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# ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

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## Maintaining the working-class nature of the CPV in the current period following Ho Chi Minh's thought

**Abstract.** Regarding the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), President Ho Chi Minh always affirmed that the CPV is the true revolutionary party of the working class. With its social basis from the working class, the Party represents the interests of the working people and the whole nation while performing a leading role. This has formulated the strength and will of the CPV over its 90 years of development. According to Ho Chi Minh's Thought on the CPV, in the current period, such strength and will are to be further strengthened by maintaining the Party's working-class nature. The key for this is the proper regard for organizing and operating principles of the CPV.

**Key words:** Working class, the CPV, working-class nature of the Communist Party, Marxism-Leninism in Vietnam.

**H**o Chi Minh's thought on the working-class nature of the CPV

The CPV – the highest political organization of the working class, the working people and the Vietnamese nation, was born in the early years of the twentieth century as to meet the urgent needs of the Vietnamese's movements against foreign invaders for reclaiming independence and freedom. Since its foundation, the Party has led the working class and the entire Vietnamese nation to glorious victories during its struggle for national liberation and the progress on the socialist path. These achievements result

from the Party's efforts in mobilizing the enormous support from the working class, the people, and the entire nation in those revolutionary movements. In return, the working class and the whole nation agree that the Party has represented and fought for their benefits in all circumstances. The very fundamental factor that generates the compatibility between the Party and the working people as well as the entire nation is the working-class nature of the Party.

It is in the working-class nature of the CPV that President Ho Chi Minh – its founder, always required absolute loyalty from all members of the CPV. Under any

circumstances, the CPV has always seen the interests and goals of the working class as the top priority. Therefore, included in writings and speeches of President Ho Chi Minh regarding the organization, construction and leadership of the Party with simple and condensed language, the issue of working-class nature of the CPV is always addressed in multiple aspects.

### *1.1 The basis defining the working-class nature of the CPV*

The birth of the CPV stems from the needs of the struggle for the national liberation and class liberation in Vietnam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At that time, the movements fighting for national liberation while complying with feudal and bourgeois ideologies failed to bring true independence to the Vietnamese working people and the entire nation. President Ho Chi Minh, after nearly ten years exploring abroad, even in the dens of imperialism and colonialism, realized: «The only way to save the country and liberate the nation is to follow the pathway of proletarian revolution», and the national interests are strictly tied to that of the working class. The proletariat revolution is the revolution led by the working class through its top political organization, the Communist Party, to achieve the ultimate goal of liberating the working people from all oppression and injustice. The Vietnamese working class, newly born as it was, was small in number and existed as a political force in Vietnamese society and concurrently a part of the international working class with an independent political ideology closely following Marxism-Leninism. The working class was the most advanced and revolutionary class among political forces in Vietnam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, the revolution of the national liberation and class liberation in Vietnam must «... be led by the working class because it is the most advanced, the most enlightened, determined, disciplined and organized class» [6, p. 283]. There is no other way to lead the revolution but through its highest political organization – the Communist Party.

Such are the practical social bases which leads to the foundation of the CPV and defines its working-class nature. Accordingly, the immutable principle is that the Party must always bear the working-class nature. However, this does not mean the CPV only safeguard and pursue the interests of the class. The Vietnamese working class represents the interests of the Vietnamese working people and the whole nation; therefore, the working-class nature of the Party is absolutely not in opposition, but in agreement with the national nature and the entire-people nature. Such is also a distinct characteristic of the CPV.

### *1.2 Features of the working-class nature of the CPV*

The ideological foundation of the CPV is the working-class ideology

Without a revolutionary theory, there cannot be a revolutionary movement. That is the principle, the rule especially emphasized by V.I.Lenin in the process of building a genuine revolutionary Party of the working class as a new model. According to V.I. Lenin, «The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory» [9, p. 32]. The advanced theory, or the revolutionary theory of the working-class movement was nothing but Marxism-Leninism. This is the only theory that has thoroughly discussed the interests of the working class and working people, and how to achieve them. Hence, in the book «Đường Cách Mệnh» (Revolutionary Path) written in 1927, with the view to spreading Marxism-Leninism to the Vietnamese revolutionaries and preparing for the establishment of the CPV, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed, «A revolution cannot be successful without a powerful Party, just like the boat cannot navigate without an experienced captain. If the Party wants to be powerful, it must consider the doctrine as its root. Every party member must comprehend and follow the doctrine. A party without the doctrine is like a person without wisdom, a ship without compass. There might be many ideologies, and doctrines but the truest, most certain and revolutionary is Leninism» [2, p. 268].

Leninism led the working class and the people with communist ideals. The reason is, «Only communism can save humanity, bring freedom, equality, charity, solidarity, prosperity and work to every individual regardless of their race and backgrounds, and be for people, joy, peace, happiness...» [1, p. 461].

*The interests and purposes of the CPV are the interests and purposes of the working class.*

In the «Sách lược văn tắt» (Brief Strategy of the CPV) in 1930, implementing the strategy of great national unity to liberate the country, President Ho Chi Minh called on the CPV to unite all forces in the society and adopted the zero-tolerance policy against the opportunism which means no compromises with opportunism. Thus, President Ho Chi Minh advocated «The Party would never sacrifice the interests of the working and peasant class for another class» [3, p. 3]. This means that the interests of the working class and the working people are always at the forefront in every decision of the CPV as well as in all situations of the revolution. The highest principle of the Party, according to President Ho Chi Minh, is each Party member «... must prioritize the interests of the Party above all for the sake of the Party, the interests of the people and the Fatherland» [4, p. 251].

The Party's interests are those of the working class, the working people, the whole nation and the Fatherland. Therefore, the Party's highest goal is to liberate the nation, the working class and working people from all chains of exploitation. This goal is also the legitimate, fundamental, and long-term needs and interests of the working people and the entire people of Vietnam. This objective is also the foundation for the Party to receive constant consensus and support from the entire working people of Vietnam throughout the process of leading the national liberation revolution and building socialism. The Party's strength comes from the strength of Vietnam's working people. The Party would lose itself whenever it diverts from the goal or disregards it. Thence, the first thing in his Will when mentioning the

Party, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed: «Thanks to the close solidarity, and wholehearted service to the class, to the people, and to the Fatherland since its establishment, our Party has united, organized and led the people to one victory to another» [7, p. 510]. The last words in the Will, also President's last wish as a member of the CPV were: «The whole Party, and our entire people unite to strive, build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam, and make a worthy contribution to the cause of the world revolution» [7, p. 510]. In alignment with Ho Chi Minh's will and as the social basis of the CPV, national independence associated with socialism, a wealthy people, a strong country, and a civilized, equitable and democratic society is the general goal in the new social model that the Communist Party and the Vietnamese working people are determined to achieve.

*The CPV is the vanguard of the Vietnamese working class.*

When the CPV was first founded, President Ho Chi Minh, while compiling Brief political platform of the Party, Brief Party program, emphasized: «The Party is the vanguard of the proletariat and has to win the hearts of the majority of proletariat and make the class capable of leading the people» [3, p. 3]. In accordance with the spirit, the Party not only leads the working class but also performs the leading role of the working class towards the working masses during the struggle for national liberation and class liberation. The Party must always be at the forefront, and act as an example of revolution awareness and actions. This is what distinguishes the Party from other organizations of the working class and the working people. According to the President, one duty of the party members is «Trying to be an exemplary model for the masses in everything» [4, p. 266]. For the masses to implement the policies of the Party and the Government, party members must volunteer to act as an example for them to follow, and to earn the trust, respect and love of the people.

As the vanguard position of the working class and working people, the CPV includes no other than «the most patriotic, enthusiastic, and revolutionary workers, peasants and intellectual workers. It consists of those who are determined to serve the Fatherland, the people, the labor and those who are public-spirited and selfless, and be a role model in the resistance war» [5, p. 188]. This ideology has always been maintained by the CPV for 90 years of construction and growth executing the country's revolutionary mission. The Party reaffirmed that at the XI National Congress: «The CPV - the vanguard of the working class, the working people, and the Vietnamese nation, is the faithful representative of the interests of the working class, working people and the nation» [8, p. 88].

*2. Factors affecting the working-class nature of the Party and some issues related to the working-class nature maintenance of the Party in the current period according to Ho Chi Minh's Thought.*

In the current period, the socio-economic development of Vietnam as well as other countries in the region and the world has witnessed many factors with both positive and negative impacts on the CPV and the working-class nature of the Party. Such processes as the accelerating industrialization and modernization associated with the development of the knowledge economy and socialist-oriented market economy and building a rule-of-law government have been facilitating the development and regulation of the Party. In addition, many new challenges and threats have risked fading not only the Party's ideology among the working class and working people but also the working-class nature in a number of members of the Party. Such shifts are evident in the political, ideological, moral, lifestyle, degradation or «self-transformation» among some party member. The Party frankly admitted at the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum of Term XII, October 2016: Many cadres and party members and even some leaders have not been exemplary models as their behaviors have even been bureaucratic, authoritarian, and impractical. Such degradation has not been effec-

tively controlled, and even exacerbated in a more subtle and sophisticated way.

In fact, despite certain advantages, some fundamental factors have exerted direct and indirect adverse impacts on the organization and the working-class nature of the Party:

Firstly, the development of socialist-oriented market economy process under the state management has certain shortcomings. In addition to the lack of strictness and synchronicity in the state's mechanisms for economic management, the Party's examination, supervision, inspection, investigation and adjudication are also neither strict and nor timely, creating gaps and opportunities for individualism. As a consequence, a number of Party members, even some with important responsibilities in the Party, have diverted from the Party's objectives and violated interests of the people and nation for personal gains.

Secondly, the globalization and advantages coming with the Fourth Industrial Revolution are the effective means for the rapid socialization of scientific and technological achievements. A wide range of ideas and ideologies have been disseminated into Vietnam as well as to all countries in the world. This is an opportunity for everyone, every nation to have early access to the greatest advances of mankind. However, as the people's intellectual standard has yet to be highly and equally developed among populations in society, the ability to access and apply knowledge among such will yield different levels of effectiveness. As the inevitable consequences, certain disturbances in psychology, thoughts and ideology of masses, officials and party members have emerged.

Thirdly, the opposing forces both inside and outside of Vietnam are increasingly undermining the CPV and its cause of socialist construction in Vietnam with many sophisticated, modern plots and means. Those opposing forces would aim at a number of the Party's members to cause turmoil within their own organization. Besides undermining the leading role of the Party, some other plots involve causing suspicions, or even

rebellious acts of the masses towards the CPV.

Under the circumstances, preserving the working-class nature of the Party is not only a regular but also highly necessary, urgent act and must be implemented synchronously with many other solutions related to enhancing political education, fostering virtuous and talented party members, reinforcing the relationship between the Party and other political organizations of the people. This article only mentions a number of issues regarding the Party's organizing and operating principles for preserving the working-class nature of the CPV, which include maintaining the goal and ideal of constructing socialism for the good of the Vietnamese people and nation.

### *2.1. Implementing seriously and effectively democratic centralism in the CPV*

In the Brief charter of the CPV, President Ho Chi Minh mentioned democratic centralism as a practice of discipline that any party member must adhere to. Accordingly, «The Party members must discuss and express their best opinions about any issue and when the majority has decided, all party members must obey and execute» [3, p. 7]. In the article published in *The Truth* (1948), democratic centralism was not only a practice of discipline but also the operating and working principle of the CPV: «The collective leadership makes it «democratic». Individual accountability makes centralism. Collective leadership, and individual accountability make democratic centralism. Working without that is against democratic centralism» [4, p. 505]. If this principle is not obeyed, serious consequences are inevitable. Some other implications are the habits of excusism, arbitrary decisions, and unorganized working manner, eventually leading to failures.

In consistence with President Ho Chi Minh's Thought on the democratic centralism of the Party, the Charter of the CPV, through different periods, always states: The CPV is organized under democratic centralism. Such principle has been concretized through functions, duties and powers of each

Party committees and party members. It is the basis for ensuring the working-class nature of the CPV.

However, democratic centralism in the organization and operation of the Party has not yet been highly effective and still superficial in practice. Therefore, in the construction and rectification of the Party, the principle should be implemented seriously and effectively. From the lower to the higher party committee level, it is necessary to specify the duties and authority of each individual and larger groups to avoid gaps and overlaps in the Party's operation. It is also important to hold regular briefings at all levels of party committees to track the performance of individual and groups. Such specifications are the basis for the evaluation and timely discipline in cases of low performance or discipline violations. Democracy is associated with rules and discipline of the Party. Extending democracy is inseparable from tightening rules and discipline. With those, the CPV can effectively mobilize the human resources and simultaneously, improve the sense of responsibility, and prevent sectarian or extreme behaviors of party members.

### *2.2. Improving the effectiveness of the principle of criticism and self-criticism among members of the CPV*

Criticism and self-criticism are vital to the survival of the Party. President Ho Chi Minh stated that «practicing criticism is to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of your comrades. Practicing self-criticism is to highlight your own strengths and weaknesses. Criticism and self-criticism must go hand in hand. They aim for everyone to learn from each other's strengths and together support each other to rectify our weaknesses» [4, p. 267]. This is the means to educate and train the contingent of party members, which in turn improves the party construction. However, criticism and self-criticism work only if the drive are to develop the party members themselves and the Party as a whole. «The purpose of criticism is to help each other improve. In essence, criticism and self-criticism must be practiced to adjust

the working manner for the better, and to preserve and uphold the solidarity and unity within the party» [4, p. 232]. President Ho Chi Minh once stated. Criticism should not be practiced for causing harms to each other nor for self-interests.

For the CPV, criticism and self-criticism are considered regular duties of party members (Article 22, Charter of the CPV). However, criticism and self-criticism within the Party, in some cases, are not practiced honestly and resolutely. Junior members avoid criticizing the seniors, younger members avoid criticizing the elderly, and people of acquaintance avoid criticizing each other, thus precluding highlighting serious shortcomings, or even covering them up. Reprisal and revenge against party members when they come under criticism are disincentives to honest criticism and self-criticism practices. In that event, criticism and self-criticism are not practiced «honestly, «resolutely» and «radically».

To overcome the above-mentioned situations, it is necessary to renew methods of criticism and self-criticism within the Party. The principle should be practiced both directly and indirectly, both hierarchically and nonhierarchically. Impartiality and proper actions are to be included in the when addressing the strengths, weaknesses and oversights of party members and the Party. Cadres and party members as individuals and the Party as a whole must adhere to the Platform and Charter of the Party, State laws and policies, the responsibility of party members for criticism and self-criticism. President Ho Chi Minh's teachings must be strictly executed: «Each cadre and party member must practice daily criticism and self-criticism, regularly improving ourselves. This should be done regularly in the same way as we wash our face every day. If well implemented, it will serve as the «panacea» for negative practices within the Party, keeping the Party immensely strong» [4, p. 239].

### *2.3. Promoting the role of the masses in supervising cadres and members of the CPV*

Supervision within the CPV includes the supervision of party committees at all levels

towards party members, and vice versa, in the execution and implementation of the Political Platform, Party Charter, resolutions and directives. This practice demonstrates the leadership role of the CPV while strengthening and preserving the working-class nature of the Party. In the current context, however, despite the aim to improve the efficiency of the Party's activities and preserve its working-class nature, the supervision solely conducted within the Party have failed to ensure the impartiality, and comprehensiveness. Apart from intra-party supervision, the supervisory role of the people is indispensable in monitoring party members and the Party's organization. The reason is the masses of the people are not only to be led by the Party, but also who it serves. Therefore, more than anyone else, the masses of the people should be the ones who objectively and closely evaluate the leadership of the Party, and is members' ethics and competence.

The masses of the people act as an essential channel in the surveillance of the CPV. As President Ho Chi Minh wrote: «the masses gather, criticize, articulate their thoughts, elect committees and councils, etc. as the ways to put the leadership under the people's supervision» [4, p. 288]. Currently, promoting the such role of the masses over the Communist Party would require the involvement of Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations of the working class and working people, mass media agencies and social media. These organizations and agencies, on behalf of the people, should voice critical opinions as well as make a contribution to building the Party.

Therefore, strengthening the Fatherland Front and focusing on building socio-political associations of the masses are necessary to not only protect the interests of the masses but also safeguard and build the Party. Among those organizations, particular concern and attention should be given to ones such as the Trade Union, Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and Women's Union. Regarding private enterprises, and enterprises with foreign direct investment,

business owners may not be members of the CPV. As a result, the Trade Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, or Women's Union in these establishments may encounter certain problems in their operation and in promoting the masses' roles, thus significantly affecting the workers' interests. The limited roles of the Trade Union, Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and Women's Union also means the supervisory role of the masses in monitoring the ministries and party members is not guaranteed.

In order to consolidate the socio-political mass organizations of the working class, especially in private enterprises and enterprises with foreign direct investment, it

is vital to develop a specific operating mechanism to settle issues arising between business owners and the organizations while ensuring the interests of the workers and enterprises. Besides, it is of great importance to diversify channels for information and feedback exchange among workers, enterprises, and organizations. Additionally, improving the efficiency of Party's organizations within enterprises should also be implemented. It is necessary to create an environment in which business owners, the Party's organizations, and socio-political organizations of the working class achieve the highest level of consensus.

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