

Firmly Safeguarding the Party's Ideological Foundation, Advancing into the Era of National Rise

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Abstract: *The choice of the Marxist–Leninist path of socialist revolution is the choice made by the history of the Vietnamese nation itself. Following this path, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Vietnamese people overcame every difficulty and challenge, achieved great victories, and ushered in many new epochs of qualitative development. Therefore, in all circumstances, the entire Party, the entire military, and the entire people are united and determined to firmly safeguard the Party's ideological foundation as the guiding principle for action, as we advance into the nation's era of ascent and strive for new triumphs.*

Keywords: *proletarian revolution; the Party's ideological foundation; decisive prerequisite; the era of national ascent.*

1. The Choice Endorsed by Vietnamese National History

When Vietnam's feudal social regime was in crisis, Western colonial-imperialist forces invaded the country. After failing to subjugate Vietnam by other means, the French colonialists officially opened fire on our country in early September 1858. Initially, the struggle was to protect independence (1858–1884), followed by the struggle to regain independence (1884–1945). From the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the influx of new literature carrying modern ideas into Vietnam, a new trend of national salvation emerged⁽¹⁾.

Phan Bội Châu (1867–1940) initially sought to rely on Japan to help expel the French colonizers and establish a constitutional monarchy; he later turned to the idea of a democratic republic, and ultimately oriented himself toward the Russian October Revolution of 1917⁽²⁾. Phan Châu Trinh (1872–1926) championed the rights of the people and hoped to rely on France to overthrow feudalism. He advocated national renewal, wrote extensively (books, newspapers, and literary works), and gave many speeches to propagate new ideas, rallying people under the slogan “*khai dân trí, chấn dân khí, hậu dân sinh*” (“enlighten the people, fortify the people's spirit, and ensure the people's livelihood”)⁽³⁾. He also cooperated with leader Nguyễn Ái Quốc during the latter's stay in Paris. Nguyễn An Ninh (1900–1943), during his years in France (1918–1922), worked closely with Nguyễn Ái Quốc and other progressive intellectuals (such as Phan Châu Trinh, Phan Văn Trường, and Nguyễn Thế

Truyền); upon returning to Vietnam, he actively wrote books, newspapers, and literary works, gave lectures, and spread Marxism–Leninism to mobilize revolutionary consciousness and awaken the youth⁽⁴⁾. Nguyễn An Ninh is regarded as someone who made significant contributions to propagating proletarian ideology in Vietnam, being the first person to translate the Communist Manifesto for publication in the Vietnamese press before 1930⁽⁵⁾.

Although the revolutionary movements in the late 19th century up until the Party's founding in 1930 continued the heroic tradition of our nation in resisting foreign invaders, they all ended in failure, mainly due to the lack of an appropriate line, the lack of strong organizations, and the lack of a vanguard force. Our country remained submerged in a “pitch-black night,” and our people continued to live in misery and bondage. This situation urgently demanded a path to save the country that would both liberate the nation and simultaneously liberate the classes and humanity. No one other than Nguyễn Ái Quốc – Hồ Chí Minh could meet that vital demand of the Vietnamese nation. To achieve this great task, Nguyễn Ái Quốc underwent ten years of searching and choosing, as manifested in the following steps:

1) He observed that Phan Bội Châu's hope of Japanese assistance to expel the French colonizers was “no different from letting a tiger in through the front door and inviting a leopard in through the back door,” and that Phan Châu Trinh's plan to rely on France to fight feudalism was “no different from begging the enemy for mercy.” He also noted that Hoàng Hoa Thám, although he directly fought the French colonizers, was “still heavily steeped in feudal ways”⁽⁶⁾.

2) He studied the American Revolution and the United States Declaration of Independence (1776), observing that “although the United States achieved a successful revolution more than 150 years ago, the struggle to emancipate the slaves was still drawn-out”; “The Great French revolution (1789) with the famous Human Rights Declaration but in fact its Constitution deprived workers and peasants of their rights at home, and abroad it oppressed subject peoples”⁽⁷⁾.

3) He chose and resolved to lead the Vietnamese nation to follow the Russian October Revolution of 1917 because “in the history of mankind there has never been a revolution so great and profound”; it was “like the blazing sun illuminating all five continents, awakening millions of oppressed and exploited people on the earth, opening up the path to liberation for nations and for all mankind”⁽⁸⁾. He understood that “for the world today, the Russian Revolution alone is successful – successfully carrying people to true happiness, freedom, and equality, not the false freedom and equality of which French imperialism brags in Annam”⁽⁹⁾.

4) He declared that “the torch of Marxist–Leninist theory and the experience of the great October Revolution illuminate the revolutionary path of Vietnam”; therefore “to save the country and liberate the nation there is no other road than the proletarian revolutionary road.” He said, “Many theories have been taught, many ideologies exist, but the truest, most certain, most revolutionary ideology is Leninism”⁽¹⁰⁾; “Only socialism, communism can liberate the oppressed peoples and working people around the world from the yoke of slavery”⁽¹¹⁾.

His decision to lead the nation along the proletarian revolutionary path created a turning point for the Vietnamese revolution. Nguyễn Ái Quốc, in a leading role, continuously propagated Marxism–Leninism in Vietnam, laying the ideological, theoretical, organizational, and personnel groundwork. He convened and presided over the founding conference of the Communist Party of Vietnam in February 1930, adopting his brief Political Platform, his brief Strategy, his summarized Program, and the Party’s succinct Statutes, clearly defining Vietnam’s revolutionary line. The founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam marked a momentous turning point: it ended the crisis of the national salvation movement, created a central organizing factor, and united the great solidarity of the entire nation under the Party’s leadership. It enabled the Vietnamese revolution to overcome all obstacles and achieve great victories. This further demonstrated that this choice was in harmony with the trends and substance of the era, arising from changes in the country’s political, economic, and social conditions and from the very failures of previous patriotic movements and the deadlock in revolutionary strategy. It affirmed that “for our country, there is no other way to achieve genuine national independence and freedom and happiness for the people”⁽¹²⁾.

2. Resolutely Safeguarding the Party’s Ideological Foundation – A Constant Task throughout Vietnamese Revolutionary History

Since the emergence of classes characterized by exploitation and injustice, progressive humanity has aspired to a life of equality and justice. That aspiration and dream persisted for centuries but remained unreachable because no method had been found to realize it. It was only when Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels summarized this historical experience—building on and enriching the work of their predecessors and elevating it under the historical conditions of the mid-19th century—that they published the Communist Manifesto in London in February 1848, marking the birth of scientific socialism. In the light of Marx and Engels’ theory, the proletarian struggle gave rise to the Paris Commune in 1871—a new form of state. Although the Commune lasted only 72 days (18 March–28 May 1871), V. I. Lenin later assessed that “the Paris Commune was

the greatest exemplar of the proletarian movement of the 19th century” and that “we all draw lessons from the experience of the Commune”⁽¹³⁾. Moreover, Ho Chi Minh drew five valuable lessons from these events: 1) The masses of workers and peasants are the foundation of revolution; (2) revolution can only succeed if it is supported by a very strong organization; (3) if the people’s morale is strong, no army or weapon can withstand it; (4) women and children can contribute greatly to revolutionary endeavors; and (5) the French Revolution, despite suffering many casualties, did not fear them – thus, if we want to carry out a revolution, we too must not fear sacrifices⁽¹⁴⁾.

Subsequently, Leader V.I. Lenin actively and creatively developed the Marx–Engels doctrine and applied it to practice, leading to the great victory of the October Revolution in 1917 and the founding of the Soviet state in 1922. Socialism, which reactionaries and imperialists had disparaged as “a specter haunting Europe,” became “a living reality.” From the moment of the October Revolution’s victory, the Bolshevik Party in Russia had to resolutely struggle against reactionary, opportunist, and reformist forces that slandered the Revolution as a “coup” and an “usurpation of power,” distorted the revolutionary nature and proletarian dictatorship of Marxism–Leninism, denied the revolutionary character of the October Revolution, and pursued a conspiracy of “peaceful evolution” aimed at destroying the socialist regime from within⁽¹⁵⁾. However, V. I. Lenin was highly vigilant and pointed out that “the enemies of the socialist regime always aim to transform the proletariat’s slogans of democracy and freedom into instruments in their own hands”⁽¹⁶⁾. Nevertheless, the significance of the October Revolution of 1917 and the achievements of socialist construction in the Soviet Union were continually affirmed and further drove the expansion of socialism into Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America, eventually forming a global system.

Regarding Vietnam, from July 1920 Nguyễn Ái Quốc studied Lenin’s *Theses on the National and Colonial Question* and at the French Socialist Party Congress in December 1920 voted to join the Communist International. He helped establish the French Communist Party, becoming the first Vietnamese communist. From that moment on, Marxism–Leninism was received by Vietnam and, together with Ho Chi Minh Thought, became the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the guiding principle for action. Regarding the Party’s ideology and its revolutionary character, Nguyễn Ái Quốc (Ho Chi Minh) stated early on while active in Guangzhou that the revolutionary Party is armed with Marxist–Leninist theory and strives to liberate the nation, humanity, and the working class. If the Party is to be

strong, it must have ideology as its core, which everyone in the Party must understand and follow. A Party without an ideology is like a person without intelligence, or a ship without a compass⁽¹⁷⁾. Therefore, on one hand, we must let the Party's ideological foundation take ever deeper root and spread throughout Vietnamese society, and on the other hand we must resolutely fight against wrongful and hostile viewpoints to defend the Party's ideological foundation.

From the process of propagating Marxism–Leninism in the country and preparing the conditions for founding the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyễn Ái Quốc actively worked to protect the Party's ideological foundation. In the period before winning power – when the Party had to operate largely in secrecy – our Party resolutely fought against reactionary and hostile forces, defending Marxism–Leninism and ensuring that it continuously spread and permeated into Vietnam's revolutionary practice. During 1945–1954, our Party mainly combated ideas that undermined Marxism–Leninism and sabotaged the national-democratic revolutionary line in Vietnam: reactionary ideologies among the landlord and bourgeois classes and some elements of the “United National Front” that sought to establish an “Autonomous Republic of South Vietnam.” During the 1954–1975 period, our Party waged a struggle against distorted and slanderous arguments seeking to revise Marxism–Leninism. At the same time, it confronted erroneous “leftist” ideas within the land reform campaign, the ideological deviations of the “Nhan Van – Giai Pham” group, and pessimistic attitudes marked by fear of sacrifice, hardship, and a prolonged resistance war. The Party also refuted fabricated claims such as “the North invaded the South.” During the 1975–1985 period, the Party fought against ideological and cultural sabotage aimed at undermining socialist values. It struggled against negative, confused, and skeptical mindsets toward socialism and tackled socio-economic dysfunctions. The Party proactively and resolutely dismantled psychological warfare schemes and countered sentiments of pessimism and disillusionment amid the country's hardships and the crisis of the socialist model in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In the Đổi Mới (Renovation) period, the Party continued to safeguard its ideological foundation, resisting “peaceful evolution” schemes and the resurgence of revisionism and opportunism (1989–1991). It defended the achievements and future of real-world socialism and combated plots aimed at undermining the Party, the State, and the Vietnamese revolution. Today, hostile and reactionary forces intensify their sabotage efforts. They ramp up propaganda campaigns to distort, manipulate, and deny the significance of the 1917 Russian October Revolution—thus indirectly rejecting Marxism–Leninism,

Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the Party's leadership. They also deny the role and mission of the working class and the goal and path toward socialism, exploiting issues of "freedom of speech, democracy, and human rights" to attack the Party, the State, and our socialist regime⁽¹⁸⁾.

In the context of these challenges, the 12th Politburo issued Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW on strengthening and continuing implementation of Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW [2010], emphasizing the importance of protecting the Party's ideological foundation. It added the "team of political theory researchers and lecturers" as a core force, and highlighted eight key tasks to focus on for protecting the Party's ideological foundation. In July 2024, the 13th Politburo issued Conclusion No. 89-KL/TW, further intensifying the implementation of Resolution 35, fully and deeply grasping its importance, and reiterating those tasks.

In all circumstances, we must resolutely and firmly safeguard the Party's ideological foundation. This work directly concerns the very theoretical basis for the Party's existence; the survival of the regime; the national and class interests; the cause of building and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and the freedom, prosperity, and happiness of the people. Defending the Party's ideological foundation is inseparable from the struggle against wrong and hostile viewpoints and from implementing the Homeland Defense Strategy in the new situation, towards the goals of a wealthy people, a strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization. Thus, firmly safeguarding the Party's ideological foundation is the decisive condition and the solid precondition for the Vietnamese nation to advance into a new era – the era of national rise.

3. Advancing into the Nation's Era of Ascent with Confidence

Marxism–Leninism applied to practice gave rise to real socialism. From a Soviet Union encircled by imperialist enemies, it perseveringly built a new regime, achieved many great victories (such as fighting fascism from 1941 to 1945), and supported socialist revolutions worldwide, transforming into a global system that demonstrated the superiority of socialism and contributed greatly to humankind. In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, real socialism existed as a formidable force on the international stage, encouraging and advancing struggles for peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress. From the late 1970s to 1991, due to various objective and subjective causes, real socialism entered a crisis, leading to the collapse of the socialist model in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, a number of remaining socialist countries implemented reforms and renewal, overcoming the crisis and rising to new development, achieving great successes – notably Vietnam and China. Countries like Cuba, North Korea, and Laos, though slower, are in the context

of international integration and globalization making certain adjustments to develop and advance.

In Vietnam, from its inception the Party has raised aloft the revolutionary banner, uniting and leading the entire people in struggles for national liberation and class emancipation, lighting the way so that our people could advance confidently toward victory⁽¹⁹⁾. Over nearly 95 years under the Party's leadership, the entire Vietnamese nation has placed firm faith in and wholeheartedly committed itself to the revolutionary cause, achieving great victories. These include: 1) The victory of the August Revolution in 1945, which shattered the yoke of French colonialism and feudalism and established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, leading our nation into the era of independence and freedom; 2) The victories in the wars against French colonialism – culminating in the 1954 Điện Biên Phủ Victory – and against US imperialism – culminating in the Spring 1975 Victory – thereby liberating the nation, reunifying the country, defending the Fatherland, and fulfilling internationalist obligations; 3) The achievements of nearly forty years of Đổi Mới (Renovation): accelerating industrialization, modernization, and international integration, and gradually transitioning to socialism with new, correct perspectives and thinking aligned with Vietnam's reality, reaping great victories of historic significance.

These achievements have opened many new, qualitatively higher eras⁽²⁰⁾, include: 1) The Era of independence, freedom, and socialist construction (1930–1975): The existential goal of the Vietnamese nation during this period was to abolish colonial and feudal oppression and exploitation, achieve national independence, and embark on building a new socialist regime. Under the sound leadership of the Communist Party, the Vietnamese people successfully fulfilled this strategic objective. 2) The Era of national reunification, renovation, and development (1975–2025): The foremost national objective was to overcome poverty and underdevelopment, rise from the status of a poor, backward country, improve people's livelihoods, and establish a worthy international standing. After nearly 50 years of national reunification and 40 years of renovation, Vietnam has attained historic and significant achievements—never before has the country enjoyed such stature, strength, and international prestige as it does today⁽²¹⁾. 3) The Era of Vietnam's Ascent (commencing with the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party): The goal of this new era is to build a wealthy people, a strong nation, and a socialist society, standing shoulder to shoulder with the powers of the five continents. The foremost priority is to successfully achieve the strategic goals: by 2030, Vietnam becomes a developing country with modern industry and upper-middle income; by 2045, it becomes a developed, socialist country with high income.⁽²²⁾

The goal of the nation's era of ascendance is to integrate at a higher level and in a new context the objectives of previous eras, reflecting a qualitative advancement of the goal of national independence in conjunction with socialism. Therefore, we must recognize this as an era of breakthroughs and accelerated development across all fields, elevating the Vietnamese nation to new heights and moving forward with the times, while simultaneously accomplishing the so-called "double breakthroughs"⁽²³⁾. The decisive precondition for achieving these objectives is to firmly and resolutely safeguard the Party's ideological foundation, to refine the theory on the path of the country's renewal with a spirit of constant innovation, and to avoid subjectivism and voluntarism; we must prevent dogmatism and conservatism from shackling our thinking and consciousness.

To realize this vision, there must be a breakthrough in thinking—a more accurate and scientific understanding of the laws governing socialist construction and the socialist path in Vietnam. This includes clarifying the nature of the socialist-oriented market economy, building a socialist rule-of-law state, developing socialist democracy, and further defining the characteristics of socialism in Vietnam with more concrete roadmaps and steps. It is essential to heed President Ho Chi Minh's guidance and integrate "the breath of our times" into Marxism-Leninism. As he once advised: "After all, one cannot prohibit the supplementation of the 'historical foundation' of Marxism by adding materials that Marx himself could not have known in his era," and: "Depending on the circumstances, nations will develop along different paths."⁽²⁴⁾ For our country, he emphasized: "In order to make Vietnam truly independent and unified, to realize a new democratic regime, and to advance toward socialism and communism"⁽²⁵⁾; "We must take practical steps, advance steadily... Our planning must be thorough and balanced. We must not let our subjectivity override actual conditions. We must combat subjectivism, bureaucratic working styles, and superficiality."⁽²⁶⁾

Although the path to building socialism has undergone many ups and downs—still uneven and winding—it clearly demonstrates its superiority, aligning with the trends of the times and the aspirations of the vast majority of working people for justice and social progress. With its noble essence, ideals, and goals, socialism and communism represent a direction that humanity must, and inevitably will, pursue. While capitalism took 300 years to establish itself globally, real-world socialism, in less than 50 years, became a global system. Having now existed for just over a century, socialism requires our patience and steadfast confidence in its eventual victory. This practical foundation empowers

the Vietnamese people, under the leadership of the Party, to persist in the cause of renovation, remain resolute in the goal of national independence tied to socialism, and firmly defend the Party's ideological foundation, striving for new achievements in the nation's emerging era.

Proud of our glorious history of national defense and construction spanning thousands of years—and particularly the great victories achieved under the Party's leadership—we find in socialism's global contributions further justification for confidence and determination to follow the socialist revolutionary path. As we celebrate the Lunar New Year of the Snake (Ất Tỵ – 2025), the 95th anniversary of the Party's founding, and prepare for Party Congresses at all levels, it is a timely opportunity to reflect on our proud journey, reinforce our faith in the Party's comprehensive and absolute leadership, express deep gratitude to our great President Ho Chi Minh, and rejoice in the country's daily transformations. It is also a meaningful political moment to review the past, assess achievements and shortcomings, conduct honest self-criticism, and seek remedies to overcome limitations, thereby generating the strength to move forward. Each cadre, Party member, and every Vietnamese—both at home and abroad—should better recognize their responsibilities and pledge unwavering commitment to the Party's cause, united in will and action to strive together for new and greater victories in this era of national ascent./.

REFERENCES

(1) Phan Boi Chau with the Dong Du movement, Phan Chau Trinh with the Duy Tan movement, Luong Van Can with the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement; the Yen The peasant uprising led by Hoang Hoa Tham, the Yen Bai uprising led by Nguyen Thai Hoc, and dozens of other large and small uprisings that took place across the country from the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of 1930.

(2) According to author Tran Huy Lieu (1956): *Modern Vietnamese History*, volume 3, Research Department of Literature, History and Geography, p.36. In the work *Socialism* (written around 1928, published in 1946), Phan Boi Chau highly appreciated Marxism-Leninism and considered the emergence of socialism a historical inevitability; analyzed the three stages of socialist revolution including: the period of socialist research, the period of socialist practice, and the period of successful socialism.

(3) Enlighten the people: abandon the method of studying by rote, eliminate extravagant customs; open schools to teach the national language and technical science knowledge. Enlighten the people: awaken the spirit of self-reliance, self-improvement, enlightenment of one's rights and obligations, escape from

feudalism. Improve the people's livelihood: take care of economic development, reclaim land, establish trade associations, produce domestic goods.

(4) Wrote 145 articles, 2 speeches, 7 books and 1 poem.

(5) Published in *La Cloche fêlée* (The Bell) from issue 53 on March 26, 1926 to issue 60 on April 2, 1926.

(6) Tran Dan Tien (1974), *Stories about the life and activities of President Ho Chi Minh*, Truth Publishing House, 1975, pp. 12-13.

(7), (9), (11), (14), (17) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, National Political Publishing House, Vol. 2, pp. 291, 296, 304, 289, 297, 304, 289.

(8) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Ibid*, Vol.15, p.387.

(10), (19) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Ibid Vol* Vol.12, p.30, 69, 401.

(12) Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), *Documents of the 7th National Congress*, Truth Publishing House, p.109.

(13) V.I. Lenin (1979), *Complete Works*, Progress Publishing House, Moscow, Vol. 9, p.414.

(15) Nguyen Trong Chuan (1997), *October Revolution and its contemporary significance*, National Political Publishing House, pp.98-99.

(16) Nguyen Trong Chuan (1997), *Ibid*, p.103.

(18) Central Theoretical Council (2014), *Arguments criticizing wrong and hostile viewpoints*, National Political Publishing House, pp.7-23.

(20) Currently, there are different views on the number and names of the eras of the Vietnamese nation since the Party took leadership, but in this article we agree with the views of Professor, Dr. Phung Huu Phu (former Deputy Head of the Central Propaganda Department) and Associate Professor, Dr. Nguyen Viet Thao (former Deputy Director of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics).

(21) Communist Party of Vietnam (2021), *Documents of the 13th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Vol. 1, p. 104.

(22) Speech by General Secretary To Lam, October 31, 2024, at the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics.

(23) Prof. Dr. Phung Huu Phu said that it is necessary to make a breakthrough straight into modernity, into high-tech fields, especially digital technology in which Vietnam has advantages; into modern national governance on the basis of digital government, digital society, digital citizens, creating remarkable development in economy, culture, society, national defense, security, and foreign affairs. It is also a breakthrough in thoroughly resolving bottlenecks, weaknesses, limitations, and difficulties that are holding back and hindering the country's development.

(24) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 509.

(25) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, *ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 293, 216.

(26) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, *ibid.*, Vol.13, p.70.