The Communist Party of Vietnam - A Decisive Factor in Vietnam's Revolution Victories

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Abstract: *On February 3, 1930, the Communist Party of Vietnam was born. Under the founding and training of leader Nguyễn Ái Quốc, later to become President Hồ Chí Minh, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has steered the Vietnamese revolutionary boat to overcome harsh challenges and as a result won great victories. From a country colonized by French colonial empire, Vietnam became a unified, independent country built and developed towards socialism. From people who lost country and suffered from slavery under both colonial and feudal oppression, the Vietnamese people became the master of their country with their lives comprehensively improved. From a country with more than 4,000 years of history but no name on the world map, Vietnam has increasingly enhanced its position and prestige in the international arena and integrated deeply into the modern world. All these great achievements are inseparable from the CPV's leadership role as a decisive factor which is expressed as follows: paving the way for the Vietnamese revolution; creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to set the right and wise path for the Vietnamese revolution; and organizing the successful implementation of the Vietnamese revolution's tasks.*

Key words: *Communist Party of Vietnam, Vietnam's revolution.*

On February 3, 1930, the Communist Party of Vietnam was born. Under the founding and training of leader Nguyễn Ái Quốc, later to become President Hồ Chí Minh, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) has steered the Vietnamese revolutionary boat to overcome harsh challenges and as a result won great victories. From a country colonized by French colonial empire, Vietnam became a unified, independent country built and developed towards socialism. From people who lost country and suffered from slavery under both colonial and feudal oppression, the Vietnamese people became the master of their country with their lives comprehensively improved. From a country with more than 4,000 years of history but no name on the world map, Vietnam has increasingly enhanced its position and prestige in the international arena and integrated deeply into the modern world. All these great achievements are inseparable from the CPV's leadership role as a decisive factor which is expressed as follows: paving the way for the Vietnamese revolution; creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to set the right and wise path for the Vietnamese revolution; and organizing the successful implementation of the Vietnamese revolution's tasks.

1. The CPV opens a new way for the Vietnamese revolution

In the mid-nineteenth century, the French colonialists invaded Vietnam, and imposed a harsh yoke on the people while exploiting all its resources. With passionate patriotism, national self-reliance and an indomitable heroic tradition of fighting against foreign invaders, the struggles against the French colonialists broke out continuously across the country, including protests by kings, mandarins, patriotic writers and scholars, as well as armed uprisings of patriarchs and peasant leaders. There were also riots during the organization of bourgeois political parties, and nonviolent struggle movements aimed at enlightening the people's knowledge, arousing their spirit, improving their livelihood and calling for support from the outside.

However, those many struggles were unsuccessful. The patriotic kings were exiled. Many patriotic mandarins and generals of the feudal state were executed using barbaric methods. Armed uprisings and riots were drowned in blood. Tens of thousands of patriotic people who stood up against the yoke of foreign colonialists were imprisoned or killed. The failure of those uprisings was foreseen because of the lack of a correct line of struggle, a political party leadership with scientific ideological foundation and strong and persuasive organization to win over the majority of people.

Leader Nguyễn Ái Quốc, later to be known as President Hồ Chí Minh had traveled, studied and done research in many countries to find a way to save Vietnam and its people. He was the founder, organizer, and teacher of the CPV. He equipped the Party with a scientific and correct ideological foundation, which was Marxism-Leninism and the path to socialism. Since 1927, in his work *Revolutionary Road (Duong cach menh),* a guidebook for training the first cadres of the Party, he wrote, "Now there are many theories, but the most genuine and revolutionary is Leninism"(1). The first *Brief Platform of the Party* (Chanh cuong van tat) affirmed that the path of the Vietnamese revolution was "to carry out a bourgeois and civil rights revolution, then a land revolution to advance towards a communist society"(2). The Party's political platform in October 1930 stated: "The Party is the vanguard of the proletariat, taking Marxism and Leninism as its root, and representing the fundamental, longterm, common interests of the whole proletariat in Indochina, and leading the Indochinese proletariat to fight to achieve their ultimate goal, that is communism"(3).

With the establishment of the CPV, for the first time there was a political party in Vietnam strictly organized according to the principle of a modern MarxistLeninist political party, taking Marxism-Leninism as its ideological foundation, and communism as the goal to strive for. Aside from which, it was the first time in Vietnam's history there appeared a new path to national salvation, in which the liberation struggle for national independence, freedom and happiness for the people was associated with the goal of building socialism.

The path that the CPV opened for the Vietnamese revolution was a qualitatively new one compared to other paths that previous patriotic movements had followed. Regarding the theoretical foundation, many patriotic movements before the CPV was born had been more or less spontaneous and were not based on a correct theoretical and scientific foundation. Whereas the revolutionary path led by the CPV was based on Marxism-Leninism, a scientific and practical ideology based on a summary of the historical development of human law. In terms of goals, most of the struggle movements before the birth of the CPV only aimed at solving specific and immediate situations without fundamental long-term goals or were aimed towards the goal of building an outdated feudal or bourgeois regime. However, the revolutionary path outlined by the CPV was focused toward the goal of national liberation, bringing freedom to the people, and carrying out the construction of a new socialism to firmly ensure the country's independence and freedom, thus ensuring happiness for the people. The new path opened for the Vietnamese revolution was in line with historical laws and trends of the times. It was the Russian October Revolution and its superiority that were a practical demonstration of the movement trend of the times. This evidence encouraged the Party to choose a new revolutionary path for the CPV and the Vietnamese people.

2. The CPV creatively applies Marxism-Leninism to wisely set up the path for Vietnamese revolution

The CPV was founded on a combination of the workers' movement and the patriotic movement of the Vietnamese people, taking Marxism-Leninism as the ideological foundation and guideline for its revolutionary goals and actions. On the basis of the principles of MarxismLeninism, the Party creatively applied it to the specific situation of the country to set out the right path for the Vietnamese revolution.

First, the general line of the entire Vietnamese revolutionary process is the organic connection between national independence and socialism. The struggle for national liberation and independence is the basis and condition for the construction and development of the country. Building the country along the socialist road, in turn, is the condition and basis for firmly defending national independence, bringing prosperity as well as happiness and progress to the people. Raising the two flags of national independence and socialism at the same time was a matter of principle, forming the backbone of the entire Party system. Consistently, the Communist Party of Vietnam relies on that as a principled basis to concretize guidelines, and the State of Vietnam has relied on it to develop specific and reasonable policies throughout different historical periods of the country.

Second, the national liberation revolution line relies on the strength of the entire nation's solidarity with the spirit "The more we unite, the more we succeed." The strategy of the Party outlined by leader Nguyễn Ái Quốc and approved at the Party Founding Conference has shown very clearly the view of maximum solidarity of all classes of the people in the revolutionary struggle. Along with the affirmation

that "the Party is the vanguard of the proletariat… the Party must win over the majority of peasants," the Party's line requires "to make all efforts to connect with the petty bourgeois, intellectuals, middle peasants, youth, and the Tan Viet," to attract and gather all into the revolutionary force, including "the rich peasants, the middle peasants, the small landowners and the local capitalists of Annam who are not counter-revolutionary," and to only overthrow "those who are counter-revolutionary." The line of revolutionary struggle is based on the strength of the great unity of the whole people, which comes from the perception of social life rule: "There is nothing in the sky as precious as the people; there is nothing in the world stronger than the united force of the people"(4). The Party's line on great national unity has been increasingly improved in a more specific and positive direction through each stage of the revolutionary process.

The line of the CPV consistently respects and protects justice, equality and solidarity, with mutual help among classes and ethnic groups in the community; respects and ensures the people's right to freedom of religion or non-religious belief as well. The Party considers overseas Vietnamese as an integral part of the Vietnamese nation, encourages and supports overseas Vietnamese to preserve their national cultural identity, and at the same time respects the laws of the state where they live.

Third, the line of building and developing the country for the people, taking the people's happiness as the ultimate goal, continuously and comprehensively improving the people's life, in terms of material and spiritual, as well as socio-economic and cultural aspects. People are both the goal and the driving force of the country's development.

First of all, that revolutionary line reflects the superiority of the socialist regime that the Communist Party leads the people to build. In the socialist regime, the Communist Party, an organization of the elite representatives of the working class and the working people, leads the society. The purpose of that regime is to liberate people, eliminate human exploitation regime and implement democracy and fairness in every policy and every step. In the socialist society, the relationship between people is free and equal, and the relationship between people and nature is harmonious and sustainable.

In line with the preeminent nature of the regime, even in the fiercely difficult years of the liberation war, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam still paid attention to economic development, cultural construction, and improvement of social conditions as the best way to improve people's lives. After liberating the South and reunifying the country, on the basis of promoting the people's initiative and creativity, and selectively absorbing international experiences, the Communist Party of Vietnam set out the process of "Doi Moi" – the renovation policy with three pillars: *economic development is the center, Party building is the key, culture building is the spiritual foundation and driving force for socio-economic development*.

Regarding economic development, the Party advocated building a socialist-oriented market economy. As General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng said, the socialist-oriented market economy in Vietnam *"is a new type of market economy* in the development history of the market economy; a type of economic organization that both obeys the laws of the market economy it is based on, guided by the principles and nature of socialism and expressed in all three aspects: *ownership, management organization and distribution*"(5).

In the process of national construction and development, the CPV is increasingly aware of the role, position and significance of culture in social life. Along with culture, social issues are given due attention for the purpose of developing a harmonious, democratic and fair society, creating opportunities for all people to live in happiness and develop freely, comprehensively, so that no one is left behind. Implementing the Doi Moi policy, Vietnam's national construction and development has made historic achievements. The country's furtunes, potential, international status and prestige have been enhanced. People's living standard have been fundamentally and comprehensively improved both materially and spiritually, in terms of socio-economic and cultural aspects.

Fourth, the line of national defense, security and external relations has also been innovated in line with the general context and the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Regarding external relations, the Party's general line is consistent, based on the principles of independence, self-reliance, mutual benefit; active in international integration, attaching importance to relations with other countries of the world, contributing to peace, progress and human happiness.

The 13th Party Congress determined to, "To consistently excise the foreign policy of independence, autonomy, peace, friendship, cooperation, development, diversification, and multilateralization of fexternal relations. To ensure to the utmost State amd national interests on the basis of fundermental principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, equality, cooperation and mutual benefit. To combine the nation's strength with that of times and be proactive and active in comprehensive and in-depth international integration; Vietnam is a friend, a reliable partner and an active and responsible member of the international community"(6).

The CPV's line considers national defense and security as vital and regular tasks. The Political Report of the Central Committee at the 13th Party Congress determined its goals as, "To bring into full play the aggregate strength of the whole nation and entire political system coupled with the strength of our times, and maximize the sympathy and support of the international community for firm safeguarding of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Homeland, defense of the Party, the State, the people and the socialist system, national culture, and State and national interests; to steadily maintain a peaceful environment, political stability,

State security and human security; and to build an orderly, disciplined, safe and wholesome society for the country's development along the socialist orientation"[7].

To accomplish that important and heavy task, it is necessary to intensify national defense and security; to forge the People's Army and People's Public Security forces revolutionary, standardized, elite and gradually modernized, and to build a people's heart fighting disposition, to form and firmly consolidate an all-people defense disposition and a people's security disposition, to closely and efficiently combine economic, cultural, social and external relations factors with defences and security factors and vice versa.

3. The CPV successfully implements the great tasks of the Vietnamese revolution

Over the past 90 years, the CPV has led the people, organized the implementation of great tasks, and achieved great victories of historical significance.

First, it was the great victory of the struggle for liberation, independence, freedom and reunification of the Homeland, the people and the nation. It was an extremely arduous, self-sacrificing struggle against the world's most powerful enemies, with unprecedented machinations.

With only 5,000 party members, the CPV wisely took advantage of a favorable opportunity, led the people to conduct a general uprising, overthrowing the rule of the French colonialists and Japanese fascists, gaining national independence, establishing the first people's democratic state in Southeast Asia, while making a great victory of the August Revolution in 1945, marking a successful milestone of the national liberation movement on a worldwide scale.

The Dien Bien Phu victory was an glorious triumph of the Vietnamese people that successfully ended the 9-year long resistance war against the French imperialists who were supported by the US imperialists. The decisive basis for that victory was the ingenious leadership of the CPV with the line of all-people resistance, all-around resistance and self-reliance as the main force, while combining the nation's rebellious strength with great support of communist parties and peace-loving movements throughout the world. That victory opened a new era of the Vietnamese revolution, in which the country simultaneously carried out two strategic tasks – building socialism in North Vietnam and fighting aggression to liberate South Vietnam.

The great victories of the Resistance against the United States of America for national salvation and the war to protect the country's border ended the country's war which lasted over 30 years. It opened a new page in the nation's history, building and developing a unified country along the socialist road. The great victory of the Resistance against America to save the country once again proves the wise leadership of the CPV, the invincible strength of the great national unity force and the very important role of the solidarity and support of socialist countries in the world, and the support of progressive, peace-loving forces all over the world.

Second, it is the victory of the renewal (Doi Moi), construction and development of the country to make it more beautiful and dignified. Recovering from the wars that lasted for more than 30 years, Vietnam implemented the country's construction while enduring many difficulties. The infrastructure of many cities, villages, roads, and factories were badly destroyed. Tens of millions of wounded and sick soldiers, orphans, helpless elderly people, Agent Orange victims and people with meritorious service in the resistance war needed help. The country was among the 15 poorest countries in the world. More than 60% of the population lived in poverty. Despite being an agricultural country, however, Vietnam had to import more than 2 million tons of food each year. Under the leadership of the CPV, after 35 years of implementing a policy of renewal, Vietnam has achieved great success of historical significance.

From a backward agricultural country, Vietnam has become a developing country with low middle income, reaching 3,512 USD per person (2020 data). The country's GDP growth rate reached at an average of 7% per year. The GDP growth scale has constantly increased. GDP in 2020 was nearly 350 billion USD. From a country that had to import food, Vietnam has become one of the three largest exporters of rice in the world in addition to many other agricultural products with a large scale and value.

People's lives have been fundamentally and comprehensively improved. The rate of poor households in 2020 was under 3%. Until now, more than 60% of communes in the country have met the new rural standards. The transport system and technical infrastructure in the countryside has been improved, and large roads have been connected to the center of most communes. All communes use the national electricity grid, primary and secondary schools, health stations and telephone service. Currently, the literacy of Vietnamese adults is 95%. Health insurance coverage is 92%, in a system in which the poor, the elderly and children under 6 years old are provided with free health insurance. Vietnam is one of the countries with the highest rate of information technology development in the world. Currently more than 70% of people use the Internet. Over the past 35 years, the number of university and college students has increased 17 times. The average life expectancy is 73.7 years old. Vietnam is one of the countries recognized by the United Nations for taking the lead in realizing the "Millennium Development Goals." In 2019, Vietnam's human development index (HDI) reached 0.704, positioning it among a select group of countries with high HDI in the world compared to other peers.

From a country under sanctions, Vietnam has expanded diplomatic relations with 189/193 member countries of the United Nations. Three countries are "special partners," 17 countries are "strategic partners" and 13 countries are "comprehensive partners." Vietnam is also an active and responsible member of more than 70 important international organizations and forums such as the United

Nations, ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, the WTO, etc. Vietnam has trade relations with 230 countries and territories; participates in many forums around the world. It has signed 15 free trade agreements (FTAs), including 3 updated versions of FTAs with very high standards. Vietnam's total import-export turnover in 2021 is forecasted to exceed USD 660 billion, accounting for about 150% of GDP, bringing Vietnam to join the group of 20 leading economies in the world in terms of international trade. After more than 30 years of opening up for integration, Vietnam has attracted more than 400 billion USD of foreign direct investment (FDI), of which about 250 billion USD has been disbursed.

Third, it is the victory of the creative revolutionary method, which comes from the specific historical conditions of the country, selectively absorbing good experiences and lessons from the world.

Shortly since its establishment, the CPV affirmed its innovative revolutionary method, "being firm in objective, flexible in strategies and tactics," keeping steadfast on the chosen path of socialism, but flexible in selecting methods and solutions to best fulfill the political tasks it has set. Only 7 months after the founding and the announcement of the Party's revolutionary line expressed in the "Brief Platform and the Brief Strategy," at the October 1930 Congress, the Party decided to change its name to the Indochinese Communist Party. In its own words it set out to "abolish the old strategic outline and regulations" to enlist the support of the Communist International. Even so, the Party persisted with the policy of uniting patriotic forces and supporting national independence, including a part of the bourgeoisie and landowners to rally its forces in the struggle for national liberation.

Thanks to the policy of broad national unity, many national bourgeoisie, landowners and patriots voluntarily joined forces with the working class, peasants and intellectuals, and contributed their wealth, talent and even life in the struggle for national independence and freedom. Especially in February 1951, at the Second Party Congress, the Communist Party of Indochina changed its name to the Vietnam Labor Party and separated Laos and Cambodia leaving them to form their own revolutionary parties. The revolutionary practice of the three Indochinese countries proved that this policy was very correct and wise, creating favorable conditions for the parties to actively promote their role and national strength in the struggle for their independence and freedom. At the same time, it was also a basic foundation to create conditions for the three countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to unite and support each other in wartime as well as peacetime.

After the August Revolution in 1945, the situation of the country was very complicated. In the North the Allied representative army entered to disarm, bringing many exiled reactionary Vietnamese political parties and organizations in and causing many opposing cases against the newly-built people's government, inciting sabotage of the goal of national unity. In the South, the French army followed the British army in disarming the fascists, attempting to occupy Vietnam

again. Under such conditions, in November 1945, the Indochinese Communist Party announced its dissolution and established the "Marxist Research Association." In fact, the Party withdrew into a secret operation to create conditions for the revolution and to attract a wide range of supporting forces, thereby consolidating the great national unity bloc and preventing the destructive agitation of political reactionary organizations.

In particular, the Party's Doi Moi policy, which was started at the 6th Party Congress in 1986, was a vivid and convincing evidence of the CPV's innovative revolutionary method because it was closely linked to the country's realities. With the spirit of "frankly looking at the truth," creatively applying and continuing to develop Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh's thought, the Party frankly assessed the country's socio-economic situation, rethought the theoretical issues of the transition to socialism in order to set up a new line suitable to the country's conditions, while ensuring to maintain the socialist orientation, and pave the way for the historical achievements of the country's construction and development period.

4. Continuing to build and rectify a clean and strong Party, while enhancing the Party's leadership and ruling capacity – the decisive factor to the success of national construction and development in the new period.

As a key and decisive factor to all victories of the Vietnamese revolution, the Party building and rectification work to make it clean, comprehensively strong in terms of politics, ideology, morality, and organization has been seen as fundamental to determining the success or failure of the country's construction and development in the coming time. The 13th Party Congress set forth ten tasks and solutions for Party building and rectification in the coming years.

1) *To Enhance Party building politically*, to persist the goal of national independence and socialism, constantly apply and creatively develop Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought in accordance with the specific conditions of the country in each period.

2) *To attach importance to Party building ideologically*, to innovate vigorously the contents and modes of ideological work along the line of proactiveness, practicality, timeliness and efficiency. To raise combativeness, instructiveness and persuasiveness in the propagation and education Marxism-Leninism, Hồ Chí Minh's thought, the Party's viewpoints and guidelines, and the State's policies and laws. To combat determinedly conspiracies, arguments and sabotage.

3) *To focus on Party building ethically,* to push ahead education in revolutionary morality, to raise the exemplary responsibility of Party cadres and members while at the same time to intensify the struggle against immoral and unethical viewpoints and behaviors.

4) *To step up Party building organizationally;* to continue innovating and improving the political system's organizational apparatuses and raising its operational efficiency.

5) To consolidate and raise the quality of Party grassroots organizations and Party members. To continue innovating and improving the structure of Party

grassroots organizations. To undertake concertedly solutions aimed at raising the quality of Party members.

6) *To enhance Party building in terms of cadres at different levels, especially strategic level cadres and chiefs.*

7) *To continue raising the effectiveness and efficiency of Party scrutinization, supervision and discipline work;* to impove stipulations and regulations, to associate closely, and ever more efficiently, Party scrutinization, supervision and discipline work with supervision, inspection and auditing by the State.

8) *To further tighten the close-knit relations between the Party and the people,* to rely on the people for Party building, to improve and implement regulations on the people's oversight of party organizations and members.

9) *To resolutely and persisstently fight corruption and wastefulness;* while at the same time, to continue ramping up reforms of policies on wages and salaries, income augmentation and public welfare for cadres, public officals and contracted public employees to have peace of mind at work.

10) *To continue innovating vigorously the modes of the Party's leadership in the new conditions,* including the leadership of State, the role and responsibility of Fatherland Front and the people's organizations, roles and accountability of chiefs, the supervision power, the way of promulgating Party's resolutions, the study and thorough grasp of Party's resolutions and theoretical research.

Conclusion

In summarizing the theoretical basis of the practice of the Vietnamese revolution over the past 90 years, it is evident that the CPV's role has been the decisive factor in all victories of the Vietnamese revolution. Therefore, it requires the Party to substantially strengthen the building and rectification work, making the Party clean, strong, and capable of overcoming difficulties and challenges, while leading the people to realize the goals of a prosperous people and a strong, democratic, equitable and advanced country./.

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