

General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's Article "Some Theoretical and Practical Issues about Socialism and the Path to Socialism in Vietnam" - a Work of Great Theoretical and Practical Significance

Prof. Dr. Ngoc Tan TA

Abstract: *The article written by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong titled "Some theoretical and practical issues about socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam" is a work of great theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it summarizes the creative application and development of Marxism - Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought on socialism and building socialism in specific conditions of Vietnam and in the world since the 1980s. The article analyses the great theoretical significance of this work.*

Keywords: *General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong; socialism; the road to socialism in Vietnam.*

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Theoretically, it summarizes the creative application and development of Marxism - Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought on socialism and building socialism in specific conditions of Vietnam and in the world since the 1980s. The great theoretical significance of the work is demonstrated as follows:

Firstly, the article presents a new perception of the times, particularly of capitalism. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the real socialism system in the world, the perception of the times has changed. Many researchers influenced by the bourgeois ideology believe that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the real socialism system is evidence for the sustainability of capitalism and the error of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on humankind's path to socialism. Even among communists and left-wing progressive researchers in the world, some are still confused, wavering and doubtful about the science and correctness of the socialist doctrine, making pessimistic judgments about the times.

By summarizing and generalizing the facts of the development of countries following capitalism in the world for several decades, Nguyen Phu Trong pointed out the ingrained contradictions, the irreparable sides of capitalism. They are: the multi-faceted economic, political, social and humanitarian crises "continue to break out"; "the process of economic and social development that crowned profit as its supreme end, that esteemed the possession of wealth and consumption of material as a yardstick of civilization" has exacerbated "the exhaustion of natural resources; the degradation of the environment and ecosystem"; Inequality in capitalist societies is increasing as only "1% of the population possessed a vast majority of the wealth and means of production, controls up three quarter of financial resources, knowledge and the mainstream of mass media", etc. Thus, as the inevitable consequences of the internal development of capitalist societies, social conflicts and "resistance movements" have broken out, revealing the truth of social injustices. On a global scale, the development of capitalism and its various forms of interventions to benefit or impose its "standards" on other countries have caused serious harm to poor countries, plunged many countries and regions into despair, and become the fundamental cause of the current wave of migration in South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America.

That fact is a solid, convincing basis for us to assert that although "capitalism has never been more global as it is today", "has achieved immense achievements", and "has set up considerable social welfare schemes that are more progressive than before", capitalism "cannot solve thoroughly" the crises that are taking place in the heart of its society and in the present world. It cannot resolve the conflicts that lead to social contradictions belonging to the operating rules of the regime. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's comprehensive, generalized and scientific assessment of capitalism, together with the affirmation of the inevitability, rationality and noble humanistic purpose of socialism, of which Vietnam is a realistic model, has brought a more correct and positive view of the times. It is also a firm confirmation that the path of development to socialism in this time is an obvious fact that cannot be denied.

Second, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's article "Some theoretical and practical issues on socialism and the path to socialism in Viet Nam" summarizes the fact, generalizes theories on a real socialism model in Viet Nam which was formed creatively based on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the world revolutions' experience and the our country's history condition. From the reality of the renewal process, and our Party's application and development of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought on socialism in the cause of

national construction and development, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong has withdrawn five conclusions that are also five core goals "President Ho Chi Minh, our Party and people have chosen and are consistently and persistently pursuing". These include: i) A society in which the development is truly for humans; ii) Economic development accompanied by social progress and justice; iii) A society of compassion, solidarity and mutual assistance, towards progressive and humanistic values; iv) Sustainable development, in harmony with nature to ensure a healthy living environment for present and future generations; v) A political system where power truly belongs to the people, by the people and serves the interests of the people. The five fundamental values that we are pursuing represent the primacy of the socialist social system that we are building and are gradually realizing. Those values are opposite to the injustices, irrationalities, and inhumanity that capitalist societies can only demonstrate in rhetoric declarations but cannot solve in the present reality, and unlikely resolve in the future.

From those core values and humanistic goals, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's work affirms the Party's general theoretical awareness of the socialist model that our people are striving to build. It is "a society where the people are well-off, the nation is strong and the people are owners, a society characterized by democracy, equality and civilization"; "possesses a highly developed economy on the basis of a modern productive force and suitable and progressive production relations. It enjoys an advanced culture imbued with national identity; Its people are entitled to wellbeing, freedom and happiness and are blessed with opportunities for comprehensive development; Ethnic groups in the Vietnamese community are equal, united, respectful and supportive of each other to grow together. It has a law-governed socialist State of the people, by the people and for the people under the leadership of the Communist Party. And it maintains friendship and cooperation with all countries in the world".

Along with eight features of the socialist model, his work analyzes, emphasizes and clarifies the theoretical creations of our Party in order to successfully realize the goal of national construction and development towards socialism. A theoretical creation of the Party that General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong emphasized, analyzed and clarified is the theory of the socialist-oriented market economy. He pointed out: "The concept of developing the socialist-oriented market economy is a fundamental and creative theoretical breakthrough of our Party. It is an important theoretical achievement gleaned through 35 years of implementing 'Doi Moi', stemming from Vietnam's praxis and selective absorption of experiences around the world".

First of all, the recognition of the market economy as an inevitable part of the transition to socialism was our Party's groundbreaking theoretical awareness. In fact, this is a crucial theoretical issue, which paved the way for important decisions of the Party in the renewal process. Particularly, it was the first time that our Party determined to build an economy of many sectors, recognized and established favorable conditions for the development of the private, and foreign-invested sectors. It is an economy that operates fully and cohesively in line with the laws of a market economy. This is also the key to open the knots of the subsidized economy, to awaken and promote the great momentum and potentials for our country's economic growth over the past few decades.

But the greatest creative development in theory is to put the market economy as a normative issue of economic growth in close relationship with the socialist orientation, an issue that comes from the primacy and humanistic purposes of socialism. As the General Secretary explains in his article: *"A fundamental characteristic and important feature of the socialist orientation in Vietnam's market economy is the combination of economy and society, the coordination of economic and social policies. It also ensures that economic growth would be accompanied by social progress and equality in every stage, every policy, and throughout the development process. This means that we shall not wait until the economy has reached a high level of development to begin exercising social progress and equality. We also shall certainly not "sacrifice" social progress and equality in pursuit of mere economic growth"*.

Thus, a socialist-oriented market economy refers to *"a new type of market economy in the development history of the market economy. It is a mode of economic organization that abides the laws of the market economy, but is also built on and guided by the principles and nature of socialism, which is reflected in all three aspects, namely ownership, organization, governance and distribution"*. In that economy, economic development policies are always closely and harmoniously linked with social and cultural development policies; Every step towards economic growth is closely linked to the realization of progress and social justice, and all of them are directed towards the ultimate goal of comprehensively improving life, bringing more happiness to people. The achievements in economic development, the improvement of people's living standards, and assurance of a stable socio-political environment for over 35 years of *Doi moi* have convincingly proved the correctness, suitability of Vietnam's socialist-oriented market economy.

Thirdly, the work "Some theoretical and practical issues on socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam" has contributed a great methodological lesson

to the determination of goals and creatively applying and developing Marxist-Leninist doctrine on socialism and Ho Chi Minh Thought in the specific historical conditions of our country. First of all, since its inception, our Party has affirmed the goal of national independence and socialism. Persistently, our Party has led the people and the whole nation steadfastly to the set goals, considering them as two banners leading the revolution. Applying Marxist dialectical methodology, taking the instruction of President Ho Chi Minh "taking the unchanging to cope with all changes" as the motto for revolutionary action, our Party has constantly innovated, set forth a wise line in the revolutionary struggle as well as in the construction and development of the country. Overcoming immense difficulties during the first years after the country's reunification, our Party set out the renewal policy, creating the basis for historical development and achievements.

Our Party has overcome the outdated mindsets and hurdles in theoretical awareness to make breakthroughs in theories, opening up a bright future for the country. In turns, those vast economic, cultural and social achievements have improved considerably people's life, enhanced our country's potentials and position, prestige in the world arena; at the same time, consolidated the lesson on staying persistently to the goal, unceasingly creatively applying and developing the theories, and evidently proved the leadership capacity and people's trust in our Party. It goes in line with a lesson withdrawn by Yuri Andropov, former General Secretary of Soviet Union's Communist Party in his work titled "K. Marx's doctrine and some issues in building socialism in Soviet Union" (published in *Kommunist* magazine, in 1983), which says: "Our experience shows that to achieve success in building socialism, the policies of the ruling Communist Party must be based on solid scientific foundations. Any disregard for the role of Marxist-Leninist science and its pioneering development, any narrow pragmatic interpretation of its tasks, any contempt of fundamental issues of theory, any overemphasis on short-term matters or academic theories can cause severe political and ideological consequences" (*Nhan Dan* Newspaper, September 8, 2021).

On the other hand, the work "Some theoretical and practical issues on socialism and the path to socialism in Viet Nam" has great practical significance.

Firstly, the summary and generalization of the theoretical perception of the Party expressed in the work of General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong reaffirms and clarifies the model of socialism and the fundamental and decisive properties of the socialist regime that our Party is leading our people to build. From the theoretical perception of the specific model of socialism in

Vietnam, the work also points out that the vital factor to ensure the successful implementation of the socialist construction is the Communist Party. "Success or failure depends first of all on the correctness of the Party's line, political courage, leadership capacity and fighting strength". Therefore, the Party's building work is of special importance. The Party must uphold its revolutionary nature, constantly improve its leadership capacity and combating strength, making the Party's organizations and State apparatus purer, stronger, and more worthy of the people's trust. Besides, the Party must always keep in mind that "People's strength is the profound source of victory and development". The Party must "prevent and reverse the deterioration of political ideology, morality and lifestyle of a part of cadres and Party members, first of all, leaders and managers at all levels".

The theoretical summary and generalization lays the ground for mapping out the Party's guidelines, the State's laws and policies in the new period. First of all, the Party's guidelines and the State's laws and policies must be consistent with the objectives and nature of the socialist construction course. It is a long-term, self-disciplined course, a huge mission - as President Ho Chi Minh put it, a tireless labor and creative process to create a qualitatively new type of society, a revolutionary transformation that occurs in facilities, wealth, ideology, human lifestyle and social relationships. Therefore, we must not rush to bypass the stages or be subjective, disregard the complex challenges and risks that may occur. *On the other hand*, the Party's line and the State's policies must come from the people, reflect the people's aspirations and interests, for the people's free and comprehensive development and happiness. The essence of the socialist social system is of the people, by the people and for the people. The political basis of the Party is the people's belief. The power of the Party and State is delegated by the people and authorized by the people. Respecting the people, binding with the people, striving for the people's happiness and constantly strengthening the people's trust have become a normative requirement of our Party, State and regime. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong once said in his closing remarks of the 6th Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee, "if people's aspiration is fulfilled, they will believe in the Party and our regime will survive; If the Party do something against the people's will, people will lose trust in the Party, and we will lose everything."

Moreover, the Party's guideline and the State's policies must derive from reality and the specific conditions of the country and the people, at the same time, must be based on research and reference from experience and practice of the world, of mankind. In other words, the guidelines and policies of the Party

and State must show the spirit of proactive integration, active participation in the common processes of the world. They need to maintain independence, self-reliance, the nation's identity, the nature of the Vietnamese socialist regime. This is also a requirement that cannot be underestimated in the context of present globalization.

Secondly, the theoretical summaries in the work of the General Secretary are the basis for strengthening the people's trust, the basis for arousing patriotism, aspiration for development, and enhancing human resources for the cause. construction and development of the country.

One of the few decisive factors for the leadership of a political party is to determine its ideological foundation with a correct, scientific theoretical reasoning system on which we set goals, clearly define ways and methods to achieve those goals. The correctness, persuasiveness of the theoretical system aim at gathering the people. This is one of the most important factors in building the people's trust. With people's confidence, the political foundation of the Party is firmly secured. Besides, people's trust will form a momentum for us to do incredible work, enable us to complete immense and difficult political tasks. As President Ho Chi Minh said: "Ideological leadership is the most important. Inside and outside the Party, we must clearly recognize the new situation, understand the new tasks, then our thoughts and actions will be unified. If inside and outside the Party, and from top to bottom, all thoughts and actions are unified, then we definitely succeed, no matter how difficult, and complicated the task might be (Ho Chi Minh (2011) *Complete Work*, National Political Publishing House, H., Vol.8., p.554-555).

It has laid the ground for refuting all distortions and sabotages of reactionary forces whose plots attempt to divide our great national unity, and weaken the regime for dark purposes. When the people believe in the noble and humane purpose that the Party strives for, and believe in the Party's wise leadership, they themselves will create a barrier of ideological vigilance against all enemy's distortions and sabotages.

Therefore, summarizing and affirming the theory of the socialist model and affirming the path to socialism ensures "the unified thought and action from the inside to the outside". That is a vital prerequisite for arousing patriotism and aspiration for development, mobilizing all great potentials and resources among the people to successfully carry out national construction and development course.

Thirdly, the work "Some theoretical and practical issues about socialism and the way to socialism in Viet Nam" by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong has

contributed to affirming the significance, importance and long-lasting vitality of Marxism - Leninism in the present day; encouraging international communist and workers' movements, and promoting the struggle for peace and progress of the world's peoples for the people's happiness.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the real socialist system in the world, the communists, progressive forces and working people in the world who love freedom and peace have been confused, wavering, even falling into pessimism, losing faith in the good future of socialism. In the crisis, people have put a lot of hope on genuine communist parties which are taking the leadership role to maintain and develop towards socialism in a few countries, including Viet Nam. The historical achievements in the renewal, construction and development of our country have greatly encouraged the workers' and communist movements in the world. The theoretical summary of a new model of socialism in Vietnam supplement a convincing milestone for the vitality of Marxism-Leninism, contribute to affirming that the path to socialism is a vivid, positive and fine reality after the failures caused by errors in the Soviet Union and countries in Eastern and Central Europe. It has also encouraged and inspired the workers, communists and working people who are fighting for progress, justice and genuine human rights all over the world. This significance is confirmed by a leader of the Swiss Labor Party: "What is socialism? First of all, socialism is the longing aspiration of mankind, the hope of the oppressed classes since the stratification of society, the hope of humanity being liberated from all shackles, the dream of a society without oppression, exploitation, ruling class, and is not governed by the selfish interests of a group of people, towards a society operating on the basis of smart and voluntary cooperation of all citizens, for the benefit of all" (Alexander Eniline, Member of the Central Committee of the Swiss Labor Party: "General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's article is theoretically solid, has clarified difficulties and contradictions of reality", *Nhan Dan* newspaper, September 8, 2021). This practical significance is also affirmed clearly, frankly and sincerely by Bimal Rathnayake, a Politburo member, Head of the International Committee of the Sri Lanka People's Liberation Front Party - JVP "By theory and practice of building socialism in Vietnam, the article contributes to affirming the significance, importance and long-lasting vitality of Marxism-Leninism in the present day" (*Nhan Dan* newspaper, September 17, 2021). /.