

Vietnam - Urgent Problems

Foreword

‘At present the problem of prime importance for Vietnam, especially in the socio-economic field, is whether there will be effective renewal. Only renewal, first and foremost renewal of thinking, of organization and personnel, followed by renewal of all Party and State activities, can the Vietnamese revolution make fast and steady steps forwards..... so as to build socialism successfully.’ p 3

‘At the 4th Party Congress (December 1976) he [Nguyen Van Linh] was re-elected member of the Central Committee, which, in its turn, elected him a Politburo member and a member of the Secretariat.’ p 8

‘At the 5th Party Congress (March 1982) he was re-elected to the Party Central Committee. In June 1985 at its 8th Plenum, he was elected to the Politburo of the Party Central Committee. In June 1986 he was elected to the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee as its Standing member.

At the 6th Congress (December 1986) he was re-elected to the Party Central Committee and then General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.’ p 9

Closing Speech at the 6th national Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

[Delivered on 18 December 1986]

‘The congress has reached unanimity.’ p 10

‘... in accordance with the reality of our revolution at present.’ p 11

‘..... the great Soviet Union - the bulwark of world peace and revolution.’ p 11

‘... The 6th party Congress marks a turning point of momentous significance in the process of inheriting and renovating the Party’s leadership politically, ideologically and organizationally.’ p 12

The 6th National Congress of the CPV - An Important Step to Renewal

[Article published in the review *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, May 1987, pp18-20]

‘After defeating the US aggressors.’ p 14

‘... all that has created new factors for the advance of the Vietnamese revolution.’ p 15

‘While confirming the achievements recorded, the Congress also pointed out that the present socio-economic situation is facing acute difficulties: a slow increase of production; low effect of production and investment; great confusion in distribution and circulation of goods; slowness in reducing the big imbalances in economy, imbalances which in some respects have become more acute; sluggishness in strengthening the socialist relations of production; the working people’s life is still beset with numerous difficulties; negative effects have occurred in many places and especially in some others they are greatly serious.’ p 15

‘They are mistakes in major undertakings and policies, in strategic guidance, and in organizing their implementation.’ p 15

‘They are manifestations of petty bourgeois thinking which is both “leftist” and “rightist”. These mistakes..... stem from shortcomings in the Party’s ideological, organizational and cadre work.’ p 16

‘The task of building socialism is put ahead.’ p 16

‘... to build the premises necessary for the acceleration of the socialist industrialization in the following stage.’ pp 16-17

‘... build and perfect in the first step the new production relations in accordance with the character and level of development of the productive forces.’ p 17

‘..... to vigorously develop the productive forces together with building and consolidating the socialist production relations.’ p 17

‘1. To work out and organize the implementation of three major programmes: grain and foodstuffs, consumer goods, and export commodities.

These programmes concretize the steps and content of socialist industrialization in the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism.’ p 17

‘The three targeted programmes are the main content of the 1986-1990 plan.’ p 18

‘2. To constantly carry out the task of socialist transformation.

In appropriate forms and steps, making the production relations tally with the level and character of the development of productive forces whose development is thus sped up. We should promote socialist economy in three respects - systems of ownership, of management and of distribution - so as to make the State-run economic sectors bring into full play their major role and, together with the collective economy, hold their decisive position in the national economy. With regard to small commodity production economy and private capitalist economy (small capitalists) in some branches of production and servicing domains, they are controlled according to the motto: “Use them for transformation and transform them for better use”.

We must encourage the household economy and organize individual workhands into various forms of collective sectors. Forms of collective sectors are widely unified on the basis of mutual benefit and equality before law.’ pp 19-20

‘3. To renew the mechanism of economic management.

We must resolutely abolish the bureaucratic centralized and state-subsidized management mechanism and synchronously establish the mechanism of planning on the basis of socialist economic cost-accounting and business transactions in conformity with the principle of democratic centralism.....

..... a harmonious combination between the interests of society, of the collective and of the working people.... the right of collective mastery of the labour collectives.’ pp 20-21

‘4. To bring into full play the driving force of science and technology.

..... stepping up the mass movement to advance into the domain of science and technology.’ p 21

‘5. We should expand and heighten the effectiveness of external economic relations.....

We should widen economic relations with Third World countries, developed industrial countries, international organizations and foreign private organizations, on the principles of equality and mutual benefit.’ pp 21-22

‘The human factor must be strongly promoted in the cause of building socialism.’ p 22

‘Social justice must be enforced, first by applying more and more widely the principle of distribution according to labour..... step by step promulgate socialist social insurance policies.’ pp 22-23

‘From the reality of promoting the people’s right to collective mastery, we can draw some conclusions that the principle of “letting the people know, discuss, work and control” must be a daily practice of the new society, which materializes the new system really controlled by the working people.’ p 23

‘The working people’s right to collective mastery must be exercised through their *organizations*. The 6th Party Congress has laid down the tasks to strengthen and promote the role of the Fatherland Front and other mass organizations, first of all the Trade Unions, the Communist Youth Union, the Women’s Union, the Collective Peasants’ Union, etc.’ p 24

‘..... maintaining order and restoring discipline in the Party and State machinery, going deep into the realities of life and keeping close contacts with the masses.’ p 25

‘..... we should resolutely fight against opportunism in all forms, individualism, position - and interest - seeking, factionalism, embezzlement and the scramble for privileges and prerogatives. We must seriously criticize and deal severely with money-seeking thought and action, selfishness, violations of socialist property and the people’s interests.’ p 25

‘Based on the principle of Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism.’ p 25

‘The Congress entrusted the Party Central Committee with speeding up the *elaboration of a Comprehensive Programme* for the whole socialist revolution in the period of transition to socialism and this programme will be presented at the 7th Congress.’ pp 25-26

‘..... the strengthening of solidarity and all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union the keystone of our foreign policy. We express full support for the domestic and foreign policies adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress.’ p 26

‘Our Party plays an active role in strengthening the unity in the communists’ and international workers’ movements on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.’ p 27

‘..... our entire Party and people are engaged in a seething revolutionary movement.’ p 29

Renovation of Thinking and Work Style

[Address made at Nguyen Ai Quoc Higher Party school, 6 May 1987]

‘..... As you know, the 4th Congress of our Party set the political and economic line for the whole period of transition to socialism..... the implementation of the proletarian dictatorship.’ p 30

‘We have so far obtained remarkable achievements..... Conservative and bureaucratic ways of thinking and working..... must be changed thoroughly with all strong measures in the fields of ideology, personnel and work style.’ p 31

‘It [renovation] is a process of self-perfection aimed at manifesting the vitality and superiority of socialism over capitalism in all fields or peaceful emulation. The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union identified renovation with renovation [sic].’
p 31

‘... to change the managerial mechanism from that of State-subsidized bureaucratic centralism to that of socialist cost-accounting.’ p 33

‘Along with the study of the experiences in building socialism of fraternal socialist countries.’ p 33

‘.... without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary movement.’ p 33

‘... through tests at pilot units in various branches and localities, we can select elements which conform to laws and are accepted by life and apply them on a large scale.’ p 34

‘.... the Second Plenum of the Party Central Committee has adopted a resolution on “solving urgent problems of goods circulation and distribution”.’ p 35

‘[This] does not mean that we should take a passive attitude toward renovation and allow the process of renovation to drag on indefinitely.’ p 36

‘Some people in the name of new thinking even deny the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism..... they propose to change the situation by applying uniformly and indiscriminately the principles of “letting all production bases decide which items they will produce, provided they are accepted on the market”, and “letting producers decide the prices of their own products”..... Such a proposition would erase the principled demarcation line between capitalism and socialism. It would even cause socialism to shrink back compared with capitalism since in certain cases, a capitalist state does not intervene with administrative and economic measures in the setting of wages, prices and markets of private producers..... under the socialist system producers are not ruled

out from the pricing process. they are allowed to produce and market non-staple products according to demand.’ pp 36-37

‘No wonder therefore that renovation of thinking and work style will run into the great inertia of old concepts, of the terrible conservative character of a work style, which have become an ingrained habit difficult to change, particularly since they are associated with highly individualistic and self-seeking people..... We must clearly see what needs renovating and what just needs cementing, upgrading. To talk of renovation of thinking does not at all mean to deny the theoretical achievements and correct views of our Party and reject the universal laws of socialist revolution.’ p 38

‘The current renovation requires us, cadres, to study without let-up, study hard, very hard and by all means if we want to fulfil our tasks.’ p 39

‘Revolutionary quality is an extremely fundamental factor. Boundless loyalty to the ideal of communism and the working class; spirit of revolutionary offensive and tireless struggle to build socialism fruitfully; close attachment and dedication to the working people; respect for and fostering of the working people’s right to mastery of society; honesty, the spirit of daring to struggle and make self-criticism; a healthy way of life likely to set examples for other people..... Without all these things, a cadre, no matter how highly educated he may be, would be of no use for the revolution.’ p 40

‘It is unacceptable for us to have in our ranks cadres with high positions and power who have become bureaucrats, who place their selfish interests above all, go after fame and profits, are hypocrites and opportunists, lie to their superiors and deceive their subordinates, oppress the people, and lead a luxurious life through illegal means.’ p 40

‘A low theoretical standard will lead to empiricism and unsteady perception.’ p 41

‘The general inertia and conservatism in our country is due partly to those [practices] in our theoretical and ideological work.’ p 43

Some Pressing Problems on the Distribution and Circulation of Goods

[Closing speech delivered at the 2nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee]

‘.... we must, as Lenin said, build a large-scale socialist industry *starting from agriculture and peasants*. We must have a correct policy to encourage the enthusiasm of peasants in production and strengthen the worker-peasant alliance in the new situation.’ p 50

‘A new thing is the recognition and the requirement of serious implementation of the principle that the amount of State materials and goods given to the peasants is tantamount to that of agricultural produces delivered by peasants to the State.’ p 51

‘... eventually the State does not have to subsidize but gains profit.’ p 53

‘Another no less dangerous thing is such an extremist attitude as making light of the planning character in the commodity-money relationship; tending to the spontaneous market and underrating the consolidation and strengthening of the organized market; fixing price’s at one’s will; neglecting the State’s role of guiding and controlling.’ p 56

‘... we should criticize the erroneous tendencies of laissez-faire.’ p 57

‘..... this plenum must necessarily be associated with the movement to purify the Party and the State apparatus and to fight the negative manifestations in social life. the Political Bureau will soon issue a resolution on this question.’ p 57

Renovating Economic Management

[Excerpts from the address to the Third Plenary of the Sixth Central Committee of the CPV 20-28 August 1987]

‘On the other hand, all these units operate within a single national economy under the baton of a single conductor – the state of proletarian dictatorship.’ p 61

‘It must be realized that the state-owned industrial and construction departments constitute the most important forces which control the country’s economic lifelines...That we have so many difficulties in our economy now is accounted for by the insufficiency of state-run units. Once the managerial mechanism is renovated, these units will become strong and will exert a beneficial effect on the entire economy.’ p 63

‘Moreover, autonomy in the state sector is not the same as autonomy in the collective sector; it is even more different from autonomy in the private and capitalist sector. In point of fact, autonomy can be regarded as completely irrelevant in the case of the two latter sectors because, as a matter of fact, all means of production are owned by the producers who are responsible for organization, management and distribution. A soloist has only himself to rely on. What the state can do for him is to take him in the right direction and have him under control, through appropriate policies.’ pp 64-65

‘It is very necessary to learn from the fraternal countries, since we are late comers with very little experience in socialist construction in general and economic management in particular. The point is how to go about it. First, we must carefully study the new forms in use in those countries so as to well understand them in both theory and practice. Second, we must carefully study our own economic, technical and social conditions for judicious application.’ pp 69-70

‘.... we must see to it that such [grassroots] units have every condition to exercise autonomy in production and trade on the basis of self-financing for self-development, with profit both for themselves and for the state.’ p 70

‘...state enterprises remained handicapped [by the Resolution of the 6th Plenum of the 4th CC in 1980....small capitalists and private businesses, particularly trading businesses, had a god time because of slack control.’ pp 70-71

‘.... to fight these negative manifestations, we acted rashly and bureaucratically.’ p 71

‘... unaffected by state regulations, small capitalist and private enterprises developed at will with virtual monopoly on many kinds of goods. It was quite common for both the state sector and the collective sector to be led by the private sector.’ pp 71-72

‘The focus of the present Plenum Resolution is the guarantee of autonomy for state-run units at the grassroots as socialist producers.’ p 73

‘Recognition of the need for materials and technical inputs on the side necessarily entails recognition of market prices (as determined by the state).’ p 74

‘This will satisfactorily serve state, collective and individual interests.’ pp 74-75

‘... state enterprises are moving too slowly.’ p 76

‘To ensure collective mastery, it is most important to enhance the role of party committees, of directors, trade unions and the communist youth organizations.’ pp 76-77

‘The more firmly the state controls key areas of the economy, the more room it will give economic units to operate, all the while keeping them in the orbit of a planned economy.’ p 77

‘Many [in economic management] are unqualified in morality of in class stand [sic].’ P78

DEEP ALL-ROUND RENOVATION IN ALL FIELDS OF ACTIVITY.
Speech delivered at the first session of the 8th Legislature of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, June 1987.

‘...at a time when the Communist parties and peoples of Vietnam and the Soviet Union are determined to carry out renovation and restructuring in the light of the Resolution of the 6th CPV Congress and the Resolution of the 27th CPSU Congress.’ p 83

‘Comrade Mikail Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders fully sympathized with, highly valued and supported the correct and realistic line of the 6th CPV Congress and the resolution of the 2nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee (the 6th Congress).’ p 83

‘Let us resolutely do away with the state of relying on others which still prevails among cadres at various echelons and branches and even among the people.’ p 84

‘Socialism has two strong points which did not exist in previous forms of society. First, the character of high-level organization and centralism created by the public ownership of the means of production. Second, the working people, who are freed and become the real masters of society and country, are a great source of manpower to defend and build the Homeland.....it is necessary to recognize that the working masses are the main basis and deep resource creating the strength of our system and the essential factor guaranteeing, preserving and promoting the fruits of our revolution.’ p 86

‘Ours is a country of aged-old small-scale production. Relations between man and man in villages are mainly ruled by social customs and public opinions and even differ from one locality to another.’ p 92

‘We already have the Constitution, the fundamental code of law of the socialist State.’ p 93

‘..... will bring lawbreakers to light and demand the juridical bodies to severely punish them, including those holding high posts with great power.’ p 96

ART AND CULTURAL WORKERS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE PARTY’S RENOVATION WORK

Summary of Nguyen Van Linh’s talk at an informal meeting with artists and cultural activists in Hanoi, 6-6 October 1987.

‘You have demanded that in your domain, work should not be imposed the way a train is placed on its tracks, and that you want to be free to take care of your work. If we should promote

democracy for producers in the economic field, I don't see why you should not exercise your right to mastery in your domain.' p 101

'The bad and the negative lie right within the people's ranks, among the high and mighty in the Party and State apparatuses.' p 102

'You should expose and strongly criticize bureaucratism, repression against the masses, stealing of public property, speculation, parasitism, enjoying other people's manual and brain labour, bad customs, superstition, degradation and corruption.' p 103

'You must be firm in the school of socialist realism. There are people who claim themselves to belong to this school, but in fact they dare not write the truth or criticize or condemn the bad to foster the new-type people.' pp 104-105

'You must contribute to building the new-type people from those who today are still full of shortcomings and even bad things. You should watch out, so as not to let yourselves fall into idealism and voluntarism and always describe the new people as if they were all saints. You must also see the weak points of a person before you can make him a new-type man.' p 105

'.... of late I got the itch to write the "Things which Must be Done Immediately". Many people have acclaimed and responded to them. But there are also those who contend: "Why should we smear our system?" and "It seems that the article is a kind of a trick to unleash a 'cultural revolution"'.' p 106

LET THE YOUNG GENERATION MAKE A WORTHY CONTRIBUTION TO THE RENEWAL OF THE COUNTRY

Speech delivered at the 5th Congress of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, 27 November 1987

'They soon understood the revolutionary ideal: saving the people and the country, liberating the nation and the working class, building a society without exploitation of man by man, where people enjoy equality and happiness.' p 109

‘So long as the Youth Union fails to create a seething movement of revolutionary action among the youth, its influence on society cannot be said to be far-flung.’ p 111

‘It is a pity that, at present, a number of young people who are not inspired by the noble revolutionary ideal, have indulged in a selfish life, craved for money, and only want to share the fruits of others’ labour. Here and there a number of young men shirk their sacred citizen’s duties such as joining the army or working. A number indulge in boozing and loitering. Others while away their time by frequenting pagodas and churches to forget their sorrows and difficulties of life. A number of young people have degenerated and fallen into debauchery, causing sorrow to their parents and society as a whole.’ p 112

‘At the same time, the close coordination between the family, the school, the mass organization and society as a whole is always an essential condition to train the younger generation into a new, socialist type of people.’ p 115

‘Through these organizations and forms of social activity, it must educate the youth in revolutionary ideals and care for their legitimate interests.’ p 116

‘This far 30% of the youth have joined the Union, but one may ask how many of them have been hastily admitted just to qualify for college admittance or for studying and working abroad?’ p 118

‘Embezzlers, thieves, parasites, hoarders, traffickers, hooligans and ruffians must be duly punished. Irresponsible bureaucrats, bullies, liars, sycophants and unruly elements.....must be severely criticized and sanctioned.’ p 121

THE RUSSIAN OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION.

Article published in ‘Review of Communism’ (Special issue) on the 70th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution.

‘Lenin applied Marx’s theory as a creative methodology to analyse new phenomena of capitalism, and to enunciate theoretical points on imperialism. He also developed and perfected the Marxist theory

on proletarian revolution, made a creative application of it to various stages of the Russian revolution, thus leading to the historic victory of the October Revolution.’ p 125

‘The 27th Congress of the CPSU has continued and brought into play the spirit of renovation and creativeness of Lenin and the October Revolution. Proceeding from the actual objective situation at home and in the world, the Congress has formulated new concepts, creatively developed Marxism-Leninism in all the most important fields, illuminated the road forward of our time and of socialism. Therefore, we have a better knowledge of our time, of the present and future path to socialism together with its objective laws. The 27th Congress and the Plenums of the CPSU Central Committee in January and June 1987 gave prominence to the renovation of theoretical thinking. The CPSU has made a serious criticism of the empiricism in the previous theoretical studies, which accounted for the lag of theory behind the reality of life. The CPSU considers theoretical backwardness the deep cause of all the difficulties, stagnation, and other phenomena alien to socialism in the Soviet Union’s economy and society in the past. Today, the Soviet Union is confronted by a task of paramount importance: leading Soviet society to a stage of new qualitative development. The great dimension and the complexity of the task require a new and profound assessment of the whole system of philosophy, socialist political economics and scientific communism. The most important point is to apply dialectics whose nucleus, as pointed out by Lenin, is “the unity of contradictions”, in order to analyse the new and main tendencies in the movement and evolution of our epoch and of Soviet society. When analysing these tendencies, it is necessary to be aware that inner contradictions are the origins and motive force of the development and movement of those tendencies, even in a socialist society.’ pp 126-127

‘The most outstanding achievement of the Soviet Union in the renovation of theoretical thinking is to have formulated new theoretical viewpoints on the turning-point character of the present historical stage in the world and in Soviet society; on the dialectics of our time with its tendencies and contradictions; on the motive forces of social progress; on the acceleration of economic development in Soviet society as a characteristic of the objective law of motion of socialism; and on the dialectics of the period of

transition to communism. All of them are the answers to the challenges of our time, to the crucial problems of Soviet society and of the socialist community as a whole.’ p 127

‘The restructuring undertaken in the Soviet Union is an all-round and thorough-going revolution. With the depth of reality in all spheres, the experience drawn from the renovation in the Soviet Union will certainly have, to varying degrees, a theoretical and practical impact on socialism the world over. In view of its character and scale, the restructuring in the Soviet Union is in fact quite a new cause, with a great influence on the process of the world revolution. The revolutionary character of the programme of acceleration for a new qualitative development of society will bear upon the world situation and the settlement of the major contradictions of our time. This will inevitably affect the situation in each country.’ pp 128-129

‘The CPSU has made a completely new analysis according to the class stand and to a science-based approach of various kinds of contradictions in the world and has put forward measures to solve those contradictions. It has also dealt with the historic role of socialism, its achievements, its supremacy and its prospects, international relations and the real possibility to prevent the danger of nuclear war which is directly threatening mankind.’ p 129

‘The Soviet Union and socialism have enjoyed growing prestige and have been upholding the banner of peace.’ p 130

‘Highly inspired by the 27th CPSU Congress and the restructuring in the Soviet Union, the 6th CPV Congress has brought into play the sense of renovation, applied the critical spirit of the Marxist tenet in order to squarely face the truth, correctly assess the truth and speak out the truth. It has also made a deep analysis of the country’s overall situation, summed up the experience of success and failure into great lessons, determined the strategic task of the period of transition and the tasks and objectives for the remaining years of the initial stage of this period.’ p 130

‘Experience of the CPSU has shown that renovation in thinking and society will result *first of all from the renovation of theoretical thinking.*’ p 131

‘Vietnam which is a country developing from small-scale production and bypassing the stage of capitalist development, has quite a specific and vivid reality.’ p 131

‘..... it is the unprecedented growth of the socialist forces in the world, with the Soviet Union and the socialist community as their core, which decide the evolution of human society.’ p 133

‘The full consensus between the CPV and the CPSU on the key questions of internal and international policies, which was expressed during the visit to the Soviet Union by the CPV’s high-ranking delegation from 17 to 22 May 1987, the successful and great results recorded in the joint statement and the new agreements, mark a new qualitative development of great importance in the all-round cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union.’ p 136

‘..... together with the ever-growing might of socialism.’ p 138

‘..... settling conflicts by political means, respecting the right to self-determination of nations.’ p 139