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No 2, February 1990

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Scientific Conference on the 'Problem of Democracy in Vietnam—the Actual Situation and Proposals'

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[Text] The editorial staff of TAP CHI CONG SAN and the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front organized a conference on 9 and 10 January 1990. Ha Xuan Truong, the editor in chief of TAP CHI CONG SAN, and Pham Van Kiet, the vice chairman and acting secretary general of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, presided at the conference.

Attending the conference were Phan Anh, a lawyer; Ngo Ba Than; Ha Quang Du, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union; Nguyen Van Tu, the chairman of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions; Dr. Phan Dinh Dieu, a professor and the deputy head of the Vietnam Institutes of Science; Dao Tri Uc, who holds a doctorate in law and who is the head of the State and Law Institute (Vietnam Social Sciences Commission); Viet Phuong, a high-level specialist with the Central Economics Management Institute; Nguyen Van Thao, the head of the Science Institute, Ministry of Justice; Pham Ngoc Quang, who holds an MA in philosophy; Ho Van Thong, an instructor in philosophy at the Nguyen Ai Quoc School; Khong Doan Hoi and Nguyen The Phan from the Marxist-Leninist Institute; Pham Quang Can, the editor in chief of QUOC PHONG TOAN DAN; Nguyen Dang Quang, the editor in chief of GIAO DUC LY LUAN; Vu Quoc Trung, the editor in chief of THANH TRA; Xuan Cang, a member of the Secretariat of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions; and many comrades who are engaged in theoretical and leadership work at the central echelon and in the localities.

Ha Xuan Truong opened the conference: Today, democracy is the burning problem of the age. It is the decisive problem of renovation in Vietnam as advocated and led by the party. Without democracy, there can be no democracy. The purpose of this conference is to support renovation. The conference will focus on three main themes: the theoretical problems of democracy, the real situation concerning democracy in Vietnam, and proposals on expanding democracy and overcoming violations against democracy.

The conference was very lively. The following is a summary of the main ideas presented.

I. Theoretical problems concerning democracy

Viet Phuong: Democracy is one of the grand projects in the hundreds of thousands of years of mankind. To date, few of those grand projects have come to fruition. They have not yet been perfected. At the end of the 20th Century, no country or people has succeeded in establishing a democracy capable of fully satisfying the needs and aspirations of the people. There is no place in the

world with such a democracy. The grandness of democracy lies in the fact that millions of people have sacrificed their life in the struggle for democracy.

Khong Doan Hoi: Throughout the history of democracy, through many bloody struggles, democratic values have been accumulated, and these have solidified as hopes, feelings, and ideas.

Nguyen Chinh (head of the Department of Propaganda and Training of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front): In a society, democracy there bears the marks of that society. But it also contains key characteristics recognized by everyone, that is, the common aspirations and ideals of mankind.

Dao Tri Uc: Democracy is the goal that we are striving to reach.

Those attending the conference all agreed that the basic meaning of democracy is that "power belongs to the people."

Khong Doan Hoi: Democracy appeared only after the appearance of the state, and the state is the product of a struggle between irreconcilable classes. When you talk about a democratic system, you are talking about a regime of the people. Democracy arose from that (from the Greek: "demo" means "people" and "kratos" means "power").

Ho Van Thong: Democracy is the state political dictatorship of a class. There can be only political democracy, which can be applied to economic life. But there cannot be economic democracy.

Concerning the class themes of democracy, Khong Doan Hoi said that "democracy always has a class nature."

However, the contents of democracy are not totally dependent on the will and interests of the ruling class. They also depend on the will and interests of the subordinate class.

Ho Van Thong: The struggle of the oppressed laborers has also left its mark on the contents and mechanisms of democracy.

Pham Ngoc Quang admitted that democracy, with the credentials of a political sphere, appears when there are classes to point out political systems and styles of state organizations. But he also said that democracy, with the credentials of a social sphere, is a product of mankind that pre-dates classes.

Nguyen Dang Quang: You cannot equate democracy with politics. If you equate democracy with politics and with class antagonism and class struggle, you will degrade that concept, and many other important themes of democracy that are even more valuable than those of political democracy will be lost. The fruits of democracy are not produced only by political power. These are also produced by the advances of the production forces and production structure, the scientific and technical

advances, the advances of economic and social management, the advances of education and intellectual standards, the advances of information and cultural transmission, and the advances of social-class structure. Particular attention must be given to the nature of the economy. A multi-faceted commodity economy contains democracy within itself, requires democracy, and forces society to be democratic.

According to Dao Tri Uc, democracy is, above all, a form of state organization. It is a principle, a characteristic, and formula for the existence and operation of the factors that create the political system. Based on polytechnical colleges in many countries, Viet Phuong mentioned a more inclusive viewpoint concerning democracy: Democracy is above all a political system, and this political core affects all other aspects of social life, including economic and cultural aspects and the relationship among people in a country and in a region in the world. In this political system, power belongs to the people, that is, the citizens.

Many people affirmed that attention must be given to another important aspect of democracy. That is, democracy must be viewed as a manifestation of the level of civilization of mankind.

Khong Doan Hoi: Democracy is the great achievement of civilization and is the result of centuries of experience. It is not the product of a particular social system. Democracy has a human character.

Nguyen Dang Quang: Social democracy is the most important result of civilization and humanity.

Others said that democracy is a solution to the problem of man, whose needs are continually increasing. Thus, from the philosophical standpoint, it can be said that democracy concerns the role of man in society. It concerns the problem of liberating man in order to ensure that each individual enjoys freedom and equality. "Every liberation entails returning the human world and human relationship to man." (Marx and Engels)

Phan Anh mentioned another aspect of democracy, the problem of leadership and social organization. He said that for thousands of years now, in both the East and the West, people have been looking for a solution to this problem. One way is to use force (such as Kiet and Tru in the East and Nero in the West). The second way is to "enter the hearts of the people." But there are also many ways of entering the hearts of the people—through religion, determinism, fate, and other political theories. And there are other ways of getting the people to believe and determine their own destiny.

Concerning the relationship between democracy and leadership, Phan Dinh Dieu said that there is no need for the phrase "democracy has leadership." The right to lead must be determined within the framework of democracy and law, and democracy, too, must be within the framework of the law. Thus, it's rational to talk about democracy and the law.

Some participants talked about the relationship between democracy and pluralism. Phan Dinh Dieu said that in a democracy society, there must be respect for different opinions and ideas, and that requires that there be social organizations to guarantee these differences. That is pluralism. Democracy must be pluralistic in nature. But the scope of pluralism must be determined by the law. In response to the ideas expressed by Phan Dinh Dieu, Ha Xuan Truong posed the question: Does having more than one party mean that the system is democratic, and does the fact that there is only one party mean that a system is not democratic? Reality in many countries, including Vietnam, shows that one party or a number of parties is not an essential rule. Rather, this is determined by the specific historical conditions. Moreover, views on pluralism differ. Views on pluralism differ among the capitalist and socialist countries and even within each country and among the different political organizations. Thus, asked Dieu, what are the contents of pluralism?

Phan Dinh Dieu: Pluralism means accepting the fact that the various political forces are equal before the law. You cannot impose the idea of having only one leading party in a democratic society. The party must win the right to lead through its capabilities and the trust of society within the framework of the law. Regardless of the degree of pluralism, it must be affirmed that this cannot go outside the framework of the law. Those who oppose the people must be eliminated.

Ngo Ba Thanh: In my view, simply having a party in power and various opposition parties will not solve the problem, that is, that does not mean that there is real democracy.

Pham Van Kiet: In our country, pluralism is essential, but that does not mean many parties. You can have just one party and still have pluralism.

Phan Anh: The first thing is to clarify the concepts of autocracy and pluralism. In my view, autocracy is a manifestation of the principle of centralism, and pluralism is a manifestation of the principle of democracy. These two standards are a measure of leadership arts and social organization. People should not mistakenly equate autocracy with one party and democracy with many parties.

In order to clarify the essence and nature of democracy, it's necessary to distinguish bourgeois democracy from socialist democracy. Many participants discussed this matter. In general, the participants affirmed that the class nature of bourgeois democracy is democracy for the small minority of people who own the means of production and the wealthy people in society. The class that controls a society's means of production will enjoy political power and organize the state in accord with its interests.

However, the matter of bourgeois democracy is not limited to such a narrow framework. It represents an historical step forward.

Khong Doan Hoi: From an historical viewpoint, the key point of bourgeois democracy is that it affirmed ownership rights. And tied to ownership rights are individual freedoms, independence, and individuality—things that had previously been crushed. But ownership rights are also the source of the conflicts in bourgeois society. It's said that everyone is born equal, but in those societies, the election systems are based on the amount of property. They talk about equality, but in those societies, there is exploitation and a lack of economic equality.

After examining the principles of bourgeois democracy, such as individual freedom, the separation of powers, freedom of the press and freedom of social opinion in general, and religious freedom, Viet Phuong said that "although that is how it is supposed to be, in reality, not everything is like that. First, not everyone in a bourgeois society is a 'citizen.' 'Citizens' are those who have fulfilled a number of conditions, particularly the property condition. Second, the right to vote equally, directly, and in secret is not present everywhere. Even in Switzerland, women don't have the right to vote. Besides this, the bourgeoisie uses tricks to cheat and win votes. In the United States, for example, usually only about 50 percent of the electorate votes. One reason for this is that even though the platforms of the candidates seem to be different, in reality, they all benefit the bourgeoisie. A second reason is the complexity of the voting process. Thus, scientists in bourgeois societies are looking for a new type of technology to implement democracy."

As a person who has lived and "experienced" bourgeois democracy, Ngo Ba Thanh affirmed that bourgeois democracy is very "showy" but not very "pretty." The reason why so many people are now praising this is that they have never experienced the reality of this.

Ho Van Thong: The progress of modern bourgeois democracy contains valuable lessons for us, but these lessons are certainly not enough for us to establish democracy in our society.

Nguyen Chinh: We should not rush to reject or condemn bourgeois democracy outright. While we are cursing it, the masses are being attracted by it. And the truth is, the socialist countries are losing points in this competition. It is impossible for socialist democracy not to inherit things from bourgeois democracy. Socialist democracy can discard what is bad about bourgeois democracy. It can discard "bourgeois" and keep "democracy." Taking those things that those societies have talked about but not implemented, socialism will transform and implement them. Those societies have talked one way but done something else. But socialism will be honest and thorough.

According to Nguyen Chinh, socialist democracy includes two factors: The democratic values inherited from bourgeois democracy will be filtered, exploited, and improved. Also, new democratic values will be created to satisfy the development needs of socialist society. Our country cannot follow the capitalist path,

but it must still pass through the bourgeois democratic stage. It cannot skip this stage.

Nguyen Dang Quang: There are several similarities between bourgeois democracy and people's democracy (the concept used by Nguyen Dang Quang). 1. Both use a form of state jurisdiction that is continually being improved and refined. In the people's democratic system, bourgeois rights can't be eliminated yet, and so there must be a bourgeois type state (without a bourgeois class) to force people to adhere to the standards of this jurisdiction. 2. Both systems implement democracy through a developed civic society (along with a political power system). 3. Both are controlled by the level of economic, scientific, technical, and educational development, the people's standard of culture, and the level of information.

As for the standards of socialist democracy, Nguyen Dang Quang said that "people's democracy differs from and is higher than bourgeois democracy in that the state is established and controlled by the people, and it is totally subordinate to the people. That is, it is the people who organize, select, and determine the democracy. It is not some force outside or within the people that determines this or "expands" this for the people."

Dao Tri Uc mentioned the close relationship between "of the people," "by the people," and "for the people" of socialist countries and stressed that all three of these must be present. If there is only "of the people" and "for the people," that concerns only the nature and goals of the state. It does not say anything about the operating formulas of the state. Because of this, without "by the people," it is difficult to avoid doing things on their behalf, which makes it impossible to guarantee democracy. In his opening speech, Ha Xuan Truong said that moving from "using the people as the root" to the "people are the masters" is a historical process.

From the above ideas, we can move to the question of how to implement "by the people" (or the method of implementing democratic rights). In the history and practice of socialism, there are two means: direct democracy and indirect democracy (or representative democracy). Phan Dinh Dieu said that people implement their democratic rights both as individuals and members of a collective. As members of a collective, this must always be done through representatives.

II. The reality of democracy in our country

Evaluating the state of democracy in our country today is not an easy task. Xuan Cang said that today, democracy is being distorted. It's called socialist democracy, but its nature is not clear. The workers and peasants, the main targets who have inherited this democracy, are unhappy about everything that they have inherited. There are new inequalities in their lives and new forms of exploitation. Within the democratic mechanism, new alignments have been formed, and they have created a new class with special rights and privileges. The masses have lost hope. They are indifferent to the democratic mechanism,

because they feel hopeless and abused. Many people construe that indifference as a lack of awareness. This has led to a widespread form: democracy is just a form, despotism is the substance. At the same time, there are many people who are sure that our democracy is a socialist democracy and that it must, therefore, be a million times better than bourgeois democracy.

Thang Son, a high-level economic specialist, said that "there are certainly different views concerning the lack of democracy in our country, but I think that this is very serious." He mentioned the following manifestations: Many of the complaints made by the people have been ignored. Many groups of people have traveled from localities to the center to ask to meet with the highest leaders and tell them their grievances. As for elections to the state agencies and even the recent elections to the three echelons of people's councils, even though steps have been taken to renovate the elections, there is still too much formalism. Press freedom and freedom of speech are still limited.

Ho Van Thong mentioned two manifestations of low democratic standards in our country: 1. Most of the people are passive. They wait and implement the orders given from above instead of being masters who have real power and who can exploit their creative talents. 2. A large number of party and state cadres lack the quality and capabilities to do the work based on a democratic mechanism. They cannot accept the control and direct criticism of the people or fulfill their legal responsibilities with respect to their actions.

According to Bui Huu Hai, the chairman of the Vinh Phu People's Council, the initial steps in democratization have been very notable. But there are still some weaknesses: There is both a lack of democracy and excessive democracy. There have been violations of democracy within both the party and state organizations.

Looking at democracy based on the realities of a district in rural Hanoi, Luu Minh Tri, the secretary of the Tu Liem District CPV Committee, said that for a long time, particularly before the Sixth Party Congress, one situation that was quite widespread in the rural areas was that the party committees and secretaries were engrossed in the work of the people's committees and agricultural cooperative management boards. The party "resolved" that it must implement things and that anyone who voiced a contrary opinion would be considered to be someone who was "against" the party or someone who had failed to implement the party's resolutions. The key cadres of the people's councils and people's committees all had to be approved by the party committees. In the rural area, before a person could go to school or attend a technical school, he had to obtain the approval of the village party committee secretary and even the party chapter secretary. Feudal thinking is still quite prevalent in the rural areas, and this is most prevalent within the ranks of key cadres of the village party committees and people's committees. Typical is the attitude of factionalism. People like to take revenge on others and cover up

for friends and members of their faction. They give the best jobs to their friends, send their children to school, and recommend them for positions in lucrative sectors.

In an article sent to the conference, Pham Bai, the chairman of the Vietnam Collective Peasants Association, wrote: "In the rural areas today, the peasants are the social element that lack democracy the most. Many cadres frequently make use of their powers, give orders, and pay little attention to persuading and mobilizing people or discussing things. They do not treat the peasants fairly. Many of the most urgent matters of the peasants are ignored. The authorities or party organizations decide everything and don't listen to the views or pay any attention to the criticisms and legitimate proposals of the peasants. As for the peasants associations, in many places the party committee echelons decide who the leaders will be and do not allow the association to choose."

Ha Quang Du said that feudal and paternalistic thinking and slighting younger people are still quite widespread in political, economic, and cultural activities. These things are widening the gap between leaders and youths and between the generations.

There has also been a serious loss of democracy among workers and in the trade unions. Nguyen Van Tu observed that in the state management sphere, the workers, laborers, and trade unions participate in elections and they participate in state organizations. But their participation is still of a formal nature. There is still a lack of real two-way communication between the state and the trade unions, laborers, and workers (here, one of the weaknesses of the trade unions is that they are still too bureaucratic, and they have failed to stick close to the masses). The workers are not the real masters of their labor. At a time when the managers are complaining that they don't have sufficient powers, the representatives of the laborers, that is, the trade unions, participate in just a general manner.

After affirming the good points, including the democratic rights that our system has given to women (concerning this, Ngo Ba Thanh stressed that even countries such as the United States that consider themselves to be democratic have not achieved much in this respect even though women in those countries have been struggling for democratic rights for many years), Trung Anh, the deputy editor in chief of PHU NU, made some very clear observations concerning the limits on the democratic rights of women. The percentage of women in the technical sectors, in the sector leadership structure, and in the administrative structure is declining. The main reason is that many people, including people in the party committee and administrative echelons, still tend to ignore women. The Women's Association is not regarded as the real representative for women's democratic rights, and, therefore, it is still regarded as a "follower."

However, wherever the cadres and party members are really of the people, by the people, and for the people, the democratic atmosphere there is much better. Nguyen Van Binh, the secretary of the Van Phuc Village Party Committee in Ha Dong City, discussed the real situation in guaranteeing and expanding democratic rights in Van Phuc Village (outside Ha Dong City). In this, the most striking thing is that everyone has the right to work and study and to enjoy the cultural achievements. And they must be assured of a comfortable life when they grow old. The party and administrative organizations there have created the material and spiritual conditions to give more and more democratic rights to the people.

After discussing the democratic situation in our country, a number of people analyzed the causes of the above situation. The main reason is that our democratic mechanism has not been perfected. In particular, the relationship between the "party leads," the "state administers," and the "people control" is not clear or concrete. This mechanism has not yet eliminated monopolization and dogmatism. Second, the cadres' and people's understanding and concept of democracy is still weak. Third, Vietnam is a feudal country in the East. It does not have a tradition of democracy or the economic preconditions that form the basis for democracy. Moreover, it has experienced many years of war and is still in a period of studying democracy.

Xuan Cang: The alarming thing is that the democratic mechanism has become a habit, a habit of management and enforcement. This has become the mode under various wonderful sounding names, but it is actually used to impose things on the people and get them to do the things already planned (elections are a good example). This has created a psychology of indifference and acceptance.

Dao Tri Uc: People talk a lot about social targets but tend to ignore the real interests of the masses and of each person. Thus, there is a wide gap between ideas and ideals and actual practices. Another reason is that many people are backward in their thinking. Very often, the resolutions issued are concerned only about economic interests and fail to give attention to the social and human values of democracy, which are values of long-term significance. These values are usually given "second priority" or are ignored completely. Another reason is "social nationalization," meaning that bureaucratic centralization has neutralized the suggestions of the masses.

Nguyen Chinh: We lack the conditions for democracy. The things that have been done have been done using out-of-date methods and a backward mechanism. We have studied the erroneous points of fraternal countries.

Khong Doan Hoi: This stems from the conflict between the backwardness of countries that have implemented a dictatorship of the proletariat and the leap over the bourgeois democratic system to a higher form of democracy.

Vu Quoc Trung: The political body led by the party lacks a mechanism to ensure democracy.

Trang Anh: From the practices of many years, it can be seen that the "party leads, the state manages, and the people control" relationship has given rise to various problems that must now be solved.

Pham Van Kiet: The party's leadership uses too many powers. It has too many special powers (there are special powers even within the party). This is why the people's control rights have been violated.

III. Basic guiding measures to solve the problems of democracy in Vietnam

Based on having a theoretical understanding of democracy and on grasping the country's practices, many people proposed measures to build and expand democracy in our country. Nguyen Dang Quang said that social democracy is the form of modern society. Thus, our country must move in the direction of building such a democracy. Mo Van Thong stressed that the democracy stems from politics. Thus, the fundamental point for forming a democratic system in Vietnam is to perfect the political and ideological leadership of the party. Pham Ngoc Quang said that "to solve the problem of democracy correctly and ensure that the people are the masters in the country, the main thing is to find the path of socialism in Vietnam, meaning that a new political program must be formulated for the party. The socialism practiced in the past period was a type of socialism with good motives and subjective voluntarism. Our lack of democracy stems mainly from the nature of this type of democracy. Nguyen The Phan said that the economic factors are the leading cause. The economy is the infrastructure. It is the root of politics and democracy. The economy will open up the way, and once it has changed in accord with the laws of life, politics and democracy must change accordingly. Focusing on the realities of the problem, Khong Doan Boi said that democratizing socialism is a process of building cultural and material preconditions to enable the laborers to participate in managing the state. Thus, it will be impossible for Vietnam to avoid encountering obstacles and making mistakes unless it has a profound understanding of the origin of this process. We must answer the question: From where are we starting and with what cultural, material, and human conditions? If the special characteristic of Vietnam's transition to socialism was a transition from a capital country to socialism without going through the stage of developing capitalism, the process of democratizing socialism in Vietnam is a transition from a country not having a tradition of democracy to the highest form of democracy without going through a democratic bourgeois stage. Starting from his local practices, Bui Huu Bai said that democracy must move from understanding to action. If you say that everything is a matter of enabling the people to understand and implement things, that conflicts with the historical process of struggle to form democracy, particularly for us. We are building a socialist democracy. Phan Anh said that "the

problem of democracy cannot be solved by "golden rules." Thus, "from the standpoint of a person who respects truth and science, I think that we will have to be patient." Xuan Cang said that "we must think about and satisfy the requirements of democratizing life without upsetting the real values that have been won in the struggle by the people. I think that we can do this by re-establishing the relationship between the party, the state, and the people. This relationship has been in existence for almost 50 years. But it has gradually faded. Today, there is a gap, but we have not measured its breadth or depth. Thus, with respect to many of the problems and mechanisms, I think that we must start over from the beginning."

After mentioning the complexities and difficulties of the struggle for a real democracy, Nguyen Chinh said that the "construction of a socialist democracy in a country may succeed or fail. Simply wanting to do this is not enough. This is an 'attack on the heavens' by the working class, as Marx and Engels wrote. The only key to solving this very difficult problem is in Marxist-Leninist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat and on the state. Our goal is the extinction of the state and party, of political power in general, and of democratic concepts." However, it is even more important and difficult to point out suitable measures for building a socialist democracy. Pham Van Kiet mentioned a lesson gained from the experiences of many countries, that is, the fierce struggle to win the hearts of the people. The communist party cannot afford to "loose" the people. The party must be built and solidified. Le Xuan Luu, the director of the Institute of Politics and Military Affairs, stressed that "in conditions in which the tendency is toward bourgeois liberalism, extreme democracy, and anarchy and the existing bases and the enemy are making attacks to destroy the party's leadership, the quality of the party's leadership is a pressing requirement. The leadership of the communist party must encompass every sphere of social life and every element of the dictatorship of the proletariat." However, views on how the party is to lead must be clarified. Pham Van Kiet said that the "view on comprehensive and absolute party leadership must be re-examined. The party must lead politics and the lines, but not everything. If the party does everything, why have a front, a National Assembly, or mass organizations? Democracy is the secret for strengthening the party's leadership role with respect to society. Real democracy must be practiced starting with the party." Nguyen Dang Quang disagreed with the view that internal party democracy is the basic precondition and decisive factor for the development of socialist democracy. According to him, "from what has just been said, it seems as if this will increase the leadership role of the party. But in reality, this will compel the party to shoulder too heavy a responsibility. This will turn the party into a force that 'holds' and 'grants' democracy to all of society." Ho Van Thong agreed with Pham Van Kiet, saying that the "party must be wise. It must examine things carefully and retrain the ranks of party members and cadres based on the strict standards of

renovation. It must maintain its vanguard position and maintain its quality and intelligence." Unless the leadership of the party is renovated, it will be impossible to have a socialist democracy. Pham Van Kiet said that the "party must lead through its abilities, not through its powers. If it leads through power, this will 'ruin' the party. Party members will become corrupt, because rights go hand-in-hand with power and power goes hand-in-hand with interests." Nguyen Chinh mentioned an important requirement: "The party must return to the masses." It must change directions and change both its organization and activities in order to lead the masses in implementing democracy. It must not concentrate almost all its strength on administrative leadership as it has been for so long now. This will enable the party to improve its leadership quality and purify its ranks. Ha Quang Du agreed that the "close relationship between the party and the masses must be strengthened." He said that the "party must give attention to the daily interests of the people. It must listen to and respect the people's views."

On the role of the political system in guiding the development of socialist democracy in Vietnam, Dao Tri Uc stressed that "renovating the political system and fully implementing (now) the absolute rights of the people without dividing their rights are pressing requirements today." In order to clarify this problem, Nguyen Van Thao mentioned a few things concerning the organization of our country's power apparatus. The National Assembly must be turned into a full-time National Assembly that conducts activities on a regular basis instead of meeting just in the spring and autumn as at present. National Assembly delegates should not hold other positions in the government or agencies of control. The National Assembly should switch from discussions to debates in order to solve the problems posed by the government and representatives. Pham Van Kiet said that to change the activities of the National Assembly in accord with the themes mentioned by Nguyen Van Thao, the election system must be quickly renovated. Vietnam will promulgate a National Assembly Election Law and National Assembly Organization Law based on the requirements of renovation and democracy. Referring to the activities of the government, Nguyen Van Thao said that the "government should switch from carrying on administrative activities to carrying on strategic activities, drafting regulations, and regulating the markets at the macrocosmic level using credit, tax, and currency tools and major policies on strategic goods. In particular, there must be reserve forces to deal with social and market changes." The delegates did not forget the role of the law and said that the laws effectively guarantee the rights of the people. The law is a concept (in nature) and is closely related to democracy.

In the political system, the mass social organizations must play their roles correctly. Pham Van Kiet said that "too many mass organizations are carrying on activities based on what is false rather than what is real." Xuan Cang said that "new training must be started, and the

working class can and must become the primary environment for training and creating the mechanisms of real socialist democracy. In implementing socialist democracy among the workers and laborers, attention must be given to the role of the trade union. The Sixth Congress of the Vietnam Trade Union held in October 1988 saw the need to pose basic questions concerning the functions and tasks of the trade union. This is a difficult and revolutionary task. But if this isn't done, the time will come when people will say, 'What do I need a trade union for!'"

Stressing the role of the mass organizations, Nguyen Chinh said: "The mass organizations are not related to the party, but they must be connected to the state. The contents of this connection have to do with socialist democracy, cooperation, mutual help, and mutual supervision and control based on a spirit of shared responsibility in order to implement the lines, policies, and positions of the party and satisfy the needs of the people."

Going into the specific democratic rights of workers and other people, Nguyen The Phan said that "with the credentials of laborers, people must have the right to work. With the credentials of consumers, people have the right to be supplied with sufficient items needed for daily life. With the credentials of owners, people must be provided with accurate information on the situation, and they must have the right to participate in discussing the important problems facing the country. With the credentials of people who enjoy freedom and equality, people must enjoy broad individual freedoms."

In providing specific proposals on the immediate problems in order to build socialist democracy in our country, many people showed interest in the ideas expressed by Viet Phuong. He proposed handling a number of urgent issues:

First, degraded cadres who have engaged in corrupt practices, no matter how small, must be punished immediately (with attention given to the mid-level and high-level ranks) in order to solidify the party's strength, generate confidence among the people, and turn the situation around.

Second, injustice must be opposed by taking immediate action to handle the grievances of a number of people.

The two tasks mentioned above are urgent tasks. As Lenin said, you must "cut out the rot immediately."

Pham Van Kiet mentioned seven points, two of which are extremely important: "Immediately eliminate the party's engrossment in state organizations and specialization. Do a good job in organizing the coming National Assembly election."

Thanh Son mentioned a number of specific proposals, particularly democracy in the economy and democracy with respect to the peasants and localities. With respect to the peasants, for example, he said that "20-30 percent

of the fields and forest land can be sold to people to ensure that each family has a 100-square-meter garden for family economic activities. One-third of the fields can be sold to talented peasants with capital in order to increase labor productivity and produce many commodity products. Or the foreign agricultural tax policy can be implemented, and studies can be done on imposing additional contribution items on peasants (there are places that have raised taxes on 15-20 items)."

Concluding this rather spirited and effective conference, Ha Xuan Truong summarized the ideas presented, evaluated the results of the conference, and mentioned the problems that require further study and discussion.

The Problem of Democracy

902E0205B Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 90 pp 50-52

[‘Excerpts’ of speeches made by Ha Xuan Truong at the beginning and conclusion of the conference; conference unidentified, date and place not given]

[Text] Democracy—stated simply, this is people and the ownership rights of people—has been a problem of mankind ever since the formation of classes and states. Since ancient times, in both the East and the West, the problem has been posed similarly: democracy along with freedom, equality, and social justice. Sixty-nine years ago, Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote two articles, both entitled "Indochina," that were published in CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME by the French Communist Party. One article that had never been published in Vietnam was translated by Professor Dinh Xuan Lam for publication in TAP CHI CONG SAN. In that article, Nguyen Ai Quoc used ancient historical reasons for discussing communism in Asia. Nguyen Ai Quoc recalled the view of Confucius (551 years B.C.): "Use the people as the root." He also recalled the view of Mencius, a disciple of Confucius: "First come the interest of the people and then the interests of the state. The interests of the emperor are of no importance." Nguyen Ai Quoc fully understood Confucius' idea of "using the people as the root" and Mencius' idea of "the interests of the people come first." He understood that this was the basis in governing the people, but this did not mean that the "people were masters." In the Western countries, democracy goes hand-in-hand with freedom and human rights. In our country, democracy goes hand-in-hand with independence. Only if there is independence can there be freedom and human rights. Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote: "The minimum conditions that will enable us to become communists are the elementary conditions of action: freedom of the press, freedom of travel, freedom of education, and freedom of assembly (the colonialists have savagely denied us all these freedoms)."

Today, the problem of democracy is the burning issue of the age. It is the decisive problem of our country's renovation movement, which was launched and which is being led by the Communist Party of Vietnam. Actually,

democracy is the party's leading policy. Without democracy, there can be no renovation. The letter issued by the CPV Central Committee on the subject of the major anniversaries in 1990 stated: "In 1990, we must promote democracy in party activities and in every sphere of social life."

Planning for our conference began a long time ago, and now it has gotten underway with the aim of supporting renovation.

Democracy is both a human value and a social element. It has both human and class characteristics. The level of democracy goes hand-in-hand with the level of civilization. Without civilization, you can't have democracy and vice versa. Democracy is the form of existence of modern society, and it is the management form of modern society. The contents and forms of the democratic bodies represent the level of development of civilization. The ruling class is conscious of the role of the people, and the people are conscious of their role as masters of society. These two problems do not always go hand-in-hand but depend on the specific historical conditions of each historical period of development. From the view "use the people as the root" to the "people are masters" is an historical period. The various democratic systems—ancient democracies to bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy (true socialism)—are the results of social changes from the bottom up in the process of perfecting man and society.

Marx and Lenin did not criticize bourgeois democracy for its slogans or the forms used by the bourgeoisie to implement democracy. Rather, they criticized the tricks used by the bourgeoisie to solidify its rule. Marx said that political freedom in a bourgeois society is just shadow freedom with respect to the people. Real freedom belongs to those who wield economic power. Lenin criticized parliamentary organizations, saying that even if they are "very progressive, they will still be just figureheads until the classes that those organizations represent seize real state power." But neither Marx nor Lenin abandoned the slogans of bourgeois democracy. Lenin wrote: "We will not abandon the slogans of bourgeois democracy. Instead, we will implement the democracy in those slogans in a more thorough, complete, and resolute manner" (Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1980, volume 27, page 558).

Democracy is, above all, a political problem, but it is not just a political problem. Because of this, implementing democracy encompasses political democracy, economic democracy, and social democracy. Here, some people have viewed democracy only as a political problem. However, everyone agrees that implementing democracy requires synchronized activities in the political, economic, and social spheres and that this requires solving problems concerning the social structure, the state and social mechanisms, and cultural, moral, and psychological standards. The three divisions of powers of the bourgeois class must be examined objectively to see if

this serves only the power of the bourgeois class. Perhaps researchers have discovered a mechanism that opposes concentration of power in the hands of a number of people and that opposes dictatorship. The main purpose of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to implement democracy for the laboring people and gradually build a state with jurisdiction. Democracy and the law are two aspects of the problem of implementing democracy. "Democracy that is led" and a "democracy that leads" are the two standards in implementing democracy, with the second being higher than the first. Real democracy is when the people have power and control their own fate. The principle of democratic centralism is based on following the wishes of the majority, but the rights of the minority must be protected by law.

No one will oppose pluralism if they understand that this means a variety of forms, freedom of opinion and expression, and protection of ideas. This approaches the truth using different methods. It means that religious beliefs and atheism can co-exist in the same society. This opposes dictatorship and dogmatism. There is no law that says that there must be one or many parties. This is determined by the specific historical conditions. Many parties is not necessarily a correct manifestation of democracy, and just one party is not necessarily a negation of pluralism in the sense discussed above. We agree completely with the resolution of the CPV not to recognize opposing political organizations in our society. However, different people have different views about pluralism. The problems of pluralism and political pluralism are not too complex, but because time is limited, this will be discussed in greater depth on another occasion.

Clearly, since the Sixth Congress, an air of democracy has arisen along with renovation, especially in the economic sphere. But in general, there is still a widespread lack of democracy, and there have been serious manifestations of disregard for the lives of citizens. There is a lack of democracy and a lack of discipline. Sociological studies must be made in order to determine the state of democracy in our country in an adequate and scientific manner. However, based on the observations and experiences of each period, we can make a generalization about the democratic situation in Vietnam, seek the reasons, and make proposals to the party and state on various matters. From theory to reality and proposals, with a serious attitude and an attitude of responsibility, I hope that our conference will make a positive contribution to implementing socialist democracy in our country.

Democracy Is Still a Greater and More Fundamental Problem Than Leadership and Social Organization

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 2, Feb 90 pp 52-54

[Phan Anh; published in FBIS-90-058, 26 Mar 90, pp 83-84]

On Economic Competition and Socialist Emulation

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 2 Feb 90 pp 55-60

[Article by Dan Tam; not translated]

Lenin's Ideas on State Capitalism and Their Application to Vietnam Today

902E0205C Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 90 pp 61-66

[Article by Nguyen Van Ky, instructor at the Nguyen Ai Quoc Institute]

[Text] Based on an analysis of the fundamental conflicts of capitalism, the founders of Marxism reached the conclusion that communism will come into being and replace capitalism. They viewed this as a necessary process in the development process. But Marx and Engels did not say how this would take place or what formulas and methods would be used. With a theory of advancing directly to socialism, Lenin found a path and measures for backward countries—state capitalism. He stressed that “not one book discusses state capitalism under a communist system. Even Marx did not write anything or provide any clear guidelines concerning this problem. Thus, we must find a way out by ourselves.” [Footnote 1] [V.I. Lenin, “Collected Works,” Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, volume 45, page 101]

After the civil war, in 1920 and 1921, Russia's economy was in great need:

1. Agriculture, industry, and communications and transportation were on the brink of ruin. These aspects of the economy had to be solidified in order to advance to socialism.

2. After many years of destructive warfare and restrictive wartime communist policies, how was the small-peasant economy to be expanded? Reality showed that commodity production had to be expanded. Lenin affirmed that the “peasant economy, with the credentials of a small-peasant economy, could not be strengthened unless there was freedom of exchange.” [Footnote 2] [Ibid., volume 43, page 376]

3. The commodity economy had to be expanded not only from the peasant side but also from the side of other economic elements so that they could compete with each other within a unified social market.

The needs of Russia at that time also made it necessary to have state capitalism to lead and link small-scale production in accord with socialist guidelines. That was the solution that Lenin found based on the realities in Russia. That was manifested in his new economic policy.

State capitalism is a capitalist economic form that the proletarian state uses in order to organize and link the small-scale producers. The following are some problems that need attention:

First, state capitalism is capitalism that the proletarian state uses and that the state allows to exist and expand for the benefit of socialism. The nature of the proletarian state determines the birth, development, and direction of state capitalism.

Second, in what way does the proletarian state use state capitalism?

1. The state uses capitalist economic forms in order to expand the production forces in the hands of the bourgeois class. Although the bourgeois class in the country has lost political power, it still has economic power. It still controls much capital and large quantities of technical materials, and it has commercial management expertise and the ability to engage in joint commercial ventures with the small-scale individual economy, foreign capitalists, and the markets.

The proletarian state must mobilize and reorganize things, create conditions and an environment, and generate confidence so that the capitalists will use their intelligence and other capabilities to engage in commercial production using many forms and create many goods for society.

In particular, through the strength of capitalism, the proletarian state must organize the small-scale, dispersed individual economy based on many different forms. It is through this reorganization that the proletarian state will be able to inventory and control small-scale production.

The key problem here is to use capitalist economic forms to stimulate the peasant economy and reorganize the small-peasant economy in the form of associations, corporations, agents, and cooperation teams. That is the fundamental characteristic of state capitalism.

2. Through capitalist economic relationships, the proletarian state must call on capitalist countries and engage in joint ventures with them in order to have the capitalist countries put their materials, technology, capital, and business management skills into commercial production activities using many forms of benefit to the development of the country.

3. The proletarian state must use capitalist economic relationships in order to organize small-scale individual production in many forms. Those must be viewed as formulas and methods or as links leading from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production.

Third, state capitalism is weaker than socialism. But this is a giant step forward as compared with small-scale individual and dispersed production. Comparing state capitalism as used and built by us with state capitalism in general and bourgeois state capitalism, Lenin affirmed that they both have the same source, capitalism. But they

differ greatly in that capitalism here is in the hands of the proletarian state and not within the hands of a bourgeois state.

On one hand, the bourgeois state uses capitalism, supports capitalism, and enables capitalism to exploit the laboring people more and more. The proletarian state, on the other hand, uses the strength of capitalism to expand the production forces and coordinate the economic interests of the state with the economic interests of the small producers. The proletarian state uses capitalism to stimulate the expansion of small-scale production and guide it away from capitalism to socialism. Lenin affirmed that "state capitalism in a country where power is in the hands of the capitalists and state capitalism in a proletarian country—those are two different concepts." [Footnote 3] [Ibid., volume 44, page 58]

Looking at the level of socialization of production, state capitalism in a capitalist country originates based on a conflict between capitalist production relationships and the socialized production forces. This requires both direct and indirect intervention by the bourgeois state in the economy. In Russia in the 1920s, because the level of socialization was low and because most production was small-peasant, dispersed, and backward production, the proletarian state had to use capitalism to gradually socialize production in accord with the goals of the proletarian state. As a result, even though both are state capitalism, they give rise to two completely different levels of socialization.

Fourth, based on the concept and nature of state capitalism and the reasons giving rise to state capitalism, we can confirm the conditions for the survival and expansion of state capitalism as follows:

1. The conditions that enable state capitalism to survive and expand are the survival and expansion of the commodity economy.

Thus, before advocating the use of state capitalism, Lenin advocated promoting commodity circulation. He said that if the peasants have little property, the proletarian state will be able to collect only half of the grain needed by the state. It will have to obtain the other half by exchanging commodities with the peasants. Expanding the commodity economy will give rise to capitalism.

2. The proletarian state is established based on a specific economic basis. That economic basis must have the nature of state ownership of the means of production, mines, factories, and key economic arteries. Some of the economic bases must depend on state ownership in key sectors so that the proletarian state can use their economic strength to organize and control state capitalism.

Having a proletarian state means having a political direction for organizing and guiding state capitalism.

Those are the economic and political conditions for the survival and expansion of state capitalism based on socialist guidelines.

Fifth, state capitalism has a great variety of operational forms. The following are a number of the main forms:

1. The highest form of state capitalism is the joint public-private enterprise. Lenin affirmed that this type of state capitalism is three-fourths socialist.

The economic contents of this form is that both the proletarian state and the capitalists contribute capital for business activities.

2. Enterprises engage in joint business ventures with capitalist countries. Here, the proletarian state engages in joint business ventures with capitalists, capitalist organizations, or capitalist governments.

3. Various types of cooperatives such as consumer cooperatives, production cooperatives, and credit cooperations. The economic substance is that individual, private producers voluntarily contribute capital and technology and engage in commercial production activities together under the guidance of the socialist state.

4. Cooperative teams are a form of state capitalism at a lower level.

5. The agent economy and contract ordering of goods form.

6. Various forms of leasing to foreign capitalists, such as leasing land to establish processing zones and to open special economic zones and economic zones having favorable customs tariffs. Besides these, there are also a number of other forms. In short, these are the economic forms based on the laws and economic interests, particularly the commodity economy, currency, and market laws. Using these forms, the proletarian state must do three things:

1. Reorganize the small-scale producers in groups, cooperative associations, agents groups, joint business forms, and so on. 2. Gradually socialize production, implement state inventories and inspections with respect to production and consumption, coordinate economic interests, and so on. 3. Greatly expand the production forces based on socialist guidelines, make use of the strengths of the commodity economy and the strengths of capitalists both here and abroad, and so on.

Vietnam's present economy is primarily small-scale production. Thus, to advance straight to socialism without going through the capitalist stage of development, we must make use of state capitalism. In his concluding remarks at the Sixth Plenum of the CPV [Communist Party of Vietnam] Central Committee (6th Session), General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh stressed that "through the process of using, managing, regulating, inventorying, and controlling things by the socialist state, we are guiding the capitalist economy toward different forms of state capitalism. This will effectively

transform socialism based on reality." [Footnote 4] [See TAP CHI CONG SAN No 4, 1989, page 11]

The resolutions of the party and state in the past period, particularly resolutions 10 and 16 of the Politburo, have advocated making thorough use of the commodity and currency relationships and expanding the peasant economy and other economic elements based on a commodity economy. This shows that we are taking the same steps taken by Lenin during the period of the NEP [New Economic Plan]. The results of these correct policies will enable the peasant economy and the economy of all of society to grow strongly. The economic potential in society, such as capital, materials, skills, managerial talents, and so on have been mobilized for commercial production.

Along with the major policies and positions of the party, a Foreign Investment Law has been promulgated. Dozens of corporations, special economic zones, processing zones, and joint enterprises have been formed with a capitalization of tens and hundreds of billions of dong. That is the strength of the policy mechanism and of the commodity economy. However, the above tendency has also spawned petty bourgeois and capitalist elements in our country. The important thing is that we must not become alarmed but must openly acknowledge these shortcomings and limit them in order to make use of the strengths of the various forms of state capitalism and gradually advance our backward and dispersed economy to socialism. The realities of life require that we make use of state capitalism.

The principles and conditions of the use of state capitalism in Vietnam today:

First principle: A dictatorship of the proletariat must be established and solidified, because the nature of the state determines the nature and direction of movement of state capitalism.

Second principle: The system of socialist ownership and socialist economic elements must be expanded and solidified using a variety of forms in terms of both breadth and depth. Only by doing this will the proletarian state have the economic strength to control and use many forms of state capitalism.

Third principle: Principles concerning economic management patterns and mechanisms:

To use the forms of state capitalism, the bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies mechanism must be abolished, spontaneous and dispersed tendencies must be abolished, and controlling things based on administrative boundaries must be ended.

We must quickly use the multi-faceted economic structure, the economic accounting mechanism, and flexible mechanisms.

To connect the above principles, a number of conditions are required so that state capitalism can be used and exploited effectively:

First condition: There must be an expanded commodity economy mechanism. The sign of an expanded commodity economy are the laws on value, prices, and currency, the supply and demand relationship, the market system, and competition. These must be obeyed and expanded.

Second condition: The existence and expansion of the economic elements outside the state sector must be legalized by promulgating an investment law, a joint enterprise law, an import-export tariff law, an insurance law, a service enterprise law, a law on competitive markets, a law on providing help, a bankruptcy law, and so on.

That is the environment, the scope, for the birth and growth of state capitalism.

Actually, the use of the various forms of state capitalism in Vietnam is nothing new. During the many years of socialist transformation, many forms of state capitalism such as joint public-private enterprises, cooperatives, cooperation teams, associations, agent groups, and other joint venture forms have been formed.

However, we are still feeling our way and have not made bold use of the state capitalism forms in the sphere of engaging in joint ventures with other countries, such as giving leases, establishing processing zones and special economic zones, using bourgeois specialists, and so on. The main reasons for this situation are:

1. Viewpoints on the expansion of the commodity economy have not become a part of life. Many people are disconcerted by the new things and feel nostalgic for the old bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies way of doing things.
2. We have not done enough in legalizing the various forms of state capitalism. There is a lack of synchronization, and things have been done slowly. As a result, the legal basis for generating confidence is still weak.
3. The economic infrastructure, information, services, and so on are still weak.
4. A number of tax, import and export, and other mechanisms are in the process of being renovated and have not yet been fully formed.

The points and reasons discussed above lead to a number of proposals:

1. Commodity economy mechanisms must be quickly established just as a number of other countries have done. These include a mechanism concerning the market system and a mechanism concerning competition in conjunction with laws on providing support and bankruptcy laws.
2. There must be mechanisms and laws on stimulating the growth of capitalism in both the peasant economy and the economy outside the state sector, such as the private and small-owner economies and the private

capitalist economy. That tendency will encourage people to voluntarily invest capital and accumulate wealth instead of concealing property for wasteful consumption.

Capitalist development tendencies are a strength for attracting capital and technology from abroad.

Only if these tendencies are boldly encouraged will there be strengths and objective portions for use by the proletarian state.

Having expanded capitalism to create objective portions for use by the proletarian state and to regulate it will enable the proletarian state to abolish bureaucratic centralism and monopolization and increase the speed forward.

Expanded capitalism will also give strong encouragement and competition to the other economic elements and create a motive force for development. There is no reason to fear this tendency, because we have a dictatorship of the proletariat and because we will control the "dosage." We have many economic capabilities.

3. There must be a domestic and international division of labor based on building an open structure and engaging in joint ventures at the enterprise and corporation level, not the middle-management administrative echelon.

The above are a number of basic points on conditions and principles and on proposals aimed at promoting the use of capitalism in Vietnam today in order to generate a new force to expand the production forces.

Building the Prestige of Party Members

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 2, Feb 90 pp 67-72

[Article by Nguyen Phu Trong; not translated]

A Few Thoughts on Renovating the Party's Mass Work at the Primary Level

902E0205D Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 90 pp 73-76

[Article by Tran Van Dam, specialist with the Department of Mass Agitation of the Central Echelon]

[Text] Our party has become the party in power that leads the people. Thus, the relationship between the party and the masses has many special characteristics and new and varied contents and forms. This relationship is present in every sphere of life, at every echelon, and in every place. It is particularly vital at the primary level.

Since the Sixth Party Congress, the mass work of the party has, in line with renovation, been made more democratic and open. This has motivated the masses at many bases to gradually overcome the difficulties, given rise to initial changes on the economic, social, security, and national defense fronts, and created a democratic atmosphere in social life.

But reviewing things seriously, we can see that the party's mass work during the past period has not made any basic changes. There are still many weaknesses, and things are done in the old manner. In many places, the party organizations are remote from the masses, and the authorities act in a bureaucratic and authoritative manner and are overbearing with the masses. The mass organizations do things in an administrative manner, they are remote from the association and union members and from the bases, and they do not satisfy the legitimate needs and hopes of the people in a timely manner. These weaknesses are clearest at the primary level. Many of the party bases are no longer the leadership core and cannot achieve solidarity with the masses. The masses have lost confidence in the party organizations and party members.

There are many reasons for these shortcomings, but in my view, attention should be given to the following reasons:

First, the party organizations and party members at many of the bases do not realize that in every stage of the revolution, the party must struggle on behalf of the interests of the workers and laborers. Other than that, the party has no interests. Many people have forgotten the teaching of President Ho: "We must make every effort to do what will benefit the people and avoid those things that will harm the people." [Footnote 1] [Ho Chi Minh, "The Socialist System Is a System in Which the Laboring People Are the Masters," Su That Publishing House,

Hanoi, 1979, page 12] In the national democratic revolution, "independence and freedom" were the highest interests of the nation, but they were also the interests of each person. For this reason, the people had confidence in the party and followed the party in carrying out the revolution even though that meant making sacrifices. The party was among the people. It relied on the people and led the people. Together, the party and the people waged war to win independence and freedom for the fatherland. Today, the needs and interests of the masses have expanded greatly. Their needs and interests are quite varied and specific. Thus, the party, particularly the party organizations at the primary level, must stay close to the people and try to understand the feelings, aspirations, and capabilities of the people on the political, economic, cultural, social, security, and national defense fronts.

Second, spreading propaganda and educating the masses about the positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state has not been carried on quickly or in depth. Many of the positions and policies of the party and state do not reach the people, particularly those living in the mountains, on islands, and remote rural areas. The implementation of the positions and policies of higher echelons at the enterprises, villages, and subwards is done in a formal and mechanical manner instead of being done in accord with the situation at the bases and in accord with the standards of the masses and cadres there. As a result, there is a lack of unity among the party organizations, the state, and the people, and the strengths of the bases have not been exploited.

Third, many party base organizations and party members have failed to maintain their exemplary vanguard nature. They have not renovated or improved their leadership role and have even slighted the task of building the regime and building mass organizations and social organizations. They have ignored coordinating the activities of these organizations. Many party organizations have rudely interfered in the affairs of the subward and village people's councils. Many party committee echelons and primary-level authorities have failed to respect the independence of the mass organizations and regarded these organizations as subordinate technical committees. They have given themselves the right to issue orders. The relationship and way of doing things between the party committees and authorities and the mass organizations and front have not yet been clearly stipulated.

Fourth, many party committee echelons at the primary level have not given attention to mass work, and they have a one-sided view concerning mass work. They regard mass work as simply a matter of mobilizing the masses to carry out the positions, policies, and laws that have been promulgated. As a result, in many places, the people know only the positions, policies, and laws directly related to them. They know nothing or very little about the positions, policies, and laws related to other targets. Besides this, many party committee echelons have infringed on the ownership rights of the people.

They have not allowed the people to discuss measures democratically or contribute ideas to help formulate the positions and policies of the party and state.

Renovating the mass work of the party is an urgent requirement of renovation and of the various classes in our society. Everything about the mass work of the party, from thinking to organization and operating formulas, must be renovated. There must be renovation from top to bottom, in which renovation at the primary level is very important. The mass work of the party must be renovated at the primary level in order to tie the masses to the party right from the primary level and enable the masses to regard the party base organizations as their organizations that work for them. That is the way to bring about solidarity among all the people, exploit the potential of the people, implement and manifest the ownership rights of the people, and successfully carry out the renovation movement launched and led by the party.

Of course, to hit these targets, the mass work of the entire party, from the central echelon to the primary level and each party member, must be renovated. And the political system must be renovated. However, the most important thing is to renovate the party with respect to political and economic thinking, organization, cadres, methods, mechanisms, and policies. As for the party base organizations, in my view, the first thing is to concentrate on implementing the following themes:

Renovate understanding concerning the human factor: for a long time now, because of the gap between the laborers and the consumers and because of slighting and "averaging" the interests of the laborers, we have not been able to exploit fully the creativity of the masses. Measures must be found to exploit the active nature of the laborers in the economic, social, political, and spiritual spheres regardless of whether they are manual or intellectual laborers, regardless of whether they work at an agency, state enterprise, cooperative, team, or private production installation, and regardless of whether they live in a rural area or a city or in the mountains or plains. One important measure is to give attention to the real interests of the laboring masses. To prevent this concern from becoming a case of the "leadership granting favors" at the industrial and agricultural enterprises, agencies, villages, and subwards, the main problem is to have a correct mechanism to tie the interests of the laborers to their work responsibilities and ensure fairness in distribution and consumption. In recent years, thanks to having a correct understanding of this problem, many party bases have assembled the masses and led the masses in meeting the challenges and advancing. Typical examples are the party bases at Dong Giao State Farm 1, Enterprise 173 subordinate to the Rear Services General Department, the Hop Thinh Cooperative in Tam Dao District, Vinh Phu Province, and Son Dien Village in Di Linh District, Lam Dong Province.

The positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state will become the strength of the masses only when they have penetrated deeply into the masses. Thus,

spreading propaganda and educating the masses about the policies of the party and the laws of the state must become a regular task of the party base organizations. Spreading propaganda about the positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state among the masses must be done thoroughly and promptly. The party organizations, party chapters, and mass organizations at the primary level must stick close to the masses and understand the feelings and aspirations of each target in order to employ suitable propaganda methods. On the other hand, those engaged in propaganda work must understand and implement the positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state. The positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state must be applied in a creative manner depending on the specific conditions at the bases. This will make it possible to exploit the strengths of the bases, and through this, enable the masses to gain a deeper understanding of the positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state. The party committee echelons and the mass organizations at the primary level must provide information to the masses so that they fully understand the truth about the economic, political, social, security, and national defense situation in our country and the reform and renovation situation in fraternal socialist countries. Reality has shown that those bases that do a good job in carrying out mass work are the bases that enable the masses to gain a correct and profound understanding of the positions and policies of the party and the laws of the state.

The party carries out mass work using the purity and strength of the party and its members and of the state organizations, mass organizations, and Vietnam Fatherland Front. Thus, building the party, building the regime, and building mass organizations to make them pure and strong and coordinating the activities based on a mechanism to ensure that the functions and tasks of these organizations are fully developed are tasks of great theoretical and practical significance.

The leading lesson of the bases that have carried out mass work well is that attention must be given to strengthening the party politically, ideologically, and organizationally. Attention must also be given to improving the morals and quality of the cadres and party members. Party members are key cadres who must have a direct relationship with the masses. They must listen to the views of the masses and take the lead in work and other activities. The principle of democratic centralism must be elevated in party activities, and attention must be given to maintaining discipline among party members.

A very important task of the party base organizations is to build ranks of capable cadres, especially those with economic management capabilities, who have moral qualities, who are zealous, and who have a sense of loyalty and responsibility to the masses. One of the decisive factors of the mass movement is to have excellent and good cadres. Such cadres usually come from the movements, and they are respected by the masses. They

are selected by the party organization collectives in a truly democratic manner, and they are trained and tested in the movement.

Bases that carry out the mass work well all give attention to building a strong regime and strong mass organizations. The mass organizations are the political and social organizations in which the masses voluntarily participate in order to benefit themselves and fulfill their obligations to the country. Thus, attention must be given to coordinating the work of mobilizing the masses to carry out the common tasks with the work of looking after their real interests. The mass organizations must be given help in training ranks of cadres. It is not necessary that the key cadres of the mass organizations be party members. They must be selected by the masses without interference or pressure. The mass organizations must be given help in improving the quality of the union and association members. It must be ensured that those who

join the mass organizations do so voluntarily. The party bases and authorities must create favorable conditions so that the mass organizations can carry on their activities. The party organizations must lead and coordinate the activities between the authorities and the mass organizations and Fatherland Front based on the rules and regulations formulated after obtaining the views of the masses.

As the experiences of those bases that have done a good job in mass work show, expanding democracy and ensuring openness and social fairness are important motive forces of the party's mass work. The primary-level party organizations must quickly use these motive forces in order to exploit the strength of the masses and successfully carry out the tasks of each locality and unit. Democracy, openness, and social fairness—those are both the targets and the motive forces of socialism and today's mass mobilization work.

Renovation of the Cadres Engaged in Organizational Work

902E0205E Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 90 pp 77, 78

[Letter by Trung Dung, Organization Department of the Central Committee]

[Text] The renovation of the party requires renovating organizational and cadre work. To do this, in my view, the first thing is to renovate those engaged in organizational and cadre work.

Each stage of the revolution has its own requirements concerning organizational and cadre work. In the national democratic stage of the revolution, organizational and cadre work satisfied the requirements of the revolution and made an important contribution to the victory won by the party and people. Party activities in that period were concentrated on the will power of the entire party, and therefore, organizational and cadre work were concentrated in the highest staffs. This requirement was essential and gave the party and revolution their strength.

However, because of the long war, administrative and state subsidies management methods created conditions for the growth of bureaucratic centralism. In organizational and cadre work, bureaucratic centralism work methods have penetrated deeply. This work is viewed as being the work of higher echelons, and it depends on the will power of a number of people. When evaluating cadres and organizations, stress is usually placed on how strictly they have adhered to the orders of higher echelons. Obeying orders is regarded as the main element of organization and discipline. Little attention is given to the talents of subordinate echelons or to the views, feelings, and wishes of the masses with respect to organizational and cadre work.

In this environment, cadres engaged in organizational work often become very inflexible. They view people from a fixed perspective. But the realities of life are quite varied, as is man. Each individual has different ways of doing things, different tastes and hopes, and different strengths and weaknesses.

For many years, we have had erroneous viewpoints: At times, too much emphasis has been placed on the personal background of the cadres. People have zealously examined their background, going back three generations. But they have not examined the real qualities of these cadres. When doing something, their "youth" has been stressed, with no attention given to their capabilities. At other times, too much emphasis has been placed on diplomas. The actual capabilities of the cadres have not been examined.

On the other hand, many cadres engaged in organizational work are indecisive and taciturn and do not want to open themselves or get close to the cadres and masses. They are very afraid of disclosing secrets concerning

organization and cadres. The lack of openness and democracy in organizational and cadre work has resulted in a number of cadres imposing arbitrary decisions when carrying out this work. As a result, in many cases, the decisions made in evaluating, promoting, or disciplining cadres do not properly reflect objective reality.

With the bureaucratic centralism mechanism, organizational cadres do not set aside much time to train and study. They do things based on the existing formulas provided by higher echelons. In selecting cadres to carry on organizational work, attention is usually given only to their "virtues," meaning a pure background, composure, maturity, and a willingness to obey and submit to higher echelons. Little attention is given to their capabilities. There is still much disorder in training cadres to carry on organizational work.

Renovating the ranks of organizational cadres is not simply a matter of replacing people. What is more important is to renovate the quality of these cadres. This process includes both replacing people and renovating thinking. It is a process of improving the quality of the organizational cadres in accord with the new requirements of the present revolution. These requirements demand:

On political quality: Above all, organizational cadres must be absolutely loyal to the revolution and to socialism. They must uphold the renovation viewpoint and adhere to the principles of renovation. They must not waver in the face of the complex situation in the world and in Vietnam, and they must not vacillate in the face of viewpoints contrary to those of the party.

Organizational cadres must be loyal and impartial. Loyalty and impartiality are manifested by being straightforward, daring to voice opinions to higher echelons, daring to struggle against negative phenomena, being objective and truthful, not being influenced or "troubled" by individual feelings or flattery, not being tempted by bribes, and not being subjective, arbitrary, selfish, or narrow-minded.

Organizational cadres must be democratic and open and stick close to reality and the people. They must have the interests of the people at heart and love the people. Each person is a unique individual, a multi-faceted world. Without a sense of love, without a human viewpoint, and without a sense of closeness, no matter how high their standards, it will be impossible for the organizational cadres to understand people.

On capabilities: Organizational cadres must understand many things.

Above all, organizational cadres must understand and be able to apply the laws of dialectical materialism. Indifference to the laws of dialectical materialism will lead to subjectivism, empiricism, one-sided views, and errors in evaluating cadres.

Organizational cadres must also have certain experiences in life. These experiences are not to be used as a tool of conservatism but to supplement their theoretical knowledge.

In order to build a rank of organizational cadres to satisfy the renovation requirements of the party, we cannot just talk about "renovation" and "plans" but must immediately stipulate standards for organizational

cadres. Only in this way will lower echelons know how to carry on renovation and what projects to have.

On the other hand, the departments of the central echelon, particularly the Department of Organization, must implement programs to train the various echelon organizational cadres, raise the training of organizational cadres to a new and higher level, and soon satisfy the requirements of the revolutionary situation and tasks.

Science and Technology Under Capitalism

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 2, Feb 90 pp 79, 80

[Article by Nguyen Thanh Tuan; not translated]

**There Will Never Be Any New Evidence for the
Merger of Socialism and Capitalism**

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 2, Feb 90 p 84-88

[Article by Le Tinh; not translated]