24-27 October, in Thailand from 28-30 October, and in Singapore from 30-31 October. But the results achieved during this trip were very good. The problems in the relationship between Vietnam and each of the countries visited are different. But between Vietnam and each of the countries visited, there is a friendly and cooperative relationship based on equality and mutual interests. The press and many politicians and businessmen in the host countries and in other countries in the world expressed a positive attitude concerning the sincerity of the Vietnamese government and gave high marks to the renovation movement being carried on by the Vietnamese people.

In recent years, relations between Vietnam and Indonesia have been solidified through a friendly exchange of opinions and concrete cooperation. The trip to Vietnam by President Suharto in November 1990 marked a new step in relations between our two countries. This visit by Chairman Vo Van Kiet further developed existing relations, particularly economic and commercial relations. The 10 Bandung principles and the 5 principles of peaceful coexistence were reaffirmed in our bilateral relations.

Because of the conflicts and mistrust in the past, relations between Vietnam and Thailand have not been normal for many years. Not only has this had an adverse effect on our two countries but it has also had a negative effect on security in this region. In such conditions, the visit to Thailand by Chairman Vo Van Kiet has opened a new page in the history of relations between our two countries. Both sides stressed the need to put an end to the conflicts and mistrust, forget the past, and build a sense of mutual trust. This is essential if we are to develop long-term relations between our two countries in

all spheres, particularly the economic and cultural spheres. During this visit, Vietnam and Thailand affirmed the principle of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial boundaries, not interfering in the internal affairs of the other, and resolving disputes peacefully. Both sides agreed to avoid engaging in any activity that would have a negative effect on the security of the other. With this spirit, it will certainly be possible to solve the difficult problems, such as the citizenship and normal life of the Vietnamese in Thailand, the conflicts over the sea boundary between the two countries, and so on. The agreements that were signed during this visit by Chairman Vo Van Kiet and the agreements that will be signed in the near future will further broaden economic and cultural relations and create a firm foundation for order and security in this region. A major result of this visit is that the two countries are beginning to trust each other.

In 1979, because of the "Cambodia problem," Singapore severed diplomatic relations with Vietnam. At one time, relations between Vietnam and Singapore were very tense. This visit to Singapore by Chairman Vo Van Kiet not only restored diplomatic relations between our two countries but also expanded commercial and economic cooperation in the industrial, service, and travel spheres and promoted contact between mass organizations and private organizations.

This visit to these three ASEAN countries by Chairman Vo Van Kiet must be evaluated not just on traditional grounds, such as how many agreements were signed, the amount of money and goods exchanged, and so on. It must also be viewed based on its basic and long-term significance. That refers to solving the problems and expanding friendly and cooperative relations between Vietnam and each of the above countries. This will create the preconditions for mutual trust so that all of the countries in this region can prosper regardless of their political system. Thus, the fact that those countries are backing Vietnam for participation in ASEAN will benefit Southeast Asia as a whole, and this is an important victory for Vietnam's foreign policy. [passage omitted]

Traditional Culture on China's Path of Development

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 12, Dec 91 pp 58-60

[Article by Le Huy Tieu; not translated]

A Way Out of Madness

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese

No 12, Dec 91 pp 61-62

[Article by I.U Kattransky; not translated]

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