

NGUYEN CHI THANH ARTICLE ON REVISIONISM

(North)

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(Article by Nguyen Chi Thanh published in the TUYEN HUAN magazine, March issue, entitled: "Some Ideas About the Relations Between Individualism and Modern Revisionism.")

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(Text) In the past, our struggle for peace, independence, democracy, and socialism scored great achievements. But while joyfully greeting these achievements, each one of us is still worried and is not yet completely satisfied. The reason for this is that in terms of the balance of power between ourselves and our enemies throughout the world, we might be able to score greater achievements were it not for the regrettable obstruction revisionism puts in the path of the revolution. Because of revisionism, our achievements have been restricted.

We have long been obsessed by this fact. Each one of us asks the same question: What must be done to achieve more for peace, independence, democracy, and socialism, and how should it be done? This question does not come to our minds without reason. It reflects an objective fact: there occurs in the political life of the international communist movement an acute struggle between the two lines--the Marxist-Leninist line and the modern revisionist line. Politically, every one of us can choose only one of the two: either Marxism-Leninism or revisionism.

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Loyal to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in the past our party correctly followed Marxism-Leninism. Recently, the ninth party Central Committee conference once again asserted the major, important problems of the world situation and the international tasks of our party. (The ninth party Central Committee conference resolution?) is a sharp dialectical and ideological weapon and an exhortation for us to develop and maintain the party's political line and the strategies and tactics of the international communist movement.

In spirit, the ninth resolution emphasizes the need to hold firm to the aims of opposing imperialism and succeeding in the revolution. The resolution (few words indistinct) the earnest desire for strength and the solidarity in the international communist movement. It also asserts that the important requirement for triumphing over imperialism and strengthening the solidarity in the international communist movement is to be determined to oppose revisionism, because revisionism weakens the struggle against imperialism and the proletarian revolution throughout the world, and because revisionism is the cause of the existence of dissension and partisanship within the international communist movement and the wide movement for peace, independence, democracy, and socialism.

The struggle against revisionism to protect the purity of Marxism-Leninism is a struggle in principle between proletarian ideology and bourgeois ideology. It is a reflection of the class struggle to settle the problem of "who will win over whom" in the world. As the 1957 Moscow statement pointed out, the existence of bourgeois influence is the internal cause of revisionism, while capitulation to imperialist pressure is its external cause. This "character" has given birth to a political line called rightist opportunism. This political line consists of compromising with imperialists and other reactionaries, denying the class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, and staying away from Marxist-Leninist principles. On the basis of this political line, an opportunistic organizational line was created. The characteristics of this line are dissension, partisanship, organizational class compromise, and nihilism. This ideological system is a "gold thread" that bores through revisionism from top to bottom and in all domains. Therefore, the struggle against revisionism is a comprehensive, dialectical, ideological, and political struggle, of which the struggle against individualism is an important ideological part.

The basic difference between revisionist dialectics and Marxist-Leninist dialectics is that revisionism denies the class struggle, the proletarian struggle, and the proletarian dictatorship. Once revisionism succeeds in penetrating a certain portion of the masses, the latter will lose their understanding of the struggle and, therefore, will renounce their class duties. Once they are influenced by revisionism and, therefore, lose their sense of political direction and its natural logic, their revolutionary vigilance will decline and their spirit of struggle will fade.

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Let us raise this question: What philosophy of life is adopted by a revolutionary who has had his spirit of struggle dampened and has lost his struggle direction? He will strive for individual happiness, that is, the individual happiness of bourgeois individualism; and he is willing to get it at any price. He can no longer promote his own individual happiness in labor for production and in the great revolution of the masses. Therefore, he will adopt a way of life based on bourgeois morality. Since everyone already knows about the bourgeois way of life there is no need to deal with it at length.

At present revisionism not only creates a kind of individualism which influences the work habits and attitudes of the masses. Rather, what is most dangerous is that this kind of individualism has some "Marxist" tint suitable for the taste of bourgeois and petty bourgeois psychology, which still exists in the international communist movement in order to serve the political line of revisionism. This problem is raised because revisionism, which was created under circumstances in the world following World War II, has given rise to many great, difficult, and complex questions which have not been settled. The forces of the socialist camp are superior to the imperialist forces. In the face of this balance of power, is there need to continue attacking imperialism or is it necessary, rather, to stop or step back? Imperialism possesses nuclear weapons as its means of war. It is plotting to bring horrible disasters on mankind. But are people throughout the world able to triumph over imperialism, or is mankind going to face the end of the world?

Socialist countries are in a position to enjoy national happiness and individual happiness. But what are their duties when the world revolution is not yet successful? Can they lastingly and steadily, while imperialism still exists, insure the fruits of the revolution in each country where the revolution has taken power? Revisionism has answered these questions in a completely negative manner. Because it is negative, rightist opportunism in revolutionary strategies gave birth to chauvinism and national selfishness, which were naturally followed by individualism. It is easy to understand that when a negative political line penetrates a person, it will create in him a negative psychology. And individualism is revived due to this negative psychology.

By its nature, revisionism rejects collectivism and is striving to shape a kind of individualism which will have a "doctrine." In order to serve its political line (few words indistinct) is to prepare a fertile ground in which it can germinate and grow. Preparing this group, revisionism does not use simple and (word indistinct) forms to stimulate individualism; rather it uses delicate, complex forms, such as general human character, abstract freedom, equality, fraternity, general peace and friendship, general friendship between men, general mutual understanding

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and confidence, general, comprehensive, and complete disarmament, and so forth. (Several words indistinct) the clear reflection of individualism in revisionism is that all matters in the world can be completely settled by a few great countries and that in each country only one person is needed to settle all problems satisfactorily.

Therefore, we can understand that this kind of individualism is fathered by revisionism and that individualism of any style can become an inevitable ally of revisionism is (few words indistinct) and lacks vigilance. Revisionism is striving to look for ideological allies in order to advance toward the formation of organizational allies. This fact is not mysterious or incomprehensible at all, because it is a law of action of revisionism, old and new.

We are now building socialism North Vietnam and are struggling to triumph completely over imperialism and other reactionary doctrines and achieve complete success for socialism. Theoretically and practically, we can assert that in the last analysis, individualism is the companion of capitalism, while collectivism is the companion of socialism, because individualism is dependent on the bourgeois ideological system and collectivism influences our minds and actions, it will benefit socialism.

Our people's democratic dictatorship is carrying out the historic task of proletarian dictatorship. Proletarian dictatorship means continuance of the struggle (several words indistinct). ~~Failure to struggle resolutely against the enemies will make it impossible for us to maintain the fruits of the revolution.~~ Failure to carry out an internal struggle will prevent the revolution from developing. Therefore, for the time being, we must not relax our vigilance against the enemies. At the same time, we must settle satisfactorily the contradictions within the party and among our cadres--contradictions between individualism and collectivism. These contradictions are not created by anyone, nor do they fall from heaven. They represent an objective reality reflecting the struggle between the two lines in North Vietnam, where we are now living.

The existence of individualism among us has been caused by the past regimes and by small, individual production (few words indistinct). Its ordinary, principal manifestations are concern for personal interests, eagerness to hold high position and achieve fame, lack of a sense of organization and discipline, liberal thoughts, failure to adopt class character and party character, tendency to seek personal happiness and tranquility, and so forth.

All these manifestations are as extremely incompatible with socialism as water is with fire. In other words, in the face of the direct demands for building socialism and for struggling for national unification, individualism is an obstacle to the progress of socialism. In a certain place, at a certain moment with and without vigilance, it even sabotages each phase of socialist construction. Here are some examples:

A comrade director of a cooperative, prompted by his concern for personal interests and desiring to plant secondary crops of his own in order to consume them or sell them on the free market for profits, approves the proposal of a number of other backward cooperative members for distributing land among them for individual cultivation. The result will be that the economy of the cooperative will slump and the cooperative itself will disintegrate as a result of the withdrawal of members from it. A writer eager for individual freedom disregards (few words indistinct). He writes whatever he pleases. The result will be that his works will spoil the minds of his readers. A worker who does not comply with labor discipline will cause the engines of the state to be seriously damaged. A cadre who always considers pros and cons concerning position and fame will lose solidarity with others. His work will therefore be affected, wasting time and wealth. But he is not sorry for this loss, contending that time and wealth belong to "heaven and earth and anybody else," and not to him! A revolutionary combatant used to peace and security will not be able to fulfill his tasks when faced with difficulties and hardships in fighting.

Do not these manifestations harm the revolution? They are simply consequences of the individualism which we must overcome. But as modern revisionism is doing harm (several words indistinct). We must pay greater attention to overcoming it. Otherwise, it will be a base from which modern revisionism can infiltrate and harm (several words indistinct). These manifestations will prompt cadres to be embarrassed in carrying out the revolutionary line, to be negative in their struggle, and to have the tendency to demand that the party's policies in all problems be revised. For example, a comrade, because of his desire to live a luxurious life, thinks that life is replete only with difficulties. He does not see the progress, a fact which may prompt him to demand the revision of our party's industrialization and agricultural cooperativization lines. Some comrades, because of their desire to seek peace and security and of their weak combat spirit, may (approve?) the viewpoints on war and peace of modern revisionism. However, it is not necessarily true that all persons entertaining individualistic thoughts have revisionist thoughts or are not to be determined to oppose revisionism.

Therefore, the aim of our opposition to individualism is not only to build collectivism in order to fulfill our revolutionary socialist tasks in North Vietnam and struggle for national unification, but also to counter modern revisionism in order to protect the purity of Marxism-Leninism. The realities of our ideological work in the struggle between collectivism and individualism in our party in the past permit us to draw the following conclusions:

1--Collectivism is one of the important factors in helping us score great achievements in our socialist reforms and construction in our struggle for national unification.

2--The struggle between collectivism and individualism is one of the important factors in the advance of our socialist revolution.

3--The struggle between collectivism and individualism is an important part of the struggle between the proletarian ideology and the nonproletarian ideology. In places where collectivism gets the better of individualism, tasks are satisfactorily carried out; in places where individualism gets the better of collectivism, tasks are not satisfactorily carried out and there are misappropriations, waste, and a tendency to care for personal interests. In places where people dare to reveal contradictions and are resolute in their struggle, collectivism prevails; in places where people conceal contradictions and lack the spirit of struggle, individualism prevails or (few words indistinct).

4--Generally speaking, at present among our cadres, the direct struggle to choose this or that regime and this or that path often and basically fails to give rise to problems for discussion except for one problem to which great attention must be paid in order to overcome it--individualism.

5--Trained in the realities of struggle and continually educated by the party, we have gradually overcome individualism. Continually educated by the party and given socialist production methods as support, we possess at present more favorable conditions for continuing the struggle to overcome individualism. But under the present peaceful circumstances and because of the advent of revisionism, our struggle against individualism is encountering some new complexities. Therefore, the struggle between collectivism and individualism is a rather protracted and complex struggle. (Several words indistinct) vigilant against a kind of individualism temporarily called "political individualism," which is a kind of opportunism because it can collaborate with revisionism and other kinds of opportunism.

Therefore, the struggle against individualism is a class struggle involving forms and consciousness and is an important content of our present ideological revolution. The struggle against individualism aims at achieving success for collectivism and socialism and, at the same time, at achieving success for the struggle against revisionism

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through curative and preventive methods in order to protect the purity of Marxism-Leninism. This is like killing two birds with one stone. This, we think, is the significance and character of our present struggle against individualism.

In our ideological work we must develop collectivism and wage an offensive on the individualism still existing among our cadres. Because individualism is one of the causes of the rightist tendency, it is (a factor?) that weakens our combat capabilities and our creativeness in carrying out our revolutionary tasks in our country and in the world. Our experiences in struggling to overcome individualism indicate that we must examine and settle this problem effectively, lastingly, and comprehensively. We must carry out the following practical tasks:

1--We must study Marxist-Leninist dialectics. Particularly, we must hold firm to the doctrine of class struggle, proletarian revolution, and proletarian dictatorship, thereby making it possible for us to improve our class standpoints and viewpoints. This is a basic task because whether our thoughts are good or bad is influenced by this task, just as the nature of our thoughts influences the way we do the task. This is also basic for the political line of our party and for the strategies and tactics of the international communist movement which we are implementing.

2--We must improve our communist philosophy of life in order to have a noble combat level. This ideal will be a "magic broom" with which to sweep away all our vile, mean, and individualistic thoughts and acts. This ideal will forge a revolutionary heroism in us so that we will dare to engage in fighting to defeat the enemies with an indomitable spirit and dare to participate in labor production with extreme enthusiasm in order to triumph over nature and step up the increase in (labor?) output.

3--We must build for ourselves a way of life full of pure, lively, and healthy socialist moralist morality; we must carry out the slogan "one for all;" and we must hate the debauched way of life of the bourgeois class.

4--We must improve seriously our sense of organization and discipline and we must oppose anarchism. This is a revolutionary demand of any revolution, especially a socialist revolution.

5--We must train ourselves in order to adopt simple manners and attitudes-- that is, to live close to the masses in accordance with the spirit of sharing all hardships with the masses. We must oppose bad practices, such as bureaucracy, contempt for the masses, haughtiness, and so forth.

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Individualism is doing us harm. On the other hand, collectivism has won successes and will achieve still greater success in the struggle now taking place in our party. Modern revisionism is playing a "double game" against the international communist movement through several methods. One very wicked and cunning method is the propagation and stimulation of bourgeois and petty bourgeois individualism in order to be able to "fish in troubled water." Revisionism is like a cloud cluster that temporarily covers some corners of the heaven of the world revolution. In contrast, Marxism-Leninism is like spring sunrays that will dispel this dark cloud cluster so that tomorrow the sky will glow again.