NGUYEN CHI THanh ON IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

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I. WE MUST STUDY, SUPPORT, AND DEVELOP WHAT IS NEW

In the light of the resolutions of the Third National Congress of the Party, the Third Session of the Party Central Committee analyzed the present situation in North Vietnam and set forth the nature of the responsibilities in regard to the 1961 state plan. The Central Committee Conference paid special attention to new developments of this situation, to new factors which are arising, and to requirements created by new changes in production relations and resulting from the period of economic restoration and building and cultural development.

The Party Central Committee also ordered that the entire Party adopt a new leading ideology which reflects the general requirements of our new society, and use this new ideology in order to understand and solve all problems in accordance with the requirements of the present concrete and objective situation in North Vietnam.

Thus, studying, supporting, and developing new things is becoming the hottest and most important problem to be solved by the Party and the government. It involves an understanding of the nature of Party policies and lines, a study and settlement of daily problems, and a thorough understanding by each cadre and Party member of the slogan "quick, strong, and firm advance toward socialism."

Why do we need a new leading ideology? North Vietnam has now basically and successfully completed four socialist transformations--of agriculture, handicrafts, small trade, and capitalist trade and industry. Old production relations have been destroyed and new socialist production relations have taken shape. This has completely changed northern society and, at the same time, set forth the new requirements and problems which we must study and solve.

This living reality has been and is being reflected on our Party and has set forth an urgent requirement: to make our views suitable to the objective situation and to intelligently apply the regulations on social development in order to construct socialism in North Vietnam and, especially, to fulfill and overfulfill the first five-year plan. That is why one of the main requirements of this year's re-education campaign is to help all Party members discern, study, support, and develop new things. This is an ideological struggle inside the Party destined to help Party members understand the situation, unify views and actions, fulfill tasks actively, consolidate and strengthen internal unity, respect principles, and develop initiative and creative spirit to the maximum through study, criticism, and self-criticism.

What are the main content and nature of these new things? The resolutions of the Third Conference of the Party Central Committee dealt with fundamental points of this problem. I am going to give you some concrete examples:

- 1 -
With the resolutions of the Conference of the Central Committee in Hanoi, we visited Dai Phong cooperative to recapitulate the experiences yielded by its construction. One of our objectives was to try to understand new conditions brought about by the changed situation. And we noted the following facts:

Once a cooperative is enlarged to the township scale, new factors and conditions begin to appear. Laborers are assembled into a large force; capital, land, cattle, tools, and so forth, are also concentrated, and the unity and struggling spirit of cooperative members receives a new impetus.

Thanks to these new factors, the cooperative had conditions to fulfill the following tasks: clearing hundreds of mau of new land, building dams, increasing crops on hundreds of mau, raising the average per-capita acreage from three sao to seven sao, developing and managing 19 side occupations, and raising the average yearly number of working days performed by a laborer from 180 to 240. Each working day yields 10 points, and is valued at from 1.6 to 2.1 dong.

Production development has raised the income of cooperative members and improved their living standards.

On the other hand, the above situation has produced a series of new problems which the Party and the state must solve. For instance:

1. Because of the increase in cultivated areas and the development of side occupations, cooperatives will have to improve techniques, or cooperative members will have to work too hard and cooperatives will be unable to progress. Will No. 51 plows and treads be able to satisfy the requirements of increased production or will pumps be needed? Will paddy threshing with feet be outmoded and will threshing machines be needed? In the next five years, how will industry serve agriculture to satisfy the requirements of the new situation?

2. Cooperatives must be self-supporting. But when the enlargement of cooperatives requires large capital to produce seeds, agricultural implements, basic construction, etc., how will the problems of bank loans and supply of goods and materials by trade have to be solved in order to develop production?

3. How will the problems of managerial and technical cadres in large-scale cooperatives be solved to meet the needs for developing collective cultivation and animal husbandry?

4. Almost all peasants have now joined cooperatives. How must the Party mass policy be applied to be consistent with the new situation?

5. With the cooperative movement to clear new land developing in the middle region, how must we organize production, create new villages, and organize society, culture, and markets in the new villages?

6. In the past, the state bought agricultural products from individual peasants and cooperatives. Now, since almost all the peasants have joined cooperatives, how must the problem of buying and collecting agricultural products be solved suitably? What will be the correct attitude of agricultural cooperative members toward the state?
After studying the situation of only one cooperative, we do not have sufficient information to outline and analyze all of the above problems systematically. But it is clear that the new situation has set forth many problems which must be solved in a new spirit. Thus, in our present leading ideology, a basic problem consists of keeping a firm hand on the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism regarding the transitional period and, at the same time, entering deeply into the practical situation of our country. If we detach ourselves from this practical situation, we will fall into conservatism and dogmatism and will obstruct the progress of the movement and the revolution.

How must we look at the situation in order to see the new problems clearly and in time? A Party resolution is a manifestation of the ideological views and methods of Marxism-Leninism. Thus, we cadres and Party members must have these scientific views and methods in order to fully understand the spirit of Party resolutions, clearly see the practical situation, and enforce Party resolutions correctly and creatively.

Ideological methods are, plainly speaking, methods of looking at things. Ideological methods are closely connected with ideological viewpoints, that is, with the matter of for whom, and for which class we are struggling. Ideological viewpoints are the roots and the platform on which we stand to look at problems in order to solve them correctly. Following are some of my views on the methods for such observation:

To reveal the situation accurately and penetratingly, we must have a certain minimum knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and a relatively profound practical knowledge—especially in regard to the realities of productive labor. Having practice, but no theory, we will be unable to recapitulate the situation or determine the direction to take to escape the deadlocks of this situation. Thus, in carrying out our tasks, we will sometimes unwittingly make lasting mistakes which can become increasingly serious. When we do not, we will be unable to develop our achievements. Intentionally or unintentionally, we will surely fall into experimentalism, if we have no theory.

Conversely, theoretical knowledge alone, without practice, will only make "unqualified" men who stand aloof from the realities of life and who, in carrying out tasks, set forth general and "unalterable principles" which prove unprofitable to the execution of tasks and can even involve other persons in trouble.

Of course, persons conversant with theory and neglectful of practice will, willy-nilly, fall into dogmatism.

Thus, one of our present and most urgent tasks consists of keeping a firm hand on dialectical materialist methods in order to correctly study problems raised by life.

At the same time, we must enter deeply into the productive labor of the masses because this labor is our politico-economic and philosophical university; in the process of productive labor, workers and peasants who are cooperative members face many contradictions and—
through trying to remove these contradictions—carry out the struggle between the old and the new in a lively manner.

For instance: The enlargement of Dai Phong cooperative to the township scale brought up the problems of clearing new land and of the duty of Party Chi So to lead this task. Why was the problem of clearing new land raised?

In our rural areas, manpower was in excess while jobs were scarce and the average per capita acreage was three sao. The clearing of new land is designed to remove this contradiction. In the past, when peasants worked individually, the problem of clearing new land—even if raised—could not be solved. Cooperatives composed of scores of families cannot engage in land clearing. Only when enlarged to the township scale, do cooperatives have the necessary conditions in manpower and capital to engage in land clearing in order to increase the average per capita acreage, exhaustively utilize excess manpower in rural areas, and raise the living standards of cooperative members.

The clearing of new land removes a series of contradictions in the path of advancing northern rural areas to a new stage. But while land clearing is being carried out, a series of new problems are immediately raised and require solution. For instance, only 20 buffaloes, do not have enough pulling power to clear and fertilize 200 mau. Moreover, there is also the problem of capital needed to buy seeds, farming tools, and so forth.

Dai Phong cooperative had to solve several problems concurrently in order to be able to increase the average per capita acreage from three to seven sao. Its primary plan—using excess manpower to clear land 20 km. west of the cooperative—was rational. But its execution gave rise to an irrational problem—two production centers for one cooperative—which had to be solved by mobilizing a number of families to resettle near the place where land was newly cleared. This move was more rational. But in turn, it raised a series of other problems—such as redistribution of manpower, reorganization of the cooperative, creation of new villages, etc.

In the past, when peasants worked individually, Dai Phong township had some hundreds of yards for drying paddy. Now, as the cooperative is enlarged and includes 14 production teams, the plan to build 14 yards is rational. But in a few years, these 14 production teams will be condensed into 7 to satisfy the requirements of production development. Then, seven and not 14 yards will be needed. Thus, the rational move is to plan for seven yards. If not, there will be waste.

From these facts, we can draw a number of views concerning the application of the ideological methods of Marxism-Leninism to the study of such problems as cooperativization and agricultural production in our country. For instance:

1. If we do not base ourselves on the concept of development in studying facts, we will in solving problems concerning labor distribution, using capital for basic construction, and drawing up production plans—meet with encumbrances, a lack of coordination and equilibrium.
and serious waste. This will hamper the consolidation and development of agricultural cooperatives and the development of agricultural production.

2. The process of productive labor is the process of the struggle to remove complicated contradictions among men and between man and nature. Thus, a good production leader must be quick-witted and must reveal and remove contradictions in the process of production development. If not, production will not develop. To remove production contradictions is to rationalize labor and production in order to produce more riches.

3. Only after entering deeply into the realities of productive labor and this contradiction-filled movement can we understand the nature of things, clearly see the trend of the development of the production movement of the masses, and consequently see far ahead and take the initiative in order to make the movement progress strongly.

4. A situation develops in line with the results of the struggle between various factors. Each situation involves many interrelated problems which must not be isolated from each other, but must be studied as a whole.

Understanding the new leading ideology brought about by the developing situation has an extremely important significance. For the time being, to understand the leading ideology is to see clearly the new factors which are flourishing in North Vietnam after the basic completion of socialist transformation.

After detecting these new factors, we must immediately improve them and turn them into typical cases so that everyone can detect them easily, support them, and help them grow and develop strongly and widely. In so doing, we step up the disintegration of old things, the improvement of the present situation, and—if one considers the future—the transformation of our backward agricultural country into a country having a modern industry and agriculture and a progressive culture and science.

We clearly realize that the active character of our Party plays an important role in developing the superiority of new production relations. This character is manifested in the firm hold which is kept on the social development law and the enlightened way in which this law is enforced by continuously revealing and improving new factors brought about by social development and transforming these factors from isolated and imperfect events into universal and increasingly perfect events which can completely replace the old things.

North Vietnam now regards socialist construction as its central task. This means that though the class struggle in North Vietnam is still being carried out in a certain sphere, the struggle between laboring people and nature to eliminate poverty and economic and cultural backwardness has become extremely important. We need more suitable and versatile new directions and methods to solve a number of political, economic, and cultural problems in order to continuously improve new production relations, develop the eagerness and creative spirit of
workers, agricultural cooperative members, and revolutionary intellectuals to the maximum, and help North Vietnam advance to socialism rapidly, strongly, and firmly.

These are the problems which we must study in order to satisfactorily enforce the resolutions of the Third National Congress of the Party which are the compass for all our actions and thoughts.