

Building the Communist Party of Vietnam in Terms of Politics and Ideology in Vietnam's Current Conditions

Ta Ngoc Tan

Prof. Ph.D, the Central Theoretical Council

Email: tangoctan54@gmail.com

Received 25 October 2019; published 25 April 2020

Abstract: *The paper focuses on clarifying the content of building the Communist Party of Vietnam in terms of politics and ideology in three major issues: (1) Building and implementing revolutionary orientation; (2) Researching and summarizing practice, creatively applying theories; (3) Innovating contents and methods to improve the quality and effectiveness of ideological guidance.*

Keywords: Party Building, Politics, Ideology, Ideological Guidance, Theory, Summarizing Practice, Communist Party of Vietnam

Introduction

After 30 years of implementing the renovation policy under the Communist Party of Vietnam's (CPV) leadership, the cause of national construction and development in Vietnam has gained great achievements of historic significance; "the country's position, force, and aggregate strength are raised, international prestige enhanced". People's material and mental life is considerably improved. Vietnam, from a poor, backward, and war-torn country, has revived and renewed, increasingly becoming more prosperous. In terms of economy, economic growth model is shifting from with to depth, advancing a knowledge economy, and deepening its international integration. Big and good

opportunities are opened for the country's development, for the goal of rich people in a powerful, democratic, just and civilized country.

However, Vietnam is still facing several difficulties and challenges. The country's economy is not developing sustainably, labor productivity and competitiveness remain low. Many problems in organizing and operating the Party and State apparatus have not been thoroughly overcome. Some negative social phenomena are considerably affecting enforceability and effectiveness of the State's leadership and management as well as people's confidence. On the other hand, the overall situation in the world and the region is quickly changing in a complex and unpredictable

manner. Such global issues as energy security, cyber-security, natural disasters, epidemics, and terrorism are increasingly complex. Extremist nationalism, populism, trade competition, struggle for resources, disputes over territories, sea waters and islands among countries, and many non-traditional security issues are becoming increasingly severe.

In this context, the Party building in terms of politics and ideology becomes a very important and vital task for not only party organizations but also the country, the regime, and the cause of firmly protecting the Fatherland.

I. Designing and successfully organizing the implementation of revolutionary lines are the central issue of the Party building in terms of politics and ideology

Based on revolutionary realities in Vietnam, the *Platform on national construction in the transition to socialism* (Platform 1991, supplemented and updated in 2011) points out the first great experience: firmly holding the flag of national independence and socialism... National independence is the foremost condition to build socialism and socialism, in its turn, is the foundation to guarantee national independence. This is also the goal of the entire revolutionary cause led by the CPV and the decisive foundation for building the Party and organizing the implementation of guidelines in various revolutionary stages.

1. Consistently realizing the goal of national independence and socialism, creatively applying and developing Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts in designing revolutionary lines

National independence and socialism are consistent and firm goals, and also the

common, unified, and most important guideline of the CPV right from its dawn. On this common guideline, the CPV has creatively applied and continuously developed Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts suitable to situations and the socio-historical context in each period; inherited and brought into play the nation's fine cultural values; selectively acquired quintessence of the culture of mankind, properly learned and applied international experience to put forth sound guidelines and policies, leading the revolution in Vietnam from victory to victory.

New lines set by the 6th CPV Congress (1986) are a typical expression of the Party's steadfast stance on revolutionary goals and creativity in theoretical understanding and development. Overcoming preconceptions and stereotypes in the contemporary cognition on socialism, for the first time, the CPV decided to develop a multi-sector economy of good production, expand business conditions, and attract foreign investment capital. The renovation policy opened a period of the country's fast development, bringing about considerable achievements of historic significance, substantially improving people's life, strengthening the regime, and consolidating the Fatherland's defense capabilities.

Nowadays, under new conditions when the model of realistic socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe already failed, the scientific and technological revolution in the field of information technology, the globalization and non-traditional security issues are posing for mankind both difficulties and advantages, opportunities and challenges, greatly affecting each and every nation. Countries with different

political regimes and development levels co-exist, cooperate and severely compete each other for the sake of their own national interests. In that context, the CPV confidently confirms: According to the evolutionary rule of history, mankind will be bound to advance to socialism. Vietnam's model of socialism¹ is the crystallization of experience accumulated during the process of revolution, reflecting a consistent stance on building socialism and the creative development of Marxism-Leninism in the country's specific conditions. This is also a result of the Party's new theoretical perceptions based on experience and lessons learned from other models of realistic socialism throughout the world, as well as from characteristics of the present epoch. To successfully build socialism and realize the goal of rich people, powerful country, democracy, justice and civilization, the CPV identifies fundamental orientations for national construction and development based on four main pillars: i) Party building is the key; ii) Socio-economic development

is the central; iii) Cultural and human development is the mental foundation and motive for socio-economic development; iv) Strengthening defense and security capabilities is essential and regular. At the same time, in implementing that line, it is necessary to place importance on firmly grasping and properly resolving a series of big relations, including those between economic and political renovation, between complying with market rules and maintaining socialist orientations, between the Party's leadership, the State's management, and people's mastery.

2. Leading the construction of political and institutional systems to guarantee the consistency and successful realization of the Party's revolutionary lines

Firstly, building the Party organizational apparatus and political system. The organization of political system over the past years has seen many renovations in terms of cognition, and it has been increasingly improved, securing the Party leadership and promoting people's mastery, significantly contributing to the cause of building and protecting the Fatherland. However, in the face of requirements and tasks in the new era, the organization and apparatus of the Party, the State, and mass organizations expose many weaknesses because the country's socio-economic conditions have considerably changed and revolutionary requirements in the time to come also raise many new and complicated issues.

The Resolution of the 6th Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee determines that the construction and perfection of the country's political system in the coming period will focus on two targets. *First*, "to continue renewing and rearranging the

¹ The Communist Party of Vietnam defines: the model of socialism that Vietnamese people is building is a society with eight characteristics: i) Rich people, powerful country, democracy, justice and civilization; ii) People are the master; iii) Having a high developed economy based on modern production forces and progressive production relations; iv) Having a progressive culture imbued with national identities; v) People have a free, prosperous and happy life as well as conditions for their comprehensive development; vi) Ethnic groups in the Vietnamese community are equal, unite, respect and help each other for their co-development; vii) Having a law-ruled socialist State of people, by people and for people under the CPV's leadership; viii) Having friendly and cooperative relations with other countries in the world (See: The Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006: 68).

organization and apparatus of the political system so that the system is streamlined and operates effectively in line with the socialist-orientated market economic mechanism to enhance the Party leadership; improve efficiency and effectiveness of the State management as well as the quality of the performances of the Fatherland and socio-political organizations; promote people's mastery". *Second*, "to streamline workforce in combination with restructuring and raising quality, effectively using the contingent of cadres and civil servants; reduce regular expenditure and contribute to the reform of wage policy" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2017: 45-46).

The tasks and solutions to perfect the organization and apparatus of the political system focus on the following issues: Persisting with the principle that the Party leads the building of the organization and apparatus of the political system; Considering to set up and realize an overall model which can meet requirements in new conditions; Reviewing and renewing content, mode of operation and the operating mechanism of the political system; Conducting administrative reforms and technological innovations as well as renewing the regular expenditure budget allocation; Enhancing ideological education to create a social consensus in renovating the organization and apparatus of the political system.

Secondly, building and continuously perfecting the institutional system for development, in which the political regime is the center. This is the renovation, perfection, and conditions to guarantee the actual enforcement of the system of legal regulations, regimes of operation

and policies which ensure the country's political and economic systems operating smoothly and effectively in line with principles, requirements, and purposes set out, bringing into play the preeminence of the regime, and minimizing negative effects and happenings arising out of control. A good institution for development means to properly deal with the interrelation between political and economic renovation.

Thirdly, setting up and realizing the strategy on cadres. "Cadres are the Party's fundamental work", therefore setting up strategies, properly training, nurturing, educating, using, and managing the contingent of Party cadres and officials of the political system are the topmost and vital political issues of the Party and the regime. As President once pointed out: "All successes and failures are due to good or unqualifiable cadres", or "cadres are the root of all matters", therefore "training cadres is the Party's fundamental work" (*Ho Chi Minh, Complete Work*, Volume 5, 2011: 280-309).

To achieve targets¹ set out in the Resolution of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Party Central

¹ "To focus on building the contingent of cadres of all echelons, especially strategic cadres, who have all qualifications, capabilities and prestige to fulfill missions, with a sufficient quantity, good quality and proper structure in line with the strategy on socio-economic development and national protection; to ensure an uninterrupted and steady continuity between generations and the capacity of leading the country and fulfilling the goals of rich people, powerful country, democracy, justice, civilization, greater prosperity and happiness" (See: *Resolution of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee on nurturing cadres at all echelons*, <http://tapchithongtindoingoi.vn/thoi-su-chinh-tri/nghi-quyet-hoi-nghi-tw-7-khoa-xii-ve-xay-dung-doi-ngu-can-bo-16291>).

Committee on building the contingent of cadres of all echelons, in the time to come, the cadre work should concentrate on taking measures to improve awareness of cadres, renewing content and methods of training and nurturing cadres in terms of ethics and lifestyle; innovating management mechanisms and policies on use and remuneration; raising quality and working capacity of cadres to meet requirements of the cause of national construction and development in the coming time. The focus of those above resolutions are: “(1) To further strongly renovate the personnel work in a comprehensive, synchronous and effective manner; standardize and tighten rules while creating good conditions to boost renovations and creations for development and having mechanisms to protect officials who dare to think, do, make breakthroughs, and take responsibility for common interests; (2) To focus on building the contingent of strategic cadres, party secretaries, and chiefs at all levels in association with duty allocation and decentralization to promote initiative and creativity while enhancing inspection, supervision, and tight control of power” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2018: 79).

3. Leading the formulation and organization of the implementation of laws and socio-economic development policies, and successful realization of the Party's revolutionary lines

The Platform on national construction in the transition to socialism is the foundation for the CPV to lead the concretization of its general lines, design and organize the implementation of policies on developing various aspects of politics, economy,

culture, society, national defense, security, and foreign affairs, and deal with issues arising in the process of development. The leadership in designing and organizing the successful realization of socio-economic development policies is an important affair and also the most concentrated and clearest expression of quality and efficiency of the Party building work. Accordingly, (i) the Party leads the concretization of its guidelines into the State's managerial policies and decisions; (ii) the Party leads and organizes the realization of its lines and the State's policies and laws; (iii) the Party leads the inspection and supervision of the realization of its guidelines and the State's policies and laws.

II. Renewing thought and improving quality of theoretical research and reality summarization, proactively contributing to designing the Party's guidelines and the State's policies

1. Renewing Party officers' theoretical awareness, especially strategic cadres

The renewal of cognitions of theoretical work should be done for, first of all, *the contingent of leaders and managers, especially strategic officials, chiefs of Party and State agencies*. Party cadres' theoretical cognitions firstly show in their understanding of role, position, importance, and nature of the theoretical work in building and developing the country. President Ho Chi Minh once stressed that: “Cadres of the Party must have a sound understanding of revolutionary theories, and theory must always go together with practice” (*Ho Chi Minh, Complete Work*, Volume 5, 2011: 289). This is the decisive condition not only for a positive environment for theoretical

development but more importantly, for two big aims. *The first aim is that*, on their sound cognitions of the theoretical word, the Party's strategic cadres will become more aware of learning, researching, and improving their systematic understanding of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts, together with modern Marxist theoretical achievements. In its turn, that is the foundation to consolidate cadres' confidence, ideal and political consciousness. *The second aim* is to help strategic officials to pay proper attention to organizing theoretical research, summarizing realities, receiving and applying new theoretical achievements to the cause of renovation, national construction, and development.

2. Renovating content and methods while improving the quality of theoretical research and reality summarization

In terms of content, it is necessary to soundly combine five research orientations. (1) To continue in-depth researches on Marxism-Leninism, confirming good values, core methodological issues, and overcome historical issues; (2) To expand researches, selectively acquire theoretical achievements of mankind, lessons of success and failure of the workers' movement, the communist movement, and the realistic socialism as well as other theoretical results, under the motto of making the best use of positive values of humankind for the sake of national interests and the goal of socialist construction; (3) To further research Ho Chi Minh Thoughts, clarify and spread broadly among cadres, Party members and people His great values of creativity in applying Marxism-Leninism in Vietnam's specific historical conditions; (4) To continue promoting research

activities in association with summarizing the reality, especially good models and experience in solving big relations, to update and clarify newly-arising issues in reality, to discover and timely criticize the policies which are no longer proper; (5) To conduct theoretical research and reality summarization, to continue clarifying the model of socialism in Vietnam, to explain and make clear practical issues of national construction and development, to build up scientific foundations and actualities for designing guidelines and policies of the Party and the State.

To effectively implement the above five orientations, it is important to renew theoretical thinking and methods of real research and summarization while applying modern methods and approaches. Particularly, "the Party's agencies of leadership from central to grassroots levels" should "innovate their methods and styles of working" as required by the 12th Party Congress - "scientific, collective, democratic, close to the people, respecting the people, for the people, sticking to the reality, and words match with actions" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016: 51). Those methods and styles are very essential for the Party's leadership and direction in general and, at the same time, necessary conditions for renewing content and methods of theoretical research and development in particular.

3. Innovating the organizational system of research agencies and nurturing/using the contingent of theorists and specialists

The 12th Party Congress pointed out: "To renew the model of organization and the mode of operation, improve quality and efficiency of the Party's theoretical

research agencies; soundly invest in building and nurturing theoretical officials, especially leading experts” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016: 201). In reality, the organizational model of the Party’s theoretical research agencies have been formed during the process of renovation and remained unchanged so far, the system’s operational mechanism has experienced some certain changes but there are still unclear problems, especially operational mechanism, assignment of responsibilities, conditions for carrying out political duties, and the relationship between research agencies throughout the country. Theoretical research and development are still independent of policy advisory activities. Therefore, it is urgent to renovate the organizational model and operational mode of theoretical research and development agencies in line with the spirit of the 12th Party Congress.

It is necessary to synchronously renovate the building and using of the contingent of theoretical officials and experts, from the initial training, training, and nurturing of experts to the usage and remuneration for theoretical researchers, especially leading ones. It also needs to have policies to attract talents to training and research disciplines of political theory through proper remuneration policies and other preferential treatments. For leading experts, it is necessary to design consistent policies on usage and appropriate remuneration, encouraging researching achievements. It is necessary to have policies on soundly using and exploiting theoretical officials and experts who are beyond the working age but still have good health and capacity.

4. Renewing mechanisms, policies, and regulations on theoretical work

It is necessary to renew policies on financial investment, technical foundations, and working conditions for theoretical research. The financial management of theoretical research activities must be shifted to the mode of ordering and doing payment by research results, resolutely cutting out complicated and unnecessary administrative phases and procedures. Research results must be used. It requires a general direction and evaluation in the whole system to avoid the overlap of topics that can lead to the waste of investment resources.

III. Renovating content and methods, improving the effectiveness of ideological work, creating a unity of political awareness in the whole Party and people

1. Requirements and tasks of ideological work in the time to come

The purpose of ideological work is to create a *unity in political awareness among Party cadres and members as well as social consensus* on the regime’s ideological foundations, the Party’s guidelines, and the State’s policies and laws. This is a fundamental condition to gather forces and bring into play the whole nation’s great solidarity, mobilizing the country’s human and physical strengths while making full use of all outside opportunities and favorable conditions to fulfill the revolution’s political goals (See: Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016: 200).

To achieve the set goals and meet new requirements and tasks, the Party’s ideological work in the current context must fulfill the following duties: To educate political theory and build up a

positive worldview and revolutionary ideal for Party cadres and members; to educate and guide political and ideological awareness for people; to educate and nurture modern Vietnamese people while building humanistic and modern culture, ethics and lifestyle in conformity with the nation's system of values; to build up a healthy social environment as the foundations for human development. To mobilize and use properly and effectively all kinds of means and forces in the society in conducting duties of the ideological work. To pay attention to social networks, modern press, and media while taking advantage of the positive capabilities of types and modes of traditional media. The implementation of tasks of the ideological work must be associated with that of socio-economic development, protection of the Fatherland, social security, and foreign affairs¹.

2. Content and solutions for Party building in terms of ideological work

The Party's unity and the society's consensus on the basis of political and ideological orientations are the prerequisite to guarantee the victorious fulfillment of the Party's revolutionary lines, at the same time the top and vital goal of the Party's ideological work in particular and the Party building in general. It is necessary to renew the awareness of the role, position, and importance of the ideological and theoretical work, really considering it a *field of special significance*. On that basis,

the ideological work must be defined as the responsibility of the whole Party, the State, each and every Party committee, government organs, each and every cadre, and Party member, especially strategic officials. The work of Party building in terms of ideology must be carried out through a series of activities of the Party and the political system.

Firstly, the Party places importance on the theoretical work, considering the building and creative development of the theoretical system and the timely settlement of theoretical issues arising in the reality its first and foremost important task. While further researching Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts in the new context, the CPV pays attention to reviewing realities, drawing new theoretical issues, discovering inappropriate theoretical issues for renewal.

Secondly, the political and ideological education for cadres and Party members, especially leaders and managers, must be regularly taken care of and continuously renovated in terms of content and method, with updates of current issues. Political and ideological education is carried out through various channels and means, with different forms and methods, from schools, news, oral propaganda, activities of Party and mass organizations, to mass media, newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet, to create an aggregate effectiveness. This is the knowledge foundation to consolidate cadres and people's voluntary confidence in the regime's good goals.

Thirdly, to continuously raise people's intellectual standards and comprehensively improve their physical and spiritual life

¹ See also: *Communique of the 3rd Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee*, <http://hanoimoi.com.vn/tin-tuc/Chinh-tri/840052/thong-bao-hoi-nghi-lan-thu-ba-ban-chap-hanh-trung-uong-dang-khoa-xii>.

so that each and every person can enjoy adequately achievements of the revolution and the national construction and development. This must be a fundamental content in the Party's entire performance, clearly reflecting the man-centered policy which considers people as a goal and also a driving force of the revolution.

Fourthly, to educate and cultivate the contingent of Party cadres and members in terms of morality, working manner, positive lifestyle, and a for-the-people spirit. To set examples for people in the spirit of "Party members come first, followed by the masses", especially among strategic officials, leaders, and managers at all echelons, chiefs of Party agencies and organizations of the Party, and in the political system. The fruitful implementation of this work will create a strong persuasion of the Party in the society, demonstrating the Party's nature as well as the noble ideal that the Party strives for: "Apart from the nation's interests, the Party has no other ones".

Fifthly, to study, sum up, and broadly spread the system of cultural values and standards of Vietnamese people in the new period. At the same time, to synchronously conduct the struggle to fight back all tones of misrepresentation against the Party, the State, and the regime. To expand the scope and enhance the efficiency of external information.

Sixthly, to consolidate the contingent of cadres, physical and technical facilities for the ideological work towards modernity to meet requirements of international integration. To improve the quality of the training, nurturing, and remuneration of ideological officials.

3. Content and solutions on media

To strengthen the leadership, management, and development of the system of press and media to bring into full play the role of the press and media in information, propaganda, and fulfillment of ideological tasks, minimizing negative impacts. To place importance on discovering and honoring new factors and typical examples while actively fighting against corruption, prodigality, and social evils. To continuously improve ideological quality and attractiveness, consolidating physical and technical facilities for the press system. To renovate and strengthen the Party's leadership and raise the effectiveness of the State management over journalism and communication activities. To pay attention to the Party building, highlight responsibilities of cadres and Party members in press agencies. To effectively orientate information, provide materials to the press, especially for important and sensitive issues and events. To review, adjust, and supplement the planning scheme for the development of the press and mass media, avoiding the overlap in terms of function.

To continue perfecting the system of laws and legal documents on journalism and communication, further clarifying authority, accountability, and the mechanism of cooperation between the Party's agencies of leadership, the State's managerial organs, professional associations, and each press-media agencies. To continue building and perfecting codes of professional ethics and educating officials to voluntarily obey them.

To renovate and improve the quality of training and nurturing political

qualifications, professional capabilities, professional ethics, foreign languages, and knowledge of international affairs for the contingent of journalists. To regularly review and evaluate the contingent of press managers; to strictly implement regulations and processes on appointment, dismissal, emulation, and discipline executive officials of press agencies. To design plans on training, fostering, and supplementing capable and qualified officials for the press system. To create favorable conditions in terms of facilities, materials, resources, and mechanisms for major press agencies to improve their quality and soundly orientate the public opinion.

To promote external information, well advertising images and distinctive cultural values of the country and people of Vietnam to peoples and friends throughout the world. To effectively guide people in acquiring positive and progressive cultural values of mankind; to be watchful over and criticize the import of negative cultural phenomena which are contrary to the nation's good customs and traditions as well as humanistic and progressive values of mankind.

4. Content and solutions for Party building in terms of morality and lifestyle

From the actualities, the 12th CPV Congress stressed the need of building the Party in terms of morality and lifestyle. Documents of the 12th Congress clearly defined: "To renovate the propaganda and education of politics, ideologies, morality, and lifestyle for cadres and Party members. To struggle, prevent and push back political, ideological, moral, and lifestyle recessions; to prevent and repel expressions of "self-change" and "self-conversion". To fight and defeat all

plots and activities of "peaceful evolution" of hostile forces; to proactively prevent and reject information and viewpoints of misrepresentation, incorrectness, hostility" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016: 200-201).

The education of culture, morality, healthy and responsible lifestyle among people, particularly cadres and Party members, is a fundamental task of special significance in the ideological work in the current context. This is also a duty to contribute to building new people and a contingent of steadfast and specialized cadres who are capable and qualified of leading people, organizing the implementation of tasks of national construction and development in the new period of a socialism-orientated market economy and international integration. It requires to consider and build up cultural and ethical standards of modern Vietnamese people in general and of Party cadres and members in particular, spreading and educating those standards so that they come into reality, becoming the lifestyle of each and every citizen, official and Party members. Means of ideological work must become the environment for monitoring morality and lifestyle of cadres and Party members, for uncompromisingly fighting against expressions of corruption, prodigality, loss of democracy, and recessions of politics, ideology, morality, and lifestyle among officials, Party members, and people.

At the same time, to raise vigilance and enhance combativeness, timely discover and reject plots and tones of hostile forces who misrepresent, slander, and sabotage the Party, the State, and the regime. To regularly be on alert and prevent dangers of

“self-change” and “self-conversion” right within people, especially in the contingent of cadres and Party members.

In short, building the Party in terms of politics and ideology is a vital issue which can decide the Party’s strength, leadership, and ruling capability. More than ever, in the current situations, the work of Party building in terms of politics and ideology needs to uphold the Party’s principles and requires attention and continuous renovation □

References

1. Communist Party of Vietnam (2006), *Documents of the 10th Party National Congress*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi.
2. Communist Party of Vietnam (2016), *Documents of the 12th Party National Congress*, Office of the Party Central Committee, Hanoi.
3. Communist Party of Vietnam (2017), *Documents of the 6th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee*, Office of the Party Central Committee, Hanoi.
4. Communist Party of Vietnam (2018), *Documents of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee*, Hanoi.
5. *Communique of the 3rd Plenum of the 12th Central Committee*, <http://hanoimoi.com.vn/tin-tuc/Chinh-tri/840052/thong-bao-hoi-nghi-lan-thu-ba-ban-chap-hanh-trung-uong-dang-khoa-xii>
6. *Ho Chi Minh, Complete Work*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011.
7. *Resolution of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee on nurturing a contingent of cadres at all echelons*, <http://tapchithongtindoingoai.vn/thoi-su-chinh-tri/nghi-quyet-hoi-nghi-tw-7-khoa-xii-ve-xay-dung-doi-ngu-can-bo-16291>