

To Unite, Consolidate, and Build the Vietnamese Working Class to Strengthen the National Great Unity Bloc

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Abstract: *The working class is a fundamental and core force in the alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals, serving as the driving force and intrinsic strength of the national great unity bloc. Building a modern and strong Vietnamese working class is a vital factor for achieving national industrialization and modernization, the aspiration for prosperity and happiness, and for contributing to the consolidation of the national great unity bloc in the current era. This article examines the current state of uniting, consolidating, and building the Vietnamese working class and proposes several fundamental solutions to unite and strengthen the working class as a key contributor to the national great unity bloc.*

Keywords: *working class, unity, consolidation, national great unity bloc, building the working class.*

In its leadership of the nation, the Party has consistently placed the working class at the center of its strategy for building the national great unity bloc: “National great unity based on the alliance of the working class, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia under the leadership of the Party is the strategic guideline of the Vietnamese revolution; it is the source of strength, the primary driving force, and a decisive factor ensuring the sustainable victory of national construction and defense.”⁽¹⁾ Strengthening and consolidating the role of the working class within the national great unity bloc is essentially about reinforcing the alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals, who represent the core and fundamental social forces in terms of population, economic position, and political and social roles. This foundation attracts and unites intermediary and unstable elements, as well as other forces, to join the revolution and the common goal of building and firmly defending the nation. Additionally, it emphasizes the working class’s role in economic development, political system reform, democratizing social life, fostering an advanced culture imbued with national identity, expanding international relations, and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

1. Current state of consolidating and building the Vietnamese working class to strengthen the national great unity bloc

- *The current status of the Vietnamese working class*

The Vietnamese working class is growing rapidly in both quantity and quality, with increasingly advanced professional skills, adopting modern industrial work styles, and adhering to labor discipline.

According to the General Statistics Office, the total number of Vietnamese workers was 14.5 million in 2017, 14.88 million in 2018, and 15.2 million in 2019⁽²⁾. The literacy rate among workers is 100%, with 80% achieving secondary and high school education. Additionally, 37% of workers have undergone training, including 25% with vocational training⁽³⁾. The number of unskilled workers with low professional qualifications is gradually declining, while the proportion of workers with university-level education is rising. A growing trend is the emergence of a “worker-intellectual” group (comprising managers, technical staff, foremen, and supervisors). These individuals are concentrated in key economic sectors, modern enterprises with high technology and automation, and high-tech zones. The intellectual workforce within the working class is becoming the most advanced, core component of the modern Vietnamese working class, playing a critical role in the nation’s economic development in the era of international integration.

The Vietnamese working class faces significant challenges

The Vietnamese working class is currently confronting major challenges. The labor structure remains outdated, and professional qualifications are low, with a critical shortage of high-quality human resources, skilled workers, and experts capable of meeting the demands of industrialization and modernization (CNH, HDH) and mastering the requirements of the digital economy in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. According to the General Statistics Office, as of June 2022, Vietnam’s labor force aged 15 and above totaled 51.6 million people, of which only 26.30% had received formal training with diplomas or certificates⁽⁴⁾. The remaining 73.70% lacked formal training, certifications, or recognized skills. Most Vietnamese workers have not received professional or technical training. Vietnam also ranks low in the region for digital skills, placing 44th out of 132 countries in the Global Innovation Index (GII)⁽⁵⁾. At the Vietnam Business Forum (VBF) in February 2021, experts ranked Vietnam’s digital skill levels below those of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. Consequently, the economy could lose approximately 2 million jobs by 2045 if Vietnam fails to meet the demand for highly skilled labor amidst the rapid pace of digital transformation. The internal stratification and

differentiation within the working class are also increasing. Industrialization, modernization, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution have accelerated the shift from traditional industries with outdated technologies to high-tech industries (such as information technology, electronics, telecommunications, robotics, and 3D printing). While this transition expands the workforce of highly skilled, technically proficient workers, it also significantly reduces the number of low-skilled workers, leading to structural crises in employment and labor. Many workers unable to adapt to technological and skill requirements face unemployment. The stratification of the working class in terms of labor has also led to disparities in income and living standards. This has exacerbated wealth inequality and intensified social stratification within the working class, widening the gaps in income and assets and increasing the risk of social conflicts. Currently, income disparities within the working class can be as high as several dozen times. According to the “2019 IT Workforce Market Report” by VietnamWorks, software engineers specializing in blockchain earn an average salary of \$2,241 per month, AI-related software developers earn \$1,844 per month, and Full Stack developers earn \$1,642 per month ⁽⁶⁾. In contrast, the average salary of production workers with moderate qualifications ranges from only 5 to 7 million VND per month.

- On uniting, consolidating, and building the Vietnamese working class to contribute to the national great unity bloc

The Party’s correct and innovative policies serve as the banner for uniting and consolidating the working class during the country’s new development phase.

The Party and State have issued numerous resolutions, directives, and policies related to the working class (GCCN). Through the implementation of these resolutions and directives, the working class’s ability to participate in state management and socio-economic governance has gradually been enhanced. This has positively motivated the working class to enthusiastically boost production, fulfil economic, cultural, and social development tasks, and strengthen national defense and security.

Party organizations, front organizations, and mass organizations at all levels have shown significant progress in their labor-related activities, leading to increasingly effective operations.

The forms of uniting workers have become more diverse and abundant, enhancing the role and position of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and labor unions. Activities are more practical and engaging, attracting large numbers of workers to participate in production drives, skill competitions, and patriotic emulation movements. Labor unions have made significant strides in protecting

workers' rights and promoting social progress campaigns. The national great unity bloc, founded on the alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals, has been further expanded. This is a critical factor in promoting socio-economic development and maintaining political stability.

Despite these achievements, uniting, consolidating, and building the Vietnamese working class to contribute to the national great unity bloc faces several challenges:

Corruption, bureaucracy, and wastefulness remain widespread and severe. Legal and institutional discipline is not strictly upheld in many places. The degradation of political ideology, ethics, and lifestyle among a significant number of cadres and Party members with authority has undermined public trust in the Party, the State, and the regime. Ethical standards in society have declined in certain aspects, public order and safety remain complicated, and large-scale protests persist, sometimes escalating into severe situations. In some areas, Party committees lack unity, and a portion of officials and Party members fail to set good examples, leading to a deterioration in leadership and cohesion within Party organizations. The activities of front organizations and mass organizations in many places are formalistic, administration-heavy, and disconnected from the public. Organizing workers into associations remains inadequate, particularly in Party and labor union organizations within private economic units and foreign-invested enterprises.

The Party has yet to fully analyze and forecast structural changes in social classes and emerging conflicts among the population in general and the working class in particular. Many Party organizations, governmental bodies, and labor unions undervalue efforts to mobilize the working class. Some policies of the State do not fully reflect the principle of national great unity. The implementation of social policies concerning the alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals contains numerous shortcomings.

Building a unified working class is a major and complex issue in the new context

As analyzed above, economic changes have led to transformations in the social and class structure of the working class. It is no longer homogeneous in terms of origins, nor is it uniform in political awareness, ideological unity, organizational discipline, and industrial work ethic, as it was when the majority of the working class was employed in State-owned enterprises, back when factories and enterprises were under public ownership. Social stratification and differentiation deeply affect new segments of workers, particularly those transitioning from agricultural backgrounds and primarily engaged in

unskilled labor—groups that are often the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Disparities in income and benefits give rise to ideological, perceptual, and organizational issues, weakening the unity of the working class.

The dynamics of Vietnam's labor market, fluctuations in commodity prices, the global economic downturn, and international trade disputes have contributed to increased worker mobility and instability across regions, enterprise types, and industries. These factors also exacerbate risks of job loss, unemployment, and workplace pressure among workers, with low-skilled labor, older workers, and rural migrant laborers being the most at risk. Labor disputes and strikes are also on the rise.

In the era of rapid development in information technology and diverse social media platforms such as Zalo, Facebook, Messenger, and Viber, hostile and reactionary forces exploit these networks to undermine the Party's policies and directives. They impose narratives on human rights issues, distort and tarnish the revolutionary achievements of our people, slander leaders, incite dissatisfaction, and provoke resistance against the government—up to and including organizing riots and attempts to overthrow the regime, threatening social and political stability. These forces particularly target unskilled laborers with limited skills and low incomes, who face significant hardships and often possess lower levels of education and political awareness. Such tactics erode trust, ideological stance, and political consciousness among workers. Therefore, uniting and mobilizing the working class, strengthening its role in the national great unity bloc, is of critical and urgent importance for Vietnam's ongoing renewal process.

2. Fundamental solutions to unite, consolidate, and build the Vietnamese working class to contribute to the national great unity bloc

First, build a clean, strong Party organization and innovate the Party's leadership methods so that it truly represents the working class as the core leader of the national great unity bloc. Promote the role of the working class as the leading revolutionary class through its vanguard, the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Consistently implement campaigns to build and rectify the Party, strengthening unity and cohesion within the Party and across individual Party organizations. Party members should set an exemplary role by actively participating in workers' organizations and acting as key figures within them. Establish specific mechanisms to encourage workers to contribute to Party building. Renew the Party's leadership methods to further enhance the role of trade unions in mobilizing workers.

Second, promote democracy in social life under the Party's leadership.

To unite and broadly mobilize the working class, democracy must be expanded. In practice, the lack of unity in certain units and localities often stems from the absence of democracy. President Ho Chi Minh once emphasized: "Only by fully promoting democracy can we mobilize all the people's strength to advance the revolution" and summarized that "Practicing democracy is the master key to solving all difficulties."

Promote socialist democracy in conjunction with combating corruption and wastefulness. The Politburo's Directive No. 30-CT/TW (8th tenure) on ensuring grassroots democracy, later institutionalized by the government into mechanisms for democratic governance at communes, wards, enterprises, and administrative agencies, has had a significant impact in uniting the people. The principle of "people know, people discuss, people do, people monitor, people supervise, and people benefit" has become a familiar and widely practiced concept in Vietnam, striving for broader implementation. Democracy must be tied to discipline, the rule of law, and the Party's leadership. The national great unity bloc, founded on the alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals, should be further expanded as a crucial factor in driving socio-economic development and maintaining political and social stability. Under the Party's leadership, democracy must be promoted across all aspects—political, economic, cultural, and social—at enterprises and production units. Conversely, exploiting democracy, extreme or excessive democracy, will hinder the ability to unite and build the working class and weaken the foundation of the national great unity bloc.

Third, promote theoretical research and summarize practical experiences to continuously refine policies, strategies, and laws on building and enhancing the strength of the working class, closely aligned with the realities of industrialization and modernization. Provide timely and convincing solutions to emerging theoretical and practical issues.

Strengthen theoretical research and practical summaries to promptly and convincingly address new theoretical and practical issues arising from industrialization and modernization. Advance the development of theories about the working class in the context of a socialist-oriented market economy, the acceleration of industrialization and modernization, and international economic integration. These efforts aim to build a strong Vietnamese working class that grows in size, has a reasonable structure, and exhibits high quality; enhance their political courage, educational background, professional

expertise, industrial work ethic, and labor discipline to meet the demands of industrialization and modernization, and international integration. Develop a strategy to cultivate a high-level workforce capable of innovation by fostering close cooperation between enterprises and educational institutions to improve technological expertise. Focus on training and upskilling intellectual workers, particularly for high-tech and cutting-edge industries. Equip workers with the ability to adapt to new technologies through lifelong learning. Both the government and enterprises should create favorable conditions for workers to access retraining opportunities, while also emphasizing the cultivation of ethical qualities, political ideology, and revolutionary ideals within the working class.

Fourth, safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of workers

Amend, supplement, and rigorously implement policies and laws to protect the legitimate rights and interests of workers. Improve workers' material and spiritual lives through specific, practical actions, mechanisms, and policies. Revisit and enhance legal frameworks on wages, social insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance, and housing and working conditions to protect workers' rights and improve their living standards. Revise the vocational training system to gradually intellectualize the working class. Additionally, prioritize political education to raise class awareness and foster a sense of national pride among workers.

Fifth, enhance the awareness of class consciousness among workers

Increase vigilance and consistently identify and effectively combat schemes and tactics by hostile and reactionary forces that aim to divide the national great unity bloc. Adopt strong measures to improve the effectiveness of ideological struggles and maintain the Party's ideological stronghold in cyberspace—a critical battlefield today. Proactively and astutely expose and denounce the reactionary nature and dark intentions of hostile forces. Work to foster revolutionary sentiment and strengthen the trust of workers in the nation's revolutionary cause.

Sixth, build a strong trade union system and promote its role in developing the working class.

Significantly reform the content and methods of trade union activities at all levels. Explore the inclusion of trade union representatives in executive Party committees in areas with large industrial zones and significant worker populations. Direct trade union activities toward grassroots units, focusing on local operations, targeting workers, civil servants, and laborers as primary

beneficiaries. Prioritize safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of workers, promoting harmonious, stable, and progressive labor relations to contribute to socio-economic development.

Trade unions should intensify communication and educational efforts to enhance class consciousness, political awareness, self-reliance, revolutionary vigilance, and commitment to socialism among workers. Engage workers' intelligence to contribute to the drafting, amendment, and implementation of policies and laws. Focus on training and educating grassroots trade union officials, especially trade union presidents in private and foreign-invested enterprises, to improve their political awareness, understanding of labor policies and laws, and professional skills. Renew and improve the quality of trade union cadre training programs. Strengthen the teaching and learning quality at the Trade Union University and Ton Duc Thang University. Enhance and expand international solidarity and cooperation with the working classes and trade unions worldwide./.

(1) Communist Party of Vietnam (2006), *Documents of the 10th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 116.

(2) General Statistics Office, *Press release on the labor and employment situation in the first quarter of 2019*.