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PHẠM VĂN ĐỒNG



HO CHI MINH

*A MAN, A NATION,
AN AGE, AND A CAUSE*



THẾ GIỚI

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HANOI - 1999

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*Hồ Chí Minh and the author (right)
Taken in Hanoi, 1968*

*This book is dedicated to the compatriots,
comrades and soldiers who have laid down their
lives for the sake of the great cause of the nation
from the early twentieth century until now.*

PHAM VAN DONG

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I

HO CHI MINH — AN HISTORIC ENCOUNTER

In the early nineteen twenties, one man became the incarnation of an historic encounter between a nation, an age and a great revolutionary cause.

That man was Ho Chi Minh. The nation was Vietnam and the age was that of a global transition from capitalism to socialism. The cause was the people's democratic national revolution advancing to socialist revolution in Vietnam, contributing to the liberation of peoples, societies and individuals in the Third World in particular and the world in general.

A man, a nation, a time and a cause — four elements of history acting upon one another simultaneously, beginning with a man and ending in a cause.

This encounter took place in the current era and within the scope of mankind's history from time immemorial, leading to great changes in the 19th and 20th centuries marked by revolutionary upsurges, and linked to the appearance of Marxism-Leninism, the triumph of the October Revolution and the victory of the Soviet Union over fascism in the Second World War.

In the middle of the 19th century, through Marx and Engels's theoretical works and revolutionary deeds, scientific socialism came into being. Since then, mankind has had a doctrine showing the laws of history, helping explain, transform and liberate the world.

From the late 19th to early 20th century, capitalism shifted to imperialism. For the first time, the world was unified, but under the rule of imperialist countries. Most peoples were subjugated and dependent. Early in the second decade of this century, under the sway of imperialism, antagonisms became extremely acute; the clouds of the First World War gathered over Europe and the hour of revolution was about to strike.

It was a time when through a series of theoretical works and practical revolutionary deeds Lenin put forth and implemented new theses that eloquently proved the vitality and creativeness of Marxism-Leninism, analyzed imperialism and drew up the basic argument: imperialism was the age of proletarian revolution. Applying Marx's methodology, Lenin pointed out that the proletarian revolution would not triumph at the same time in a series of highly-developed capitalist countries, but first of all in the weakest link in the world chain of imperialism, where there was a fairly strong revolutionary movement of the working class and toiling people guided by a correct ideology.

In 1917, the greatest turning-point in world history occurred with the great Russian October Socialist Revolution. It ushered in a new age which Lenin had theoretically anticipated: the period of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.

After the October Revolution, the failure of proletarian revolutions in Hungary, Germany and Italy, and the alliance of imperialist countries and reactionary forces encircling and attacking the world's first socialist State created new problems: how to defend and build socialism in a country like the Soviet Union and develop an adequate strategy for revolution in developed capitalist countries as well as in colonized ones.

The founding of the Communist International in 1919 on Lenin's initiative, and its activities, played a very great role in the founding of communist parties, unification of the international workers' movement, and boosting of revolutionary mobilization in many countries throughout the world.

In his genius, Lenin foresaw the shift in coming revolutionary storms to colonized and dependent countries, and forecast that together with Soviet Russia the triumph of revolution in great countries of Asia would radically change the face of the world. The rostrum of the Communist International resounded with the historic call by Lenin, complementing the call by Marx for a new age: "Let the proletariat and oppressed peoples throughout the world unite".

In the early twenties, history awaited people in colonial countries with enough intelligence and revolutionary will to answer Lenin's call for solidarity and struggle in its deepest sense, with enough character to represent the awakening and rising up of oppressed peoples. At that time, many patriots and revolutionaries in Asia, Africa and Latin America warmly responded to Lenin's call, brought scientific socialism to and founded communist parties in their nations, and boosted the revolutionary

work of the Third World to contribute to our time. Ho Chi Minh was among the most representative of them.

Ho Chi Minh was a son of the Vietnamese nation. Here I would like to highlight only a few salient features in the long, stormy and glorious history of the nation which gave birth to Ho Chi Minh. This nation exists on land inhabited from time immemorial, the convergence of many highways and waterways, a meeting-place of many civilizations. With a constant need for solidarity against foreign aggression, the Vietnamese nation struggled to survive and develop through several millennia and many painful and tragic, stormy and stirring periods. The Vietnamese nation has a strong and lasting vitality, an indomitable and staunch spirit, and a pride and a will for national independence. In their social life, the Vietnamese people honour ethics and humanity and boast a tradition of fraternity and unity. Throughout millennia of building and defending their country, the Vietnamese people have proved themselves to be gifted, courageous, clever and creative. Towards foreign nations, the Vietnamese people are open, friendly, sensitive to the new, and receptive, and are ready to welcome the good from others.

History evolves in its own ways, some of the mysteries of which have been discovered only recently. Like many other nations in the area, the Vietnamese nation carried on its destiny through the stagnation of a society based on a small-scale production under the Asian mode of production, then feudalism just when European nations shifted to capitalism one after another.

Late in the 18th century, after the death of our national hero Quang Trung in his youth when his talent was flowering and

country-building still at its initial stage, Vietnamese feudalism further declined. In the mid-19th century, when Vietnam was under threat from French colonialism, the Nguyen dynasty sold out the country and put down the people's resistance: Vietnam became a French colony.

The Vietnamese people languished in servitude, lost their place on the world map, were oppressed politically, exploited economically, poisoned culturally and condemned to hunger, rags and disease. The whole of Vietnamese society, especially the labouring classes, suffered the tragic fate of slaves whose right to live, along with every other human right, was trampled upon.

The aspiration for freedom nurtured in the Vietnamese nation surged to become a matter of life and death. "One has to wage revolution to live," as Ho Chi Minh put it. However, one after another, resistance wars of the feudal type, reliance on foreign help, a reformist tendency leading to co-operation with the enemy and falling into their traps, all ended in failure as they were not appropriate ways to save the country.

This was the time when Ho Chi Minh was growing up in the cradle of the patriotic movement, being brought up by his family and influenced by his native province.

Thanks to personal study, contacts with the toiling masses and the impact of the anti-French movement in 1908, he started his revolutionary activities. Laboriously and critically examining his forefathers' endeavours, which he admired, he realized they were not right and chose his own way through perception and intuition. Like many other patriots of the time, he made up his

mind to go abroad and see the world, and observe and study how people lived in order to discover a way for the Vietnamese people to free themselves.

In 1911, at the age of 21, Ho Chi Minh left his country for new horizons with many aspirations and much confidence. During ten years of travel on many continents, he saw a world reeling under imperialist domination, and witnessed and shared the lives of many enslaved people! He had an opportunity to observe imperialism and Western society in the most representative European and American countries and cities. In Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese man easily sympathized with oppressed nations, with their exploited toiling people, while through their counterparts in other parts of the world, the Vietnamese man and nation became more aware of themselves.

It was rare for a genius born of a colony, deeply concerned with the downtrodden life of an enslaved nation and worried from his youth about the destiny of his nation to have a chance to investigate the situation of many dependent and oppressed countries of the world, to participate in the European worker's movement, to combine quintessential elements from the traditions of Vietnam and East with modern achievements of Western industrialized civilization, and to encounter Marxism-Leninism through his own encyclopedic knowledge. Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary pilgrimage was none other than a process of history showing that after enduring torments man would meet scientific socialism, the revolutionary theory on the liberation of man.

Ho Chi Minh recorded those first meaningful and exciting encounters with foreign people and friends, and throughout his

life, whenever there was an opportunity, he often recalled the memories and lessons learned while seeking the road of revolution in his youth.

A rural labourer becoming an intellectual through study, a worker through life and class standing, an international revolutionary fighter familiar with both colonies and metropolises. Ho Chi Minh benefited from both the surging strength of oppressed peoples and the vanguard spirit of the European working class.

By the end of 1917, Ho Chi Minh left Great Britain for Paris just after the triumph of the October Revolution in Russia, ushering in a new age for mankind. In Paris he quickly became an ardent revolutionary and soon a member of the French Socialist Party of the time.

In 1920, after days spent reading Lenin's *Theses on the National and Colonial Question*, Ho Chi Minh cried with joy as if he had found a way out of darkness.

In the light of Marxist-Leninist theory he felt himself imbued with the laws of history with the mission of a history - maker.

In 1920, Ho Chi Minh voted for Lenin's Third International, contributing to the founding of the French Communist Party.

Ho Chi Minh's most important achievements in Paris, marking the shaping and operation of a revolutionary strategy with national and international significance, were the institution of the Association of colonial peoples and the publishing of *Le Paria*.

Now looking back, I wonder how a young Vietnamese, just arrived in Paris, was able to participate in its political life, do extremely important work for his nation and for colonized peo-

ples and contribute to the formation of a communist party for the French working class. Reviewing those events, he would tell me that these stirring, absorbing and worthwhile first revolutionary activities helped him learn much and mature rapidly.

Ho Chi Minh's writings published at that time in Paris, *Le Procès de la Colonisation Française* (French Colonization on Trial), was also a condemnation of colonialism in general. In the shaping of revolutionary strategies for colonized countries, his works in the early twenties made one recall the influence of Engels's "The plight of the English Workers" in the early eighties on the shaping of Marxism. These laid bare real life with stern details devoid of theory and philosophy but resplendent with the philosophy of history and the peoples' and mankind's orientation of struggle.

The spark of truth burning in Lenin's theses caused the ideas in Ho Chi Minh's thinking and soul to flare up into a fire: the theory on revolution in colonized and dependent countries, from the viewpoint of national liberation linked to socialist revolution. In the early nineteen twenties, this theory was expounded by Ho Chi Minh and perfected step by step. This was the application and development of Marxism-Leninism, based of the firm belief in oppressed peoples' capacities in the initiative of the revolution in colonized country and in close combination with the metropolis's revolution in the proletarian internationalist spirit. At that time, Ho Chi Minh's views were strangely new and difficult to understand. They lay in a revolutionary creative movement of people whose theoretical contributions and struggles blazed a path for our time.

This also was the time when hundreds of millions of people in colonized countries, reduced to the condition of pariahs, rose up and entered history as revolutionaries who lost only their chains and won the whole world: a world with national independence, freedom, food, clothing, civilization, happiness, a dream that became a real future something that was not easy to build but was already appearing on the horizon.

Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary views helped bring Marxism - Leninism to many colonized countries and world proletarian revolution. The course of history over the past sixty years has been the realization of these ideas.

Starting with huge difficulties and going through many years of struggle, the upsurge in national liberation movements after the Second World War caused the colonial system of imperialists to disintegrate in big chunks. More than a hundred countries became independent, a score of them following the socialist path, thus confirming the position and influence of the Third World as a major force of our time. At present, developing countries united in the struggle against imperialism, together with socialist countries in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and development, constitute a large bloc with an important say in the present and future problems of our planet, especially in the building of a modern civilization truly democratic, just and humanitarian.

In the mid-nineteen twenties, when revolutionary movements in colonized countries were surging and developing, Ho Chi Minh decided to return to his homeland. His main task as he himself pointed out later, was to organize and launch a revolutionary

people's movement in his country in order to liberate it as had intended when setting out.

In 1930, the Communist Party of Vietnam was founded. Fifteen years later, the August Revolution triumphed, opening a new era of Vietnam's history and constituting the first victory in the liberation of colonized countries. Following that, the two victorious resistance wars against French colonialism and US imperialism constituted a 30-year epic for the Vietnamese nation, contributing to the upsurge of national liberation movements in many areas of the world.

Since 1954 in the North and 1975 throughout the country, the Vietnamese nation has shifted to socialist revolution, becoming one of the Third-World nations tackling a difficult quest, undergoing many trials and tests and seeking a path, a process and a method for advancing to socialism.

That historic encounter on a night in July, 1920, in Compoinc alley, Paris has been crowned with many victories of revolutionary work. In my mind's eye I see that historic rendez-vous as an opportune and magnificent one. ⁽¹⁾

Now that the 20th century is coming to an end and a new millennium about to begin, history is evolving in a varied, multifarious and intricate way, so one cannot surmise all struggles between revolutionary and reactionary forces. In many radical ways, the Vietnamese nation and others are doing their best to liberate nations, society and man.

1. Ho Chi Minh read Lenin's *Theses on the National and Colonial Questions* in the Impasse Compoinc, Paris.

What Ho Chi Minh has developed over the past half-century and will live through Vietnam's coming revolutionary work and develop in a common revolutionary trend among nations.

I ponder the above and study historical processes and events in a spirit of respect and truth. I believe they faithfully reflect an encounter between a man, a nation, a time and a cause.

Late in 1923, meeting Ho Chi Minh coming from Paris to Moscow for the first time, Soviet poet Osip Mandelstam wrote, "In Nguyen Ai Quoc's noble behaviour and serene voice, I see the future, the ocean — like peaceful fraternity throughout the world: this young Vietnamese revolutionary fighter 'radiates a culture which is not European, but perhaps that of the future'."

While Vietnam was fighting against US aggression. Western writer and journalist Hélène Tournaire wrote: "In Ho Chi Minh, everybody finds the noblest, most simple, and dearest member of his family... Compared with weapons, that does not yield to all the weapons of the Seventh Fleet... Ho Chi Minh's image is the perfect combination of Buddha's wisdom, Jesus' fraternity, Marx's philosophy, Lenin's revolutionary genius and the feeling of a master of a family, all that wrapped in a most natural manner."

Looking back to Ho Chi Minh's life and work, all communist parties, nations, men of culture and intellectuals have agreed on this remark: "Ho Chi Minh belongs to the future, because he has created this future... He is a man who makes modern history. He has become an architect of the world revolutionary process in its most turbulent period.. He becomes the beacon lighting the way for all oppressed peoples of the world... Perhaps more

than any other man of this century, Ho Chi Minh personifies revolution... He is one of the noblest and dearest men of our time." (1)

These quotations (and many others) show that for many years our foreign friends have been clear-sighted in their appraisal of Ho Chi Minh the man, while testifying to his charisma — a man with an extraordinary will and a great career.

Great men and great events take on elevated proportions over time. As history unfolds and advances, it will bring further into relief the stature and depths of Ho Chi Minh and his work for present and future generations of the Vietnamese nation and possibly of many other peoples.

1. From speeches delivered by the representatives of Communist Party and other articles of various intellectuals and cultural activists in the world when Ho Chi Minh passed a way.

II HO CHI MINH - HIS THEORY AND ACTION

"There cannot be a revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory." These words of by Lenin are, in essence, a summing-up of the history of revolutionary movements, especially in recent times with the guidance of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

While working with him, I clearly perceived that he constantly linked revolutionary work to revolutionary theory, and realized that it was both his philosophical and working style.

Until his death, Ho Chi Minh devoted his heart and soul to the people and the country. His revolutionary ardour increased when he witnessed and shared the misery of the oppressed peoples of the world, together with their fighting will and determination to seek a new way of life. That added depth to Ho Chi Minh's philosophy. Visiting many oppressed countries on different continents and living in highly developed capitalist countries, he clearly saw the contrast between the two worlds and compared imperialism to a leech with two suckers. This was not only an image but also a valuable viewpoint in many aspects, both in breadth and depth, exposing the nature of exploitation

by imperialism, in the past, present and future when it tried to adapt itself to changing times so as to cope with the development of world revolution.

Until the early 20th century, Marxist-Leninist theory had only blazed a trail to proletarian revolution in the West. Ho Chi Minh deemed it necessary to contribute to bringing this truth of our epoch to a world which had not yet been enlightened. From then on he thought and undertook research on what the Marxist-Leninist masters had not dealt with, owing to the limitations of history. That was the theory of revolution in colonized countries.

Using the image of a two-suckered leech, Ho Chi Minh proposed another idea comparing world revolution to a bird with two wings. While the leech sucked the blood of oppressed peoples to foster capitalist countries, the bird had one wing in colonial countries which could soar vigorously and rapidly as history would later prove.

I write briefly about this to provide a broad view of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy. I think this can shed light on the revolution of the international situation and confirm the theoretical viewpoints which seem very simple but are in fact deep and creative, and still have a practical and topical meaning. This may be a valuable contribution by Ho Chi Minh to Marxist-Leninist theory, which has been proved by reality, and the theoretical and practical value of which will be proved far and wide.

The salient feature of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy is his systematical thought. One cannot find this in any of his single works, but it appears throughout all his activities, articles,

speeches and lectures. As for me, I clearly saw it while listening to his lectures in Canton and living beside him in Cao Bang and so on.

Ho Chi Minh's views can be described under two headings:

1. On revolution (line and method);
2. On the Party.

Speaking of Ho Chi Minh's philosophy, an extremely important point to emphasize is its style and appropriate response to historical evolution. Everybody knows that Marx, Engels and Lenin used to remind revolutionaries to deal in a timely fashion with changes in the revolutionary movement. What the masters advised us was to be creative; what they were concerned about was stereotype.

Ho Chi Minh abided by this principle. He often said to me, "A revolutionary has to rely on opportunity and position, to make use of them and to create them." To those who sent him off to France in 1946, he only said, "You have to cope with changes."

One more point about Ho Chi Minh's theoretical style which he considered particularly important was that the Vietnamese toiling people and those of colonial countries at the time "can't go to school and very few know how to read and write." That is why the revolutionary fighter Ho Chi Minh, a theoretician, used simple, clear, easy to understand and remember words and expressions with a strong and deep persuasive force. In the preface to a collection of lectures in Canton, he wrote, "The working

language here is very simple, direct, and clear — just as 2 and 2 make 4 without any adornment or ornamentation.”

Some people, especially foreigners, regard him as a theoretician-practitioner. This remark is correct on the grounds that he constantly linked theory to practice, in both thought and deed.

1. VIEWPOINT ON REVOLUTION

Ho Chi Minh was one of the first men to analyze and condemn colonialism in a systematic way, pointing out that it was a modern slave regime politically, economically, culturally, socially that it led to wanton plunder and sometimes genocide with regard to colonized peoples.

Ho Chi Minh clearly perceived and stoically experienced the miserable plight of oppressed peoples. He found in it the roots of the vigorous upsurge of revolutionary desire for self liberation, of the aspiration to become men with all their boundless creative power.

Once awakened, the more than one hundred oppressed peoples would demonstrate unexpected intelligence and creativeness. Ho Chi Minh was the first man to confidently and proudly turn this into a theory.

Since the early twenties, Ho Chi Minh had expressed his views on revolution in colonized and dependent countries by remarking, “The path to national salvation is proletarian revolution.”

Ho Chi Minh called on Western communist parties to actively help and support revolution in colonized countries, while oppos-

ing dependence and inferiority among oppressed peoples. He stressed self-reliance for revolutionary movements in Third-World countries, and pointed out that revolution might be successful in the colonies sooner than in mother-countries, thus boosting the revolutionary struggle in the latter.

I think that Ho Chi Minh's views on national people's democratic revolutions, developing into socialist revolution in each Third-World country, then spreading throughout the world was one with a deep theoretical and practical meaning, contributing to the revolutionary movement of oppressed peoples.

This was his viewpoint on the three liberations — of nation, of society and of man — intertwined and unified. On the way to save his country, Ho Chi Minh discovered these three liberations of mankind when he encountered Marxism-Leninism.

The three liberations, in Ho Chi Minh's opinion, evolved out of history, incorporated characteristics of each country's situation, of each area and the world in each period, led to unexpected results, fared well and would bring to mankind more light, more knowledge and more happiness.

Here I want to emphasize national liberation in the relationship between national independence and socialism. There are neither common patterns, nor models to follow. Big or small, every nation wants to preserve its own characteristics. “There is nothing more precious than independence and freedom”, this guideline will always be the right one for every nation and for mankind. Every nation is a product of history that will exist for a long time. And the time will come when the earth becomes a

home on which all nations can build socialism, each nation in its own way contributing to the garden of flowers of all nations.

According to his philosophy, for any nation waging revolution, the main point was to understand that it was not alone; its strength lay in itself coupled with that of progressive mankind, it enjoyed the support of friends on every continent, it worked for itself and for other nations as well.

Proletarian internationalism is therefore a viewpoint of great significance, giving each nation a new stature, boosting the strength of each revolutionary movement with that of the world and of history.

Each revolutionary movement, and each nation should be generous in its contribution and grateful to others in its enjoyment. "Being consonant to reason and sentiment" was Ho Chi Minh's good behaviour. As for fraternal countries and revolutionary movements, especially for Laos and Cambodia, Ho Chi Minh instilled in the Vietnamese people in general and his cadres in particular the thinking that "helping friends is also helping ourselves." Vietnam resistance wars supported by the whole of mankind were a modest contribution to the world revolutionary cause and Ho Chi Minh's proletarian internationalism through practical revolutionary work.

Ho Chi Minh's travels clearly showed that the nation was the starting-point and objective and the place of action. Informed by Marxist-Leninist theory and equipped with proletarian internationalism, each nation has gradually changed and matured, recovered its past traditions, mastered its present and is building its future.

Ho Chi Minh was deeply imbued with a nationalist and internationalist spirit, active in both areas, sensitive and impartial.

Ho Chi Minh understood the need for, and soon advocated, the broadening of relations by the Vietnamese revolution, then those of new Vietnam with all nations, States, and international organizations in order to gain more friends and decrease the number of enemies.

It can be said that Ho Chi Minh was a communist fighter imbued with a proletarian internationalist spirit, who despite many changes in circumstances and men set an example in proletarian internationalism through perceptiveness and warm feeling in all his actions.

In Ho Chi Minh's viewpoint on revolution, its central focus was man. For him, the objective, end and driving force of revolution were man. This focus pervaded the ideology and method of revolution, in fighting aggression as in building in the national people's democratic revolution society in socialist revolution.

This focus on man revealed itself in Ho Chi Minh himself — a man of work, revolution, ideals and action; a man always forging ahead. Ho Chi Minh's theories on man were also those on various social strata, especially of the working people. They were about believing in the people, relying on them, building their strengths and fully developing their capacities. Revolutionary force lay, in his opinion, in the people's keeping faith keeping it meant having all and losing is meant losing all.

Everything started with man and man made everything – this viewpoint of Ho Chi Minh was in the final analysis a respect and love for man – communist humanism.

Ho Chi Minh imbued his plan and his work with the truth: revolution was the work of the people, by the people and for the people. He said emphatically that not only did everything have to be done for the sake of the people in a practical way, but – still more important – it had to be truly for and by the people, otherwise it was not for the sake of the people in the right sense of the word.

This viewpoint helped avoid condescension, paternalism and bureaucracy.

For him, man was linked to the collective and demonstrated his strength in harmony with the collective. However, man was not diminished by the collective. Each man had a personality, likings, abilities and interests of his own. The collective respected the peculiarities of each man and created the conditions for him to develop his personality.

With such assessments and feeling towards man, throughout his life Ho Chi Minh fought against social regimes that oppressed the people and led to alienation. He was also opposed to leading a loose life, to all errors and evils degrading man's dignity, leading to degeneration.

Throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh constantly cared for the education of man from childhood, promoted what was good in him, commended heroes, and promoted examples of valiant

fighters, efficient producers, good men and good deeds in revolutionary mass movements.

In the resistance war, Ho Chi Minh encouraged the whole people to fight the enemy and turned the Vietnamese into patriots and members of the resistance. In construction, he mobilized all the toiling people, turning all workers into socialist men.

Together with his views on revolution Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to various revolutionary methods, including the measures and forms of struggle appropriate to each circumstance.

Over the past sixty years, the Vietnamese revolution has been in dire straits, and has had to overcome difficult trials and solved unprecedented problems.

Under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the Vietnamese revolution contributed to the enrichment of Marxist-Leninist theory in method, especially to the national people's democratic revolution.

Ho Chi Minh made use of all the methods of struggle from experiences of the working class and toiling people of various countries, and cleverly combined these methods, in accordance with the circumstances of a colonized country and with the situation of the Vietnamese revolution during each period.

In the 1930-1931 revolutionary upsurge, from afar Ho Chi Minh put forth perceptive remarks on its strong and weak points and its experiences - inherent to the infantilism and "leftist" tendency of a newly - founded Communist Party - and made important suggestions for preserving and gradually developing

revolutionary forces with appropriate mottoes of struggle and mass organizations.

In the 1936-1939 period, through many letters and newspaper articles sent to the Central Committee, Ho Chi Minh described ways to make use of temporarily favourable conditions, organized open and legal activities, gathered and led the masses to struggle in various ways, and gradually brought all the people to the revolutionary front. At the same time, he remarked many times that the Party had to have a section working underground, in secrecy, concealing its forces and carefully preparing for dealing with an enemy which would resort to terrorism in order to push back the revolution.

In the 1940-1945 period, under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the Vietnamese revolution was a stirring practice, proving the success of his theories about launching a movement for liberation, using opportunities, preparing during a pre-insurrectional period, organizing the masses, building the armed forces, founding liberation areas, establishing administrative committees, mobilizing local guerrilla warfare and the partial insurrection then leading to general insurrection throughout the country, with the aim of an uprising throughout the nation.

After September 2, 1945 and throughout 1946, the Vietnamese revolution went through a stormy period. The destiny of the homeland was at stake. In those hard months and years, Ho Chi Minh showed himself to be courageous, clever and creative, reacting sensitively and in a timely way to various situations, using many techniques to divide enemies, now working with the Chinese Kuomintang troops to deal with the French colonialists,

then compromising with the latter to rapidly drive Chiang Kai-shek troops home. Under his guidance, our people foiled all the manoeuvres of both internal and external enemies, held on firmly to revolutionary power, and raced against the to prepare their nationwide resistance war against French aggression. Thinking back to that time I cannot help asking what would have happened without Ho Chi Minh.

His greatest contribution to the theory of revolutionary method was the theory on people's war.

This was the theory on a just, total, protracted liberation war using various troops fighting the enemy in the towns, countryside, forests and mountains, mobilizing armed and political forces, from women and old people to pioneers, combining guerrilla warfare everywhere with decisive blows from main force units, combining military, political and diplomatic struggle, combining the strength of the nation with that of our epoch. It is perhaps rare that people's war lives up to its name as it did here – as deep-rooted in the people and as invincible as the people were here.

The two resistance wars against French and Us aggressions over thirty years called for a great mobilization, organization and leadership, a philosophy on revolutionary method evolving vividly in life, through which in the same way Ho Chi Minh guided the Vietnamese Communist Party and nation to perform three great causes to foster a will for struggle until victory; build armed forces with three categories of troops and a complete people's national defence; shape the theory and art of people's war

– all people, all-sided, using the strength of the whole nation and of the support of progressive people.

Vietnam's people's war was the climax and the synthesis of methods of struggle in national people's democratic revolutions.

The common feature of Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary method was confidence in the Vietnamese nation, in oppressed nations, in toiling people. That is why under any circumstances it aimed at building revolutionary forces, relying on the masses, promoting revolutionary ardour, the will to fight and win, and the intelligence and creativity of the people.

2. VIEWPOINT ON THE PARTY

Ho Chi Minh was a man who clearly saw the Communist Party's decisive role in revolutionary work and made it lead the national people's democratic revolution successfully.

Such basic principles of the Party as single-minded unity, democratic centralism, strict discipline, self-criticism and criticism, love between comrades, relationship among the people, etc., were sacred things which Ho Chi Minh abided by throughout his life and made everybody understand alike, thus creating a great strength and bringing a remarkable results.

At the same time, Ho Chi Minh devised new theoretical viewpoints on Party-building, especially in colonized countries, complemented and developed Marxist-Leninist theory. His theoretical thinking was very clear, his way of action very strict, with plans, from Canton to Cao Bang and later on.

Right from the start, Ho Chi Minh pointed out that it was necessary to have a Party to lead the revolution. In the reality of Vietnam's history, since its founding the Communist Party rapidly played the leading role among all strata of the Vietnamese people. According to him, this leading role was based on two factors.

A Communist Party armed with Marxist-Leninist theory is one of the working class, the representative of advanced production forces and the new social regime, leading all strata of the people to overthrow capitalism and build a new society. The Party's leading role is build on the historic mission of the working class. This is a classical view point on the Communist Party.

At the same time, the Communist Party is the leader because it has a correct ideology, comprises vanguard men exemplary in revolutionary activities, who draw the masses to act with them. Here the leading role is grounded in the fact that the Party does correct and good work, the result of which has a persuasive power and credit among the masses.

Ho Chi Minh's working method with the Party was based on both grounds, with a particular stress on the latter. Building the Party's leading role on correctness, efficiency and credit was the basis most appropriate to the evolution of history, of the ever higher level of man and democracy. Gradually the second basis was the main one along with the development of human society. Living near him, I clearly realized this matter as well as other questions. Ho Chi Minh was not dogmatic. He also found that the strength of the Party lay in the people's faith which was in turn consolidated firmly thanks to the fact that the Party grasped

this truth shown in its activities and ideology: the revolutionary cause was that of the people, by the people and for the people.

Ho Chi Minh's overriding thinking to build the Communist Party of Vietnam was a creative viewpoint which he put briefly as follows: the Communist Party was the result of the combination of Marxism-Leninism with the workers' movement and the patriotic movement.

This viewpoint permeated the mapping out of the Party's line, the choice of its members, its founding and training, and the cementing of its relations with the masses.

Starting from the nation, Ho Chi Minh immediately made the Party find deep roots in the traditions and the features of the nation. At the same time, illuminating and upholding the nation with Marxism-Leninism, he immediately made the Party from its ideology to organization a Party armed with Marxism-Leninism.

As capitalism in Vietnam was only just burgeoning and the working class very small, Ho Chi Minh advocated a proletarianization and revolutionization of its first Party members to mobilize the masses, train Party members, lead the patriotic movement and build the Communist Party.

About the relationship between the Party and the people, Ho Chi Minh put forth the viewpoint that the Party and its members were people's servants – only in this way could they be leaders.

The realization of this viewpoint turns the Communist Party from the vanguard unit of the working class into the vanguard unit of the people.

Under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the Party and its members went to the people, clung to the grassroots, mobilized, organized and guided the masses, and the whole of Vietnam became a vast and permanent school of struggle and of revolution. In this school, he paid great attention to educating Party members on Marxism-Leninism, morals and revolutionary virtues following a new ethic, the level of which depended on the requirement of each stage.

Under all circumstances, Ho Chi Minh set himself as an example to build the Party. The leader's example consciously and warmly responded by the entire Party created a strict and sacred pattern, leaving a fine tradition about the Party and its leadership. The single-minded unity within the Party, instructed to each Party member by Ho Chi Minh and consolidated by him and which was preserved as the apple of our eyes, was a great source of strength for the Party, an image of the one minded unity of the whole nation, a factor of paramount importance that ensured the victory of the revolution.

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Ho Chi Minh made theory lively in practice and made practice full of theory. For him, theory was extremely important, as it illuminated action and was summed up from action.

Although Ho Chi Minh was deeply conversant with Eastern and Western cultures and effectively used his cultural knowledge in the right place at the right time, he was in the first place a

theoretician and a practitioner of Marxism-Leninism in a very correct, pure, bright and genuine way.

Ho Chi Minh could be considered as an innate dialectical materialist and historical materialist who successfully settled the relationship between the seemingly contradictory aspects of revolutionary work: nation and class, national and international, creativeness and faithfulness, inheritance and renovation.

Ho Chi Minh was the harmony between subjectiveness and objectiveness, the fitness between strategy and tactics, the unity between principle and versatility.

Marxist-Leninist theory is a method of thinking and research for a policy and the measures to organize its implementation, linked to the reality in each country, each time, each work. Applied correctly, it brings efficiency to action. If it is understood, but applied incorrectly, it leads to failure and possibly to heavy losses.

In our country, especially since 1975, we have deviated and paid a dear price for our mistakes. It is the same in many other places.

These harmful deviations prove all the more the correctness and vitality of Marxist-Leninist theory, the necessity to understand correctly, grasp firmly and apply Marxist-Leninist theory appropriately to historical circumstances. I think it is a major lesson that Ho Chi Minh left us – to link theory to action, apply Marxist-Leninist theory's correct, good and efficient viewpoints to our work.

Ho Chi Minh's theoretical contribution has both a topical and practical character meeting the present needs of the revolution

and a lasting value constituting important suggestions and a source of inspiration for future generations. Understood and applied in a creative way, his system of theoretical views can fit in with the present evolution of history, live on and promote its lasting impact upon the revolutionary work of the peoples of Vietnam and of the world.

III

HO CHI MINH - HIS CAUSE

Ho Chi Minh's system of theoretical views has pervaded the masses and become revolutionary practice in Vietnam over the past sixty years. They are decades of revolutionary upsurge in Vietnam and in the world.

A man, a nation, a cause, there three factors combined and made up an historical movement starting from a man, going along with a nation and a time, leading at last to the liberation, of the nation, society, and its people. That was what Ho Chi Minh sought when leaving his country, nurtured when he came back and fostered throughout his life before recording it in his Testament.

As Ho Chi Minh pointed out time and again the revolutionary work he advocated and implemented, together with the nation, was a long and arduous process requiring struggle and sacrifice by many generations. In his lifetime, he made extremely important contributions to it, laying the groundwork and blazing a trail for the future.

Ho Chi Minh was the founder of the new Vietnam, in which national independence is closely linked to socialist ideals and then to socialism itself.

Ho Chi Minh was the founder of the Communist Party of Vietnam, which is armed with Marxism-Leninism.

Ho Chi Minh was the founder of a new era, the Ho Chi Minh era - the most resplendent page in the long history of the Vietnamese nation.

I think the most important part of Ho Chi Minh's contribution can be summarized as follows: to hold high the banner of national independence linked to socialist ideals and then to socialism, wage a national people's democratic revolution, develop it into a socialist revolution, and build socialism bypassing the stage of capitalism's development ⁽¹⁾. This is a contribution of great value to the nation and many Third World countries.

1. NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE CLOSELY LINKED TO SOCIALISM

Ho Chi Minh was the founder of a new Vietnam, independent, reunified and developing along the socialist path.

From an enslaved country, Vietnamese patriots and the Vietnamese nation had to struggle to rid themselves of foreign domination. They experienced many paths to national salvation and at last found through Ho Chi Minh the correct and good

(1) Many say, "bypassing the stage of Capitalist development". I think that we should say, "... bypassing the stage of development of Capitalism".

way. Ho Chi Minh wrote in the early twenties: "Only in socialism and communism can we find our liberation".

To day when looking back, we realize all the more the stature of the man who wrote these words. That short sentence strongly and clearsightedly asserts a great line encompassing space and time, permeating the patriotic movement, gradually pervading the Vietnamese nation, and showing the road to victory. At that time the workers and peasants, Vietnamese youth, intellectuals who responded to Nguyen Ai Quoc's call, although they were not fully and deeply imbued with revolutionary awareness, definitely chose the way to national salvation together with an orientation to build their country and materialize the age-old dream of their nation and mankind.

The concept of national independence closely linked to socialism has proved to be the correct ideology mapped out since the Party's foundation and further clarified later on. This line is the process of the Vietnamese revolution with two periods which overlap – a national people's democratic revolution and socialist revolution – the latter period achieves the tasks not fulfilled in the former, and the former period, when conditions permit, can begin a few tasks of the latter one.

Right in the national people's democratic revolution, when the main task was to overthrow imperialist rule, national independence and socialism were two banners – one may say a twin banner – forming the driving force of the revolutionary movement. National independence helped build socialism while socialism gave an epochal meaning to national independence, making it thorough and most effective. Right after the August

Revolution Ho Chi Minh pointed out that it was nonsense when the people of an independent country did not enjoy democracy and did not have sufficient food and clothing. Fighting against hunger, ignorance and foreign aggression was a programme of national independence linked to socialist ideals, expressed in a most practical way, easily perceived by the nation at that time, understood by every citizen and agreed to by all patriots. In the resistance war against US aggression, national independence and socialism were all the more closely linked.

National independence closely linked to socialist ideals and then socialism itself, from national people's democratic revolution advancing to socialist revolution, such is the revolutionary route of the Vietnamese nation. This itinerary shows the essence of Vietnamese revolutionary work, the will and aspiration of the Vietnamese people, and brings a new stature, a new driving force to the Vietnamese revolution, and makes all the fiercer attacks by enemies of all kinds. The Vietnamese people have had to pay for independence and freedom with protracted and arduous fights and have won a glorious victory.

Twenty years after the first revolutionary training class opened by Ho Chi Minh in Canton, fifteen years after the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the 1945 August Revolution triumphed, leading to the establishment of the first worker-peasant State in a colonized country that had freed itself from the colonialists' yoke.

At the starting-point of all the work the August Revolution contained the seeds and the forces which would lead to historical

evolution in the future. However, it is true that it was but a starting point.

The Vietnamese Communist Party and people availed themselves of a rare opportunity to conquer might, issued the Declaration of Independence, and set up a new Vietnam. But the enemies of Vietnam's independence and freedom are not yet liquidated, and will surely return. The French colonialists and imperialist forces of the world, in the first place the US, could not bring themselves to acknowledge a Democratic Republic of Vietnam born of a colonized country.

Within three weeks of the Declaration of Independence, the fight against the French aggressors burst out in Nam Bo and more than a year later it spread throughout the country. After nine years of valiant fighting, the Vietnamese army and people won the glorious Dien Bien Phu battle, a victory resplendent in their history. The failure of the French colonialists heralded the collapse of old - style colonialism in the world. Afraid that Vietnam's victory would lead to the breakup of a series of positions in many other countries, the US imperialists took the place of the French. Thus broke out the resistance war against US aggression which lasted more than twenty years, until the total victory of the Ho Chi Minh campaign.

This was a do-or-die fight between the Vietnamese nation and the most powerful and aggressive imperialist forces. Owing to the character and significance of the resistance war, helped and supported by the whole of mankind, as many international friends in many countries appraise and assert, this was also a

confrontation between the liberation movement of the Third World and neo-colonialism, between civilization and brutality.

Once again, in our time, the Vietnamese people "successfully support justice against brutality, humanism against violence".⁽¹⁾ Following the collapse of old style colonialism, neo-colonialism has experienced first defeat. A new situation and potential opened for Third World nations to gain independence and freedom through many ways and in many forms.

History will record forever the Vietnamese generations who fought hard throughout thirty years under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and of the Communist Party of Vietnam that suffered countless hardships and sacrifices and conquered untold difficulties that seemed unsurmountable at first to make the present patrimony of their nation and contribute in a modest way to the face of our planet today.

The Vietnamese people are proud of their armed forces, which grew from self-defence and small guerilla units, worthy of being "Old Ho's soldiers", loyal to their country, pious towards the people, able to achieve any task, overcome any difficulty, and against any enemy, "score resounding exploits, and bring glory to their homeland".

In the two resistance wars, he closely followed major battles and anticipated the results of the fighting. This was generally a victory, but he used to say that a victory at which there was rejoicing must be at a small cost; that is few or negligible losses.

(1) Nguyen Trai, a famous strategist, politician and diplomat (XVth century). *Proclamation of the Defeat of the Wu Invaders.*

These seemingly simple words which I have heard many times have an extremely deep impact upon our army commanders.

In the spring of 1975, the task of winning independence and reunification of the country was achieved.

Before that, the building of a new regime happened during wartime, exactly as Ho Chi Minh advocated, "building while fighting".

In the particularly difficult circumstances of war, the Vietnamese people gradually consolidated people's power, carried out land reform, organized the peasants into co-operatives, build up the economic infrastructure, developed education, culture and health service, and made socialist thinking gradually into the leading influence in the people's spiritual lives, thus creating good relationships between men. On the basis of a low-level economy and low living standards, there already appeared a wholesome society with a strong fighting force and many humanist values, leaving a deep impression upon foreigners visiting Vietnam during the wars of resistance.

Ho Chi Minh paid special attention to the production movement and thrift followed all aspects of such undertakings, and urged his associates to perform their duties, both major and minor, especially those with a direct bearing on people's lives was much impressed. I will never forget that in a season of storms which resulted in floods he wanted me to stay in Hanoi at my post.

The achievements in building the new society contributed greatly to the victory, fostering and mobilizing various strata of the toiling people, turning the North into a great rear guard force

fighting heroically, supplying manpower and wealth and iron will to the patriotic resistance war against US aggression, and pointing to the orientation of the Vietnamese revolution after the victory.

Broadly viewed, one can see that the new regime in Vietnam gloriously overcame the trials of war, showing that it could mobilize the whole people and avail itself of the forces of our time, conquer the aggressors, and that no brutal force could prevail against it.

2. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND MARXISM-LENINISM

The above achievements are closely linked to the birth and development of the Communist Party of Vietnam, founded and shaped by Ho Chi Minh. Here it is necessary to reiterate and emphasize the Party because it was an important part in Ho Chi Minh's career, an extremely great contribution of his to the nation. A genuine son of the Vietnamese working class and nation, the Party was fostered by the quintessence of the class and nation, linked from the start to the international communist movement and working class, worthy of being the captain of the revolutionary boat, the leader and organizer of every victory by the people.

Throughout his life from the founding of the Party, Ho Chi Minh established its building as his primary task. He trained cadres and Party members to firmly grasp and apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete circumstances of the country. He taught them to uphold the thorough revolutionary stand of the working

class, to be imbued with industry, thrift, integrity, righteousness, and public-spiritedness, to abide by collectivism and reject individualism. He said emphatically, that the Party must enforce broad democracy, self-criticism and continual and serious criticism. He often reminded us to keep close contact between the Party and the masses, respect the people's role of master, show vigilance and struggle against bureaucracy, a danger which can make a ruling party stand aloof from the masses, alienate itself and degenerate.

Thanks to Ho Chi Minh's teaching and guidance, the Communist Party of Vietnam has become a huge contingent fighting for independence, freedom and socialism, worthy of being the vanguard unit of the working class and nation.

The more Ho Chi Minh cared for building the Party, the more he was concerned about building revolutionary organizations, closely linked to the leading core – the Party – to make up a system which gradually develops and perfects itself. Each revolutionary organization is an original creation of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese nation, like the National United Front and mass organizations, the people's armed forces, the democratic republic and the socialist republic. Gathered around the Party, continuing and multiplying its impact, the system of revolutionary organizations are tools and at the same time great achievements which will reap results for a long time.

The doctrine of Marxism-Leninism that Ho Chi Minh from the start equipped the Communist Party with and propagated in Vietnam since the nineteen twenties was a great achievement he brought the nation. Marxism-Leninism's theoretical system.

explained by Ho Chi Minh in easy-to-understand and penetrating words revealing its innermost meaning was received by the people of a nation whose history had prepared them for an encounter with this truth of our epoch. Under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the Vietnamese revolution is Marxism-Leninism in action in a formerly colonized country.

For the Vietnamese nation to adopt Marxism-Leninism was to remould its old thinking to adopt a new outlook on life and the world, to assert its choice of socialism, and thus take a firm political stand regarding the problems of the nation and the world.

Together with Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh brought to the Vietnamese nation proletarian internationalism.

Ho Chi Minh promoted a fine relationship of solidarity between the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Soviet Communist Party, the Chinese Communist Party, French Communist Party, and other communist and workers' parties near and far throughout the world. While they were joined to one another, disagreement could happen, but Ho Chi Minh persistently worked for the unity of the international communist movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, conforming to reason and sentiment.

Since the advent of the Vietnamese revolution, Ho Chi Minh fostered a warm friendship between the Vietnamese and Soviet peoples – the people of Lenin – and took pains to promote close ties between the Vietnamese people and the neighbouring Lao and Cambodian peoples in the common revolutionary struggle.

Ho Chi Minh fostered in the Vietnamese nation kinship with the peoples of socialist countries, and a feeling of comradeship in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism with the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Ho Chi Minh guided the Vietnamese nation to win broad international support in its resistance war against French aggression, and to shape a real world peoples front – including the people of the US – supporting Vietnam against US aggression, turning a nation's just cause into a struggle by the whole of mankind.

Ho Chi Minh told the Vietnamese people to support all progressive movements, to love and respect all other nations and fulfil their obligation toward them, to treasure, preserve and develop their friendship with all forces, organizations and men of goodwill in the world.

The internationalism that Ho Chi Minh cultivated, like a feature of the Vietnamese nation, was proletarian internationalism of the working class and oppressed peoples, the socialist internationalism of nations which have brought their revolution to victory and are building socialism, the internationalism imbued with the humanism of all men of conscience before the common destiny of nations and mankind during our time.

3. THE HO CHI MINH ERA AND THE NEW IDEOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

Ho Chi Minh created a new era for the Vietnamese nation, a part of mankind's new era, a period of transition from capitalism to socialism throughout the world ushered in by the Russian

October Revolution. In the new era a new Vietnam is forming with noble ideological and spiritual values.

National independence linked to socialism, Marxism-Leninism and internationalism – these great concepts, previously unknown, become familiar and popular, mingle with social life and gradually condition it.

In the country of Ho Chi Minh, revolution is the rising up of the whole nation and of each man to overcome difficult trials and perils through fierce struggles. At the same time, revolution is the joy, freedom, enthusiasm of a man knowing that he is contributing to a great cause. Revolution is an extraordinary endeavour and also a festival of the masses. Revolution is the solidarity of the whole people, the whole nation and each man growing up in an altruistic and humanist cause to write new pages of history – epic and lyrical.

In the resistance war to win independence and freedom, Vietnamese revolutionary heroism with countless resplendent manifestations was the crystallization of noble ideological and spiritual values, symbolizing the unstoppable rising up of the Vietnamese nation and the invincible strength of man.

Living near him, I saw one of his salient traits: he paid attention to man's virtue and fostered revolutionary ethics in cadres and people throughout his life.

Vietnamese society in the era of Ho Chi Minh was a society upholding the spiritual values and the good relations between men. In this society, representative men were valiant fighters defending the homeland, toilers zealously building the country, men caring

about the people's life, men with altruism and love for their fellow-countrymen and comrades, ceaselessly endeavouring to rise up following the motto: "One for all, all for one".

4. THE STYLE OF HO CHI MINH, THE LEADER AND THE ORGANIZER

In order to fulfil his work, Ho Chi Minh pursued thorough, clear-sighted leadership in politics, ideology and organization. His leadership showed clearly that revolution was a science and at the same time an art. Revolution was a clever application of all possibilities, a creative reaction to all situations.

Ho Chi Minh was the man mapping out the line, deploying the forces, the organizer, the manager and the architect. He achieved extraordinary results from ordinary and simple deeds, concrete and practical ways of doing modest and firm first steps; small and simple forces at the start. Ho Chi Minh's huge revolutionary work was developed according to a plan which was scientifically thought through and calculated as to both method and time, aim and result.

It can be said that Ho Chi Minh was an integral part of history. History over many months and years, in critical as well as ordinary times was with perseverance created by Ho Chi Minh in a style like that of history – with initiative, optimism, sacrifice and defiance despite hardships and ups and downs.

Ho Chi Minh's genius was to grasp very rapidly the laws of history and apply them in the right place, at the right time, in

the right amount, following the right way, turning impossible dreams of ordinary men into reality.

Throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh followed one road and one goal. Nevertheless, he directed strategy and tactics in a dynamic and versatile way, without sticking to rigid principles and dogmas. To reach its final goal, the Vietnamese revolution has had to deal with many enemies and overcome many obstacles, hence it has had to follow devious and tortuous paths, advance and retreat, use gentle and tough tactics, and varied methods. Under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the Party's line met the requirements of the revolutionary circumstance. With a special political sensitivity, Ho Chi Minh correctly appraised the turning point, making very clear-sighted and clever decisions, now compromising to preserve and consolidate his forces, now resolutely turning to the attack with well-prepared forces in decisive battles. In the period of war of resistance, building the country, and the period of land reform, when there were shortcomings or mistakes, Ho Chi Minh and the Party undertook frank self-criticism and when necessary criticised themselves in public and promised to set those mistakes right.

Ho Chi Minh's particular style was to believe in the people and rely on them. From the period in Cao Bang up to the two resistance wars, Ho Chi Minh was a revolutionary who continually mobilized, organized and inculcated the masses with a deep confidence in their strength, creativity and potential. Living near him, I saw in clear relief some of his great thoughts: revolution is the masses, the masses are the movement, the movement is the sweeping promotion of good men and good deeds through

patriotic and socialist emulation, enthusiasm to destroy the enemy in wartime and to rebuild in peace time.

Ho Chi Minh constantly linked the Party to the nations; his work was the Vietnamese revolutionary work of the entire Party and the whole people. From the founding of the Party up to the establishment of the State and through two resistance wars, the historical evolution led to the shaping of Ho Chi Minh's staff, the collaborators, comrades and disciples who made up with him a clear-sighted and staunchly lead collective whose influence moulded the entire Party and the whole nation. Vietnam's history records names and contributions by Comrades Tran Phu, Le Hong Phong, Nguyen Van Cu, Le Duan, Truong Chinh, Ngo Gia Tu, Vo Van Tan, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Hoang Van Thu, Nguyen Chi Thanh, Ton Duc Thang, Pham Hung and many deceased predecessors together with the present Comrades Nguyen Van Linh, Le Duc Tho, Vo Chi Cong, Do Muoi and many others.

The Party's key cadres, from the high-ranking to the lowest, having gone through trials and chosen of the revolutionary movement, are in general men with character, virtue and talent. One cannot quote all the many Party members who have fought and laid down their lives for the independence and freedom of the homeland, for socialism and the people's happiness. They were communists in the clandestine period not yielding to any of the enemy's repression or inducements. They were heroic fighters always in the frontline to destroy the enemy in the two resistance wars against French and US aggressions. They were exemplary cadres and Party members zealous in peaceful construction leading the masses to overcome difficulties and implement the

desires of the masses. In concluding this chapter, I think I should make it clear that in the light of the present renovation, when looking back to the past, we can realize the shortcomings and mistakes in social and economic construction, which were due to the limits of their historical experience.

5. HO CHI MINH'S CONTRIBUTION AND LEGACY

Throughout more than half a century of fighting, the Vietnamese nation has undergone major changes. From an enslaved nation to one knowing independence and freedom, from a partitioned country to a completely reunified one, from a colonized and feudal society to one of renewal, taking its first steps in the creation of a life of plenty, civilization and happiness for the people, from a land little known, without a name on the map to a credited member of world revolutionary forces and the international community with important contributions to make to mankind. These are the major themes of Ho Chi Minh's work embodying the historic encounter between a man, a nation and a time.

Sixty years is the span of action of a man's whole life, but it is only a short one in the history of a nation and the evolution of our times. Looking back to the past and at the world, one sees that what Ho Chi Minh brought to the nation and realized was truly a change in life.

However, compared to what Ho Chi Minh nurtured, the trail he blazed for the nation – two revolutions to achieve three great liberations: liberation of nation, society and man – what was achieved in Ho Chi Minh's lifetime were but the first steps. These first steps were glorious and extremely important, creating a basis

for the whole path, ensuring and forecasting the ensuing victories, but they are only the first stages. In the entire work devised by Ho Chi Minh, what has been done can be considered just the groundwork.

Let us recall what Ho Chi Minh said immediately after the August Revolution, expressing and earnest longing, "Our country must be completely independent, our people must have enough food, clothing, and schooling". Today, our country is independent but our people have only begun to build a life of plenty and happiness. Not long after the North was liberated, Ho Chi Minh pointed out, "to defeat the imperialists and feudalists is relatively easy, but to do away with poverty and backwardness is much more difficult." He already foresaw the complexity and difficulty of socialist revolution.

At an advanced age and declining in health, Ho Chi Minh began writing his recommendations, five years before he passed away. His Testament is filled with his boundless love for all the people and crystallizes so many of his thoughts and reflections on the road forward and the future of the Vietnamese nation and the world revolutionary movement.

While the war raging fiercely, Ho Chi Minh asserted the total victory of the patriotic resistance war against US aggression. The main part of his recommendation was reconstruction after victory condensed into two verses:

*Our mountains will always be, our rivers will always be,
our people will mountains always be; American invaders de-
feated, we will rebuild our land ten times more beautiful.*

Ho Chi Minh's first concerns were to preserve the Party's unity, single mindedness and purity so that it would be worthy of being a truly faithful servant and leader of the people and to constantly urge the fostering of revolutionary generations in the future. He placed particular emphasis on mapping out sound plans to develop the economy and culture, so as to continuously raise the people's living standards. The reality of past years has proved that these were key points in deciding the destiny of the nation and the prospects for socialist revolution. The emphasis on these points after many years of reflection and decision showed how clear-sighted he was in his vision.

As Ho Chi Minh pointed out, six years after he passed away, the patriotic resistance war against US aggression triumphed, the building of socialism met with difficulties and snags, exactly as he warned. Our Party has time and again undertaken self-criticism and drawn useful conclusions from it.

Marking a turning-point, which time makes all the more significant, the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam decided to begin an all-round renovation.

In this, the source of strength in the Vietnamese nation is precisely the work done by Ho Chi Minh, and now becomes his sacred legacy, comprising both reality and potential, both material achievements and spiritual values, crystallizing the energy and sacrifice of so many Vietnamese generations, combining the depth of history with the height of our time, harmonizing age-old traditions and the new revolutionary character.

To carefully preserve Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary legacy is to carry on revolutionary work in today's world, the pressing

requirement of which is renovation. As the world evolves rapidly and intricately in an unprecedented way, many new concepts crop up in all fields, which we have to grasp and apply. However, we should not forget Ho Chi Minh's legacy. This is precisely the basis on which to create the new.

Being true to Ho Chi Minh's legacy is the basis for uniting the whole people, mobilizing all potentialities of the country, and carrying out renovation in a creative and effective way.

Being true to Ho Chi Minh's legacy is to persevere along the path of national independence and socialism, of Marxism-Leninism, of proletarian internationalism, to overcome waverings and hesitations and resist deviations.

Being true to Ho Chi Minh's legacy is to maintain and uphold in the new context the fine qualities of the nation and the Vietnamese, overcome signs of decay and oppose alienation and degeneration.

Through the process of this historic encounter, enduring while overcoming immediate difficulties, Vietnamese revolutionary work will continue to flower along the trail which Ho Chi Minh blazed and along which he led the nation during the past half century.

IV HO CHI MINH - THE MAN

In order to understand Ho Chi Minh's work, let us make our acquaintance with Ho Chi Minh, the man I had the opportunity to live near for many years, through many stages of the Vietnamese revolution, from the day of the training class preparing for the founding of the Party in Canton to those last days before he passed away.

I began to get to know Ho Chi Minh through a photo when undertaking my last year of junior secondary education in a Hue school. That day I saw a photo of a young man wearing a felt hat, the kind that was common in Europe then. The man in the photo was wonderfully attractive. The photo was handed from one person to another and everybody knew it was Nguyen Ai Quoc, well-known for his activities in France.

This was an important event in my life, the first time, I came into contact with Ho Chi Minh. Later events helped me gain a deeper understanding about that first encounter.

Two years later, when I was undertaking the last year of senior secondary education in a Hanoi school, most of the students went on strike to mourn Phan Chu Trinh, and so did I.

After leaving school I made contact with those looking for patriotic students seeking to save their country through revolution, I was then led, together with scores of people, most of them students, from Hanoi, Nam Dinh and many other provinces through Lang Son on the border to Canton – at that time a centre of democratic revolution in China.

Arriving in Canton in the autumn of 1926, I attended a class taught and run by Nguyen Ai Quoc – alias Comrade Vuong – together with other Vietnamese revolutionaries. At the first classroom meeting, I immediately recognized him as Nguyen Ai Quoc, thanks to the photo I had seen in Hue.

What is worth stressing here is that the most cherished memory for me – the meetings with Ho Chi Minh all the more impressed on the memory, heart and mind the image of a man who always remained the same person, although later on we would go through so many changes and upheavals in our country and the world.

Of course, those changes also brought changes in ourselves. I would like to emphasize that the then Ho Chi Minh was the same man until his last days, with the same bearing, a man whose first appearance showed he was very simple, very kind, wonderfully charismatic to those around him and making a deep impression on them, experiences they often recount.

The second time I met Ho Chi Minh was in Kunming about mid-1940, this time with Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap. I immediately recognized him, as he did me. He remarked that I had not changed.

Some time later, we crossed the border into Cao Bang. From then on, till Ho Chi Minh's last days, I worked beside him, except for the first two years of the resistance war against French aggression when I was sent south to Trung Bo.

Witnessing Ho Chi Minh's actions and sharing his life over a long period, I gradually came to understand Ho Chi Minh the man.

A nation, a time, a cause united and gave birth to and crystallized in a man, such was Ho Chi Minh's nature and stature.

Usually when a man knows he is an important person, he is not always natural and upright. That was not true of Ho Chi Minh. Throughout his life he was always upright in all deeds, great and small.

Ho Chi Minh was an outstanding man who seemed larger than life. Nevertheless, when meeting him, everybody felt he was familiar, generous and natural, not in the least distant. This impressed foreign guests especially.

He combined of Vietnamese, revolutionary, communist and humanist elements. All that come together in him and elevated him to his historic mission.

First of all, I would like to speak of Ho Chi Minh's views on man's life. This was communism's view of man and the world, about which the founders of Marxism-Leninism spoke at length in many works and in many forms. I believe there is no need to recall this comment. What I would like to stress is that during all the time I spent beside him, worked with him and learned from him, I realize even more clearly today when I look back that Ho Chi Minh was the personification of the

Communist outlook on man and the world, in his life and activities and in all circumstances of his truly rich life.

I still remember our chats about life, revolutionary work, man and the future of mankind. He often said, "In general, in whatever place, whether in our own country, or elsewhere in the world, he who lives in society carries the long-standing influence of the ruling class and naturally seeks fame and self-interest. It is not the same with us. Our mission is to reform this world and eventually achieve the aims of communism."

Regarding this mission, what he told me many times fitted in with the last goals of communism that Marx described precisely: "When and only when wealth flows abundantly can mankind write the words: 'To work according to one's abilities and to enjoy according to one's needs' and 'The development of each man's freedom is the condition for the development of every man's freedom.'"

Ho Chi Minh was a man of unshakeable belief in the future of the nation, mankind and socialism. This consistency enabled him to deal with countless changes in a stormy world.

He was a man who consistently aimed throughout his life for national independence and socialism. His concentration on this goal manifested itself in his political activities and permeated his everyday life. The aura around Ho Chi Minh which made one feel pure and elevated was public-spiritedness, and care for the people, the country and for ideals. Both in works he initiated and those he was compelled to undertake, he succeeded in adhering to this goal. The measures might vary, the paths might

be devious and tortuous, but the goal was always one and the same.

Concentrating on his chosen goal Ho Chi Minh was steadfast in struggling with all enemies and difficulties, and imparted this staunchness to the entire Party and the whole nation.

His consistent goal and steadfast will manifested itself in practical activities. All his words and deeds were practical and concrete: He did what he said, did more than he said, sometimes did without saying, and his thought manifested itself in actions. He was always practical in order to be really effective, daring to think and do extraordinarily great work without illusion or rashness.

Ho Chi Minh was a man dynamic and versatile in his reactions and perceptive and serene in his mind and style. The more dangerous and difficult the circumstance became, the calmer and more perceptive he was. The correct solution usually came in a natural reaction as from revolutionary intuition. A dynamism and versatility in reaction coupled with perceptiveness and serenity in mind, an ease and freedom in style. Ho Chi Minh was utterly different from the wise men of the past, regarding worldly things as ephemeral and trifling. Ho Chi Minh lived a worldly life and concerned himself with everything pertaining to man as Marx declared. His easy style was that of a man aware of the laws of history, belonging to the people and believing in them, knowing what he wanted and where he was going, avoiding obstacles, conquering his enemies, quiet like a mountain, moving like a sea, grasping the art of the possible and ceaselessly expanding the limits of the possible.

As he wrote in his Testament, Ho Chi Minh had nothing to regret when leaving this world. A man living in harmony with the people, history, and himself throughout his life, always serene and easy as befitted an intellectual fighter who was a master of circumstance, with his responsibility fulfilled and his conscience clear.

He was the embodiment of humanism in its fullest sense: affectionate, courteous, confident, knowing how to ask from men and encourage them, with regard to the Vietnamese people and the peoples of the world, to the toiling people and to every man.

From working underground to leading a State, he cared for every comrade's ideas, work and life, each citizen's food, clothing, life, study and entertainment. He forgot no one but himself, from old friends to new acquaintances. Throughout his life he encouraged good men and good deeds, enthusiastically welcomed good news, recommended good behaviour in meetings and related to foreign friends the achievements of the Vietnamese people in the war of resistance and in building their country. This supreme happiness pervaded his whole life.

The personification of urbanity, Ho Chi Minh was affable, expansive and generous. Those who approached him were gladdened. Living near him for many long years, I did not see him outwardly angry at comrades. This amazes me even when I recall it now. As for myself, I would like to mention a shortcoming of mine which I still remember after many decades. Despite that, he simply said, "You've spoiled the work." One must be truly considerate and generous to behave with such humanism. This attitude was a lesson that impressed me deeply.

His humanism manifested itself in his attitude toward every man, carrying first of all for those in the toughest fighting positions, sharing the grief of the bereft, trying to compensate for such losses, generous toward those who made mistakes and genuinely repented. His words and deeds fulfilled toilers' expectations, fired enthusiasm in intellectuals, convinced waverers and doubters, inspired pioneers and the young, befriended his assistants, and valued every personality.

Affection and courtesy make huge demands on man. Ho Chi Minh put forth strict requirements for all work, and kept order and discipline in order to extend everybody's capabilities so that everybody contributed his best to the nation and developed his personality fully.

His humanism was not only about living for other people and about man throughout his life, in no way to bring man what the latter desired but also to arouse in man pride and confidence and revolutionary will, so that man could achieve this by himself. Every Vietnamese person felt he was a member of the family. Although living far and wide and having no opportunity during their lives to meet him, everybody felt he was beside them, and knew quite clearly what he was doing and thinking. The Vietnamese people's love for him was equal to his love for them, deep and shining.

While deeply attached to his nation, Ho Chi Minh also expressed his warm feelings toward all nations of the world, consistently supporting all patriotic and revolutionary struggles everywhere, concerning himself closely with foreign friends, and demonstrating his concern about every man's plight through

sympathetic and practical actions. He personified the spirit of the words: "All lands are under one roof, all proletarians are brothers" and the ideal "Man is a friend to man." Like the Vietnamese nation, the whole of mankind repaid him with a special love.

Ho Chi Minh was a living image of revolutionary virtue. He demonstrated public-spiritedness, industry, thrift, integrity, rightness, kindness, intelligence and courage with a new content which he set to the entire Party and the whole people. His particular trait was modesty and simplicity, a sincere and natural modesty and the simplicity of a man who was always himself. The higher his position, the greater his prestige, the more modest and simple he was. Before everybody and more than everybody, everyday, in every action, he did exactly as he urged every revolutionary cadre to do — he was faithfully and devotedly the servant of the people. Despite his supreme position in the Party and State and his very high prestige, he continued to live like an ordinary Party member and worker, respecting the masses and abiding by the collective will, listening to his followers and the people around him when preparing important policy or writing a newspaper article.

His everyday life and every action demonstrated organization and the collective spirit. And in the every deed, he required widespread unity among the collective, thus mobilizing the limitless strength of the people's solidarity.

Something worthy of pride for the Communist Party of Vietnam and nation was that in a country where the leader was so loved and trusted by all the people there was no cult of personality and its attendant evils. This was both a quality of Ho

Chi Minh and a characteristic of the Vietnamese nation. Always the same man, Ho Chi Minh passed the test of glory, power, age and time, and shone with man's nobility.

Ho Chi Minh was a strategist, leader, organizer and at the same time a man of culture, a journalist, and talented poet. He began and contributed greatly to the modernization of the Vietnamese language and wording. Throughout his life, he used the pen to wage war on the cultural front in the mass media, with a style using variety and great nuance, the main feature of which was its simplicity — a popular mode of thought and expression that was easy to understand, evoked responses in man's heart, great ideas, and encouraged good deeds with simple words rich in imagery and expressing great thoughts in simple terms.

Much has been written about his style of speaking and writing. I will not repeat this but it should be stressed that we have not yet learnt his wonderful style. In an essay or speech, he took care with every sentence and every word and with the subject matter as it might have been a matter of great importance. For instance, when a comrade wrote in a document about our war of resistance against US aggression: "The enemy will certainly be defeated, we will certainly win". Uncle immediately reacted "You must say, 'We will certainly win, the enemy will certainly be defeated'." And he explained: "We have to win for the enemy to be defeated." This demonstrated his unshakeable faith in his own beliefs and an iron will to fight and to win.

He told me in confidence that he was not keen on writing verse and could not spare much time for poetry, but when circumstances permitted and inspired him, he did write beautiful

and inspiring poems. His collection of poems "Prison Diary" is in many aspects a treasury of observation on life, man and arts, the richness of which can still be much appreciated.

Ho Chi Minh the poet did not only reveal himself through poetry. A poetic spirit imbued with life and sentiment, with a Vietnamese and oriental flavour, emanated from his works and life. This theoretician and man of action was always poetic, now passionate, now serene, always simplicity itself in his ode, epics and lyrics – as with poetry itself.

Ho Chi Minh was a great cultural personality for the Vietnamese nation and mankind, in the fullest sense of a man of culture. In him, a great cultural personality mingled with the great poet, bringing into full play the traditions of a cultural nation.

Ho Chi Minh was a great cultural personality because his life and works were fine examples of an outlook on man and the world, which reflected a humanism in tune with the age-old dream of the Vietnamese nation and of others expressing mankind's greatest thoughts and feelings.

UNESCO's decision to commemorate Ho Chi Minh's 100th birthday throughout the world shows an excellent understanding of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese nation, for all the Vietnamese people this is a source of pride and encouragement to carry on his work.

Having talked about his revolutionary, Vietnamese, communist, and humanist spirit, I would like now to talk about his life.

About the environment in which he lived, I remember the many years he resided in Pac Bo cave. In order to describe it, there can be no better way than recalling some of his verses:

At the brook in the morning and in the grotto at night

I usually eat maize soup and bamboo shoots.

*Translate the **Party's History** on a stone slate*

Revolutionary life is truly luxurious.

Speaking of maize soup, I would like to relate a little-known story. Before returning to Cao Bang, there was a time when he and ourselves had to live across the border among people who only ate maize soup. He had a good deal of money then — two rolls of bank-notes, like two dictionaries which he entrusted to me and which I had to keep in large pockets in my underwear. Nevertheless, we had to eat maize porridge to stay our hunger. Later on, particularly in his last years, he ate with me. Once he said, "When one can eat, there is nothing to eat. When one has something to eat, one cannot eat." Then he had no appetite and ate very little.

Turning back to his environment, his two lifelong companions were man and nature. To give an example of his significant and beautiful living environment, I recall the house standing on poles which many people in our country and the world have visited over many years. Here, as in Pac Bo, Ho Chi Minh lived with man and nature. This was not only an environment, but a way of life which brings considerable joy but which today's civilization is destroying with its giant cities and fully-equipped high-rise buildings full of unnecessary objects, and its tremendously

polluted environment which is destroying nature and harming man. Recalling Ho Chi Minh's environment, I would like to quote two lines by Nguyen Cong Tru:

A boat loaded with wind and moon,

A seemingly inexhausted store.

These verses, dating from over one hundred years ago, express Ho Chi Minh's living environment and way of life, voicing the aspiration and trend of a genuinely civilized life style.

About Ho Chi Minh's daily life, here I have nothing new to say, as his life was interwoven with work, revolution, struggle and man. However, I recall something that is rarely mentioned. Whether at home or abroad, Ho Chi Minh never took holidays. Every day he kept to a strict timetable. He possibly rested when meeting pioneers, children and especially our Southern compatriots and soldiers during the war of resistance against US aggression, or when watching a film on Saturday nights in the Presidential Palace with children of fellow-workers. Sometimes he received foreign guests or ambassadors from fraternal countries during these film-screenings.

I would like very much to relate here the details of his meals. Soon spartan meals, many people could not imagine them. However, what impressed me was that during meals, he told us to eat up the food and leave an untouched one. I recall this in order to demonstrate his kind heart, his respect for those who prepared the meal and furthermore for those who prepared the ingredients of the meal.

About Ho Chi Minh's life and the man, I would like to say something in the concluding part of this chapter. A few months before he passed away, he was very tired but told us of his devout wish to go South. This time, we explained to him that his health would not bear it and that the war was turning to our advantage, so that when the South was liberated he would then be able to visit our southern compatriots and soldiers. His reply was most unexpected: "It is now when our southern fellow-countrymen are fighting and making sacrifices that it is most meaningful to go South."

Also at that time, he reminded us of what was to be done to improve our northern compatriots' lives. We then stressed what he recommended: "To work and to produce so as to get a good result, hence to improve our living standard." That did not answer his request as we can now clearly see. He requested something practical and timely. This was too difficult. Of course he knew that, and his longing gnawed at his heart during his last months.

Ho Chi Minh was a man who lived a life which consistently aimed for lofty ideals set from the start and these ideals materialized in him. This was a man of history as well as a history maker.

Living near him and reviewing his life and his works, great and small, I can see clearly that Ho Chi Minh was a model communist. Hence I hit upon a thought: a fine communist makes communism fine and vice versa.

Ho Chi Minh was such a man.

V

HO CHI MINH LIVES FOREVER IN OUR CAUSE

During the sad days of parting forever with Ho Chi Minh, the boundless sorrow and deeply-held convictions of the whole Party and people were crystallized in the phrase: "Ho Chi Minh lives forever in our cause". This represented feelings of sympathy for the leader, and expressed loyalty to Ho Chi Minh's legacy and determination to carry on the struggle for national independence and socialism initiated by him and for which he laid the foundations. "We resolve," said the Ba Dinh Square Declaration, "to carry Ho Chi Minh's banner to our ultimate goal." Upon leaving this world, Ho Chi Minh bequeathed to the entire Party and people a mission, with advice from the bottom of his heart, for the continuation of a historic programme to achieve national liberation and advance towards the liberation of society and man. In his lifetime Ho Chi Minh made historical events in starting from history and linking them with the course of history, without dogma and conservatism, and full of renewal and creativity.

Ho Chi Minh's theoretical and practical legacy should be promoted in keeping with new trends in our epoch and conditions in our homeland.

1. EVOLUTION OF OUR TIME AND THE HISTORIC MISSION OF SOCIALISM

Let us glance at the world situation at the present moment. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have undergone important changes in order to become powerful forces in the world, but they have not clearly demonstrated the superior ability of socialism to respond to the people's trust and ardent aspirations. Some European socialist countries are experiencing a serious crisis. This is due to errors of varying degrees committed by the leading bodies, resulting in the loss of the people's confidence and their alienation and creating opportunities for imperialist and international reactionary forces to gain the advantage and carry out sabotage. At this moment, let us remember a book written by an American, John Reed, on the October Revolution with the resounding title: *"Ten Days that Shook the World."* In the book, some characters played big roles then, but subsequently committed unforgivable mistakes and were criticized. Let us also remember the victory of the Soviet Union over German fascism, which gave birth to many socialist countries and the world national liberation movement. At present, history still marches ahead, especially in the area of the scientific and technological revolution, which is providing mankind with extraordinary possibilities unimaginable only one or two decades ago. History is the people multiplied by time — representing an invincible force. From such a high point of history, I can recall a legend — that of the phoenix rising from the ashes. In the days to come, this legend will become reality.

Capitalism is doing its best to make use of new discoveries in science and technology and to adjust its policies in accordance with changes in the world. Consequently it has recorded some achievements, even some developments, in certain fields, but at the same time it has accumulated new elements of a crisis. In capitalist countries manual workers and intellectuals are fighting in various ways against capitalist oppression and exploitation — highly visible yet insidious oppression and exploitation — and against societal decadence, for a better life, democracy, social progress and socialism.

In an attempt to put into effect their plans for world domination, imperialist and reactionary forces are frantically opposing revolution by all means; and at the same time, imperialism, especially American imperialism, has never discontinued its arms, race so as to retain its position of strength. In such a situation the cause of defending peace means the rallying of all popular forces in nations all over the world on a broad front, to carry out a revolutionary struggle of an epochal character to thwart all calculations by imperialism and protect the peaceful existence of all nations and indeed the whole of mankind on our planet. Many countries of the Third World have undergone untold hardships caused by capitalist oppression and exploitation, imperialism and transnational corporations. They are stepping up their resolute struggle to abolish their dependency vis-a-vis Western countries and attain their goal — a fully justified goal that in many respects is very revolutionary — to set up a new world economic order, do away with poverty and advance

towards modernization in independence, freedom, democracy and social progress.

The economies and life styles of all nations are becoming more and more internationalized; that is a new historical trend which offers them opportunities to increase exchange and cooperation and pool their efforts in finding solution to global problems, the most important and pressing of them being how to protect the environment, and at the same time prevent other dangers such as illiteracy, disease, and drug addiction.

All of the above are the results of a struggle by the peoples all over the world, which generates favourable new conditions for the major battle of our time for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. That is, in microcosm, a picture of the world situation capturing the attention and consciousness of all men. The present moment is an extremely serious and sensitive one, and it highlights the role of revolution.

Although they have to go through a painful, complicated and prolonged process with many ups and downs, nations and the whole of mankind will increasingly acquire new perceptions of the historic mission of socialism, the only social regime able to eliminate oppression and exploitation and do away with the danger of war, replacing capitalism and leading mankind towards a higher and better civilization.

The road followed by nations and working people is the path of revolution in various forms — a revolution characterized by diversity and richness, suiting each country's conditions.

I believe that such a vision of our epoch is in accordance with Ho Chi Minh's basic views — revolutionary views — and with his overall thesis that stresses the linkage between national independence and socialism leading to the three big liberations of mankind by ways and means appropriate to each nation's characteristics and capabilities.

2. RENOVATION IN VIETNAM

In Vietnam, renovation has become a guideline ever since the 6th Party National Congress, conceiving of this process as a fundamental requirement of all nations, an inevitable trend of our time, and as part of the very nature of Marxism-Leninism and socialist revolution.

After our total victory over US imperialism for national salvation, our work in building socialism and defending the socialist homeland has recorded many achievements, some of which we can be proud of. On the other hand, we have committed errors which were profoundly analyzed at the 6th Congress of the Party.

In our present drive for renovation, we are endeavouring to overcome shortcomings in our socio-economic policy in order to continue and develop our revolutionary achievements and creativity in seeking the right solutions, combining the strength of our nation and our time, and advancing our country.

In reviewing our initial experiences, and confirming the soundness of the direction of renovation and the value of our first achievements the Party's Central Committee has clearly defined the basic principles that will guide the whole process of

renovation in all fields — political, economic, cultural and social. Those basic principles represent the essence of Ho Chi Minh's legacy bequeathed to the nation which consists of: Marxism-Leninism, the socialist path, the leadership of the Party, proletarian dictatorship and socialist democracy, and proletarian internationalism. It is no accident that those marvellous and meaningful concepts come together. Once again, life demonstrates that Ho Chi Minh made a very important and fundamental contribution and that our Party and nation have been completely loyal to his legacy.

Our Party is now putting those principles into effect with a sense of creativity for which Ho Chi Minh set a model. On each one of those principles, I would like to emphasize the following points:

Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma; it is rather a theory and methodology on the rules for development of nature, society and man. This development is continuously proceeding in a dialectical way, bringing about a creative change in theory and methodology, a constant enrichment and new vitality as history and man's revolutionary cause advance.

Socialism is not a rigid pattern, summarised in a few precepts that all nations have to emulate; it is rather a progressive society, learning from all past achievements of mankind, in which working people are the real master, where exploitation of man by man no longer exists, where productive forces are highly developed and forms of collective ownership of the principal means of production are diversified — a society endowed

with an accordance and a rich culture, and developed in accordance with the characteristics of each nation.

Leadership by the Communist Party is not a privilege; it is a mission undertaken and well fulfilled by our Party right from the beginning. It stands now as a result of our Party's achievements, something it is endeavouring to preserve and make as effective as possible, relying on its vanguard character, the correctness of its ideology, the exemplariness of its members, the convincing nature of the Party's effectiveness, earning the people's trust.

Socialist democracy is not a kind of formal, fake democracy, nor a kind of extremist and an archic democracy; it is genuine democracy enjoyed by working people under the Party's leadership which is continually growing and improving and which acts as a motivating force promoting the limitless capabilities of each person of the working people and the nation. It cannot be compared with bourgeois political pluralism. Socialist democracy is closely linked to proletarian dictatorship, with legality and regulation in all aspects of life, with resolute condemnation of all acts of sabotage against the people's socialist cause.

Proletarian internationalism is not an outdated concept. It represents a feeling of militant solidarity, full of purpose and effect, uniting all the working classes and oppressed nations of the world as well as the people of socialist countries. In the light of the current international situation, I would like to interpret proletarian internationalism as having a much larger scope; it is broad internationalism with a deep humanitarian character, linking all

nations and men if integrity in the common struggle for peace, national independence and socialism.

Fully grasping the above basic principles will be a factor in ensuring the success of renovation, avoiding all manifestations of conservatism and dogmatism, and at the same time avoiding the danger of bourgeois liberalization and the trap of "peaceful evolution" promoted by imperialism.

Relying on those basic principles, we have to solve major problems of socialist construction in our country, step by step fulfilling the following tasks: to develop productive forces, carry out modernization and industrialization, continually improve the people's material and moral living conditions, perfect socialist democracy, renew political processes and organization, achieve ideological and cultural revolution, consolidate national defence and security, expand relations with foreign countries, and increase the Party's militancy and leadership in an effective way. Such are the key problems in our programme and strategy to be studied and discussed by competent organs of the Party and State and by all the people.

We have here the great lessons given to us by Ho Chi Minh's style to be sensitive to historical trends, actively seize opportunities, firmly stick to principles and show flexibility in proceeding promptly to renovation, and to link theory to practice.

3. SOCIALISM WITH VIETNAMESE CHARACTERISTICS

The final product of renovation should be the creation of a socialist society with Vietnamese characteristics, bearing the

imprints of the nation's mentality, talent, and its pursuit of goals and motivation on its path, processes and methods of work.

Problems in the programme and strategy, mentioned above in general, are closely connected with the immediate and long-term cause which Ho Chi Minh, the Party and the nation long cherished and which is: to promote a strategy in order to build a society of the people, by the people and for the people, offering material abundance and gradually over time all the facilities necessary to a modern civilization, and parallel to this, gradually to define and develop a way of life where men treat each other as equals and behave in a new way, living in an environment where man and nature co-exist in harmony.

That would be a society where relationships between people are marked by integrity, morality and genuinely humanitarian concern, where the potential of both community and individual are maximised, where "the free development of each constitutes conditions for the free development of all people". That would be a flower garden, in which each region and nationality is represented by its own fragrance and beauty. That would be a homeland that is a source of happiness and pride for each Vietnamese. Here we would find the modest contribution of the Vietnamese nation to the newly created civilization of mankind.

Socialism with Vietnamese characteristics is the goal of the historic strategy devised by Ho Chi Minh for the nation right at the beginning of this century; it can be considered to be the fulfilment of his Testament, and the peak of the "three-liberations" revolutionary struggle waged by Vietnam, opening up wide

horizons for more far-reaching progress on the road to limitless development of the nation, society and men.

At the beginning of the century, when the strength and standing of socialism were in their infancy, early revolutionaries predicted that no matter what happened, socialism would eventually achieve victory.

Vietnamese communists and the whole Vietnamese nation, through the image of Ho Chi Minh, have seen factors of development in the midst of difficulties, drawn lessons from their own shortcomings, discovered the way out of dangers in order to gain success.

In past years we have been confronted by extremely difficult socio-economic problems which sapped our confidence and morale, but an overall and in depth analysis would show that Vietnamese working people and the nation - and Vietnamese in general - have proved their political consciousness and understanding in overcoming adversity and advancing with determination. In the last twelve months, our economic situation has experienced some initial improvements, which have had a positive effect on the psychology of various strata of the people. And this represents a force and a confidence portending the success of renovation.

To remember Ho Chi Minh is to change this phrase "Ho Chi Minh lives forever in our cause" into each Communist's and citizen's thoughts, feelings and actions.

The road is still full of obstacles, but with their unity, single-mindedness and self-confidence, the Vietnamese people will forge ahead under Ho Chi Minh's banner.

Ho Chi Minh beckons to us; let all Vietnamese follow him, and resolve to achieve victory.

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