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THE PIONEER WHO OPENED THE WAY TO RESOLVE THE HISTORIC CRISIS OF THE NATION

Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN [Communist Review] in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 79 pp 26-34

[Article by Hong Quang]

[Text] Part I

"In the 1920's, following the defeat of the Can Vuong uprising, the intense liberation movement of our people faced a profound crisis with regard to the line it would follow."

This observation, which is made in the introduction of Le Duan's book "Advancing Under the Glorious Banner of the Party To Win New Victories for Independence, Freedom and Socialism," generally describes the actual situation of our country at the start of the 20th Century, especially from 1921 to 1929.

This observation refers only to the crisis in its profound stage. Actually, this crisis began when the French colonialists invaded our country, began when our people took up arms to resist their aggression and lasted until the birth of the party of the Vietnamese working class. During that period of time, our country's revolution was experiencing "darkness from which there was no escape." Although the movement won some victories, it was ultimately put down by the French colonialists. The defeats of these uprisings had one basic cause, the lack of a correct line.

In the 1920's, this crisis in line reached its highpoint. After the liberation struggle waged under the banner "support the king, save the nation" met with failure, the cause of liberation was continued under a new banner, the banner of bourgeois democracy, but it did not succeed in achieving better results. The crisis, instead of being resolved, worsened.

Why was this?

It was because throughout the preceding period and subsequent period, all patriots were limited by historic conditions, by their recognition and could not understand that the old times had passed and the new times had emerged with totally different characteristics. The lines previously followed to

4. If we mechanize 70-80 percent of agriculture in the Red River Delta, we can free several million laborers.
5. The Political Report of the Party Central Committee at the 4th National Congress of Delegates, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, p 28.

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save the nation were no longer suitable. The persons who were leading the anti-French movement under the banner "serve the king, save the nation" were unable to explain why our forefathers had served the king and saved the nation from Nguyen, Thanh and Minh but could not win victory against the French under the banner "serve the king, save the nation."

The historic experience of our country over the past half century and the historic experience of the modern world prove that only by correctly examining and evaluating the characteristics of the age is it possible to gain a deep understanding of the characteristics of each country and possible to adopt a correct line.

"Only by examining the primary characteristics of the different 'times' (not simply the special stages of history of each country) can we adopt the correct strategy; and only by understanding the fundamental characteristics of an age can we evaluate the peculiar characteristics of one country or another."(1)

In each age, we must determine which class plays the central role during the age and determine the basic factors and the principal trends of development of the age.

Engels also stated that each age is dominated by its own class, that the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were elements of society that were "indispensable" and "necessary" "as the moving force behind the progress of mankind"; as "the legitimate power during a limited period of history"(2); however, this necessity, this role as a moving force and the legitimate power disappeared once these classes seized total power, became exploiters, became obstacles to the development of society and became reactionary. This is the way to examine the issue of the age of the founders of scientific socialism.

In our country, the process of development of society has been marked by special historic conditions; therefore, the emergence and role of the classes have also been marked by special characteristics. The most noticeable difference here is that Vietnamese society has not experienced a period of capitalist development, although it has seen rudiments of capitalism. While the feudal system in our country had completed its historic role and capitalism had not emerged, in the West, capitalism shifted from being a progressive force to being a reactionary force. The bourgeoisie lost its status as the moving force behind social progress and was no longer the central class of the age. The French bourgeoisie, which arose from the 1789 revolution, became a monarchial, corrupt and reactionary bourgeoisie. Our country's bourgeoisie, which was born during that age and had a small, underdeveloped economic and political position, did not have the objective base needed to become the central class of Vietnamese society or play the role as a moving force behind social progress as had the French bourgeoisie during the age of its ascendancy. However, the role of the feudal class, due to the stable historic conditions underlying it, was, as Engels stated, part of the common law of development of mankind. Our country's feudal

class during its initial stage, which occurred in the Middle Ages, had a certain amount of progressive impact upon the development of society, especially with regard to winning and maintaining the independence of the nation and resisting the yoke of foreign aggression.

The age in which Ly Thuong Kiet, Tran Quoc Tuan, Nguyen Trai and so forth recorded outstanding feats of arms by defeating aggressor armies and winning and maintaining the independence of the country was the age in which the feudal class in our country was still progressive, the age in which all national movements, wars of resistance and uprisings against aggression were within the orb of the feudal class, the center of society. Because the feudal class of that time still played a progressive role, the interests of that class were somewhat consistent with the interests of the nation; the representatives of this class adopted such clear-sighted lines as "agreement between king and subject, harmony between brothers, unity throughout the country," "rely upon the strength of the people," "fathers and sons be soldiers together," "use weakness to resist strength, use few to defeat many" and so forth, which were correct strategic lines that led the war of resistance against foreign aggression to victory.

However, beginning in the 16th Century, the feudal class of our country showed indications of declining and entered a process of gradual change from progressive to reactionary. Because of this, the Trinh-Nguyen conflict divided the country for 200 years, Le Chieu Thong betrayed the country and Nguyen Anh asked the French colonialists to save our country, thereby opening the way for them to invade our country. Although our people continued to stage uprisings and although these uprisings were, at times, very heroic and great and reflected the unyielding tradition of the nation, the course of liberation based on the viewpoint of the feudal class could not save the nation in the new age.

In the new age, when the feudal mode of production became the major obstacle to the development of society, it was clear that the "central class" of the age was not the feudal class that had betrayed the nation and was suppressing the people. For this reason, the banner of national salvation based on the feudal point of view lost all appeal and became a tattered banner. The slogan "serve the king, save the nation" no longer had any meaning when the king, the symbol of the country, became a traitor. Our people had to fight for 38 long years (1858-1896) under that banner and had to pay a very high price to learn a valuable lesson: feudal ideology is the reason why our people are backward and why they lost their country.

"The very old know how the qualifications for civil service examinations harm us." This was the testament of Luong Van Can, the famous, patriotic, feudal intellectual, the leader of the Tonkin School. His testament was also the conclusion reached by all of the feudal intellectuals of our country at the start of the 20th Century. The "qualifications" referred to by Luong Van Can was not only a manifestation of the system of feudal civil service examinations, but also a manifestation of the entire feudal system and not only harmed the personal life of Luong Van Can, but also harmed an entire nation.

After divorcing themselves from feudal theory, Vietnamese patriots searched for a new course of national salvation. The course they found was national salvation based on the theory of bourgeois democracy in the translated works of Luong Khai Sieu and Khang Huu Vi, national salvation based on cooperation with modern Japan, national salvation based on the Chinese Tan Hoi bourgeois revolution, on the bourgeois parliamentary system in the western countries.

After the Tonkin School had been open only 9 months, the French colonialists issued an order closing it and imprisoned Luong Van Can and his followers on Con Dao Island. The anti-Trung Ky tax movement was suppressed and Phan Chu Trinh was also banished to Con Dao Island. Phan Boi Chau and Vietnamese overseas students were expelled from Japan. The Tan Hoi revolution met with defeat and Phan Boi Chau was arrested by the Chinese militarists. Phan Boi Chau was disappointed in modern Japan, which he once admired very much, and could not understand why that country did not want others to follow the modern course. Phan Chu Trinh, who was imprisoned several times by the French, could not understand why France, which had the most famous parliamentary system in Europe, did not want its colony to have a bourgeois parliamentary system and severely suppressed those Vietnamese who wanted France to help them establish a bourgeois parliamentary system.

All of the patriots of our country who adopted this bourgeois democratic stand failed to understand that the central class in the new age, the class determining the guidelines and substance of the development of the times was not the feudal class nor the bourgeoisie. "The bourgeoisie, once a progressive and ascending class, had now become a declining, withering, troubled, reactionary class." (3) They failed to understand that "a totally different class had become the ascending class within a broad scope of history." (4) That class was the proletariat.

For this reason, bourgeois democratic theory was not the revolutionary theory that could liberate the oppressed nations and laboring masses. Therefore, the defeat of Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh also meant the bankruptcy of bourgeois democratic theory in our country.

Prior to 1920, our country was truly in a profound crisis regarding which line should be followed to save the nation. This crisis was a crisis concerning the leadership role of the progressive class in society.

## Part II

Amidst this deadlock, at a time when "the situation appeared hopeless," Nguyen Ai Quoc, that is, the revered President Ho Chi Minh, by means of his genius and his practical actions, promptly met the pressing need of history.

Refusing to be bound by the limitation of contemporary patriots, Nguyen Ai Quoc found another way to save the country, one based on accurately analyzing the various lines for national salvation that had met with defeat.

Later, we heard this analysis repeated as follows: "Phan Chu Trinh did nothing more than ask the French to carry out a reform...which is the same as asking the enemy to have pity on you."

"Phan Boi Chau hoped that the Japanese would help drive off the French. This was very dangerous, much like 'bringing a tiger to the front door and finding a panther at the back door.'"

"Hoang Hoa Tham was more realistic because he directly struggled against the French. However, according to those who tell it, he was a feudalist at heart."(5)

In 1911, when he began his journey to find the course of national salvation, Nguyen Ai Quoc lacked the conditions needed to immediately adopt the theory of Marxism-Leninism. In Europe, Marxism had been born more than 60 years ago (1847) but not one socialist revolution had won victory in the world. The places visited by Nguyen Ai Quoc (the United States, Great Britain, France and so forth) had no communist party. Prior to 1919, there was no Communist International. It was under these conditions that Nguyen Ai Quoc began the work of studying the revolutions that had won victory in the most developed capitalist countries. They were the American revolution of 1776 and the French revolution of 1789. Nguyen Ai Quoc greatly admired the desire for independence and freedom of the American people but he realized that it was not possible to follow the course of this revolution because it had won victory more than 150 years ago but workers and farmers were still living miserable lives, were thinking about a second revolution. He also admired the spirit of the French revolution but could not follow its course either because the French revolution, like the American revolution, was a bourgeois revolution, an "incomplete revolution."

At that time, although he was not within the ranks of the progressive class of the times, Nguyen Ai Quoc saw that the bourgeoisie was no longer the progressive class of the age.

When World War I broke out, it further exposed the cruel, corrupt and dying nature of capitalism. This was the most vivid reality that helped Nguyen Ai Quoc to understand the true nature of capitalism.

In 1917, returning to France, Nguyen Ai Quoc participated in the French workers' movement. In November of that year, an event occurred that shook the entire world and marked a great turning point in the history of man; the victorious Russian October Revolution. The October Revolution ushered in a new age in history, the age of transition from capitalism to socialism throughout the world. The October Revolution also brought about a turning point in the national liberation movement by closely linking national independence and socialism under Lenin's resounding militant slogan: "Proletariat of all oppressed countries and nations, unite!" The victory of the October Revolution shook the reformism of the 2nd International at its very foundation and led to the establishment of the Communist International-- the revolutionary vanguard unit of the working class and the oppressed peoples of the entire world. Then, a profound division occurred within

the international worker movement: to follow the bankrupt and traitorous 2nd International or to follow the revolutionary 3rd International? All of these important events in the political life of the world directly influenced and determined the revolutionary course followed by Nguyen Ai Quoc. After spending a short period of time engaged in study and research, Nguyen Ai Quoc unhesitatingly committed himself to the course of the October Revolution, to Marxism-Leninism and the Communist International.

This irrevocable stand taken by Nguyen Ai Quoc was marked by an action of historic significance at the Congress of the French Social Party held in Tours, December 1920. At that congress, Nguyen Ai Quoc voted to endorse the Communist International, voted to establish the French Communist Party.

The irrevocable stand to follow the course of the Russian October Revolution was presented by Nguyen Ai Quoc in his book "The Revolutionary Road" written 5 years after helping to found the French Communist Party.

"In the world today, only the Russian revolution has achieved success, achieved thorough success, that is, the masses enjoy true happiness and freedom... The Russian revolution drove off the Czar, the capitalists and landowners and is now making every effort to have the workers and farmers of all countries and the oppressed peoples of the colonies carry out a revolution to topple imperialism and capitalism throughout the world."

Nguyen Ai Quoc's irrevocable stand of total commitment to Marxism-Leninism was stated by him as follows:

"We now have many theories and philosophies but the most genuine, the most reliable and the most revolutionary of them is Leninism."

"The Russian revolution teaches us that...we must follow Marxism and Leninism."

Nguyen Ai Quoc's irrevocable stand of total commitment to the Communist International was recorded in this book as follows: "To wage a successful revolution, Vietnam must rely upon the 3rd International."

What was it that led Nguyen Ai Quoc to Marxism-Leninism so rapidly and irrevocably?

Nguyen Ai Quoc answers:

"At first, it was patriotism, not communism, that led me to believe in Lenin, in the 3rd International. Gradually, while studying Marxist-Leninist theory and performing practical work during the war, I came to understand that only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed peoples and working people of the world from the yoke of slavery."(6)

From patriotism to communism, that was the course followed by Nguyen Ai Quoc. It is also the course followed by the people of Vietnam.

We understand the patriotism referred to by Nguyen Ai Quoc to be the patriotism of the proletariat. It differs from the patriotism practiced before Nguyen Ai Quoc.

The historic experience of the more than 100 years of the Vietnamese revolution and the historic experience of the modern world prove that not all types of patriotism lead to socialism. The patriotism of Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh did not lead these two gentlemen to communism, even though Phan Boi Chau did write a book on socialism. The patriotism of Gandhi, Sukarno, Sun Yat-sen and so forth also failed to lead them to communism, even though they did once embrace communism.

The patriotism of Nguyen Ai Quoc was the total opposite of the patriotic stand taken by the feudal class and the bourgeoisie. Imbued with the essence of the patriotism of the people and nation and feeling deep sympathy over the loss of country, the injustices and the impoverishment of the working people of all countries, Nguyen Ai Quoc lived, listened and rapidly found and accepted the patriotic viewpoints of the proletariat. For this reason, Nguyen Ai Quoc's patriotic viewpoints were very correct. One was the viewpoint that once the revolution achieves victory, the right of ownership must belong to the majority of the people, not to a minority. Another was the viewpoint of loving one's country while respecting the sovereignty of the peoples of other countries, as a result of which there is an alliance between the national liberation revolution of the colonies and the proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries. Another was the viewpoint of uniting all patriots in the world within a united front against the common enemy, imperialism.

The inevitable trend of the age, and also of Vietnam under the new conditions that existed, was for genuine patriotism, once the feudal class and the bourgeoisie had dropped their banner of patriotism, to adopt socialism; there was no other course open to genuine patriots for thoroughly liberating the nation outside the course of socialism. Whether this trend became apparent to genuine patriots quickly or slowly was determined by specific historic conditions; however, this trend was an objective law.

In Vietnam, all genuine patriots stand under the banner of socialism. Nguyen Ai Quoc was the first Vietnamese patriot to wave this banner.

Nguyen Ai Quoc's adoption of Marxism-Leninism caused an entire stratum of Vietnamese patriots to do likewise, thus forming a strong current in Vietnamese life in the 1920's.

Nguyen Ai Quoc's participation in the founding of the French Communist Party in 1920 was not only a great turning point in his active life, but also opened the way for the great turning point in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. It was the turning point that ushered in the period of the Vietnamese patriotic movement being closely linked to communism, the turning point that opened the way for Marxism-Leninism to enter Vietnam.

In Russia, Lenin said that Marxism would have to experience one-half century filled with terrible suffering and sacrifice, one-half century of unparalleled revolutionary bravery, one-half century of unprecedented energies and selflessness devoted to study and research, one-half century of practical experience, of failures of examining and relating to the experience in Europe in order to win victory. Vietnam travelled this course of hardship and sacrifice for more than 60 years, from the time it was invaded by the French imperialists until Nguyen Ai Quoc found Marxism-Leninism, and for more than 70 years if we include the founding of the Vietnam Communist Party. This course also involved the examination of the mistakes and failures of domestic revolutionary theory, examination of the latest revolutionary experiences of Europe and America, the selfless study performed by Nguyen Ai Quoc and his comrades-in-arms and, finally, the examples set by the Russian October Revolution.

The law of the development of our times is that national independence is closely linked to socialism. Previous compatriots were unaware of or slow to recognize this law. Nguyen Ai Quoc, however, recognized it at an early date.

This was related to the historic circumstances in which Nguyen Ai Quoc lived and, at the same time, to Nguyen Ai Quoc himself and all other contemporary patriots.

Nguyen Ai Quoc was born and worked in the new age. This age is the age of the collapse of imperialism, the age of transition from capitalism to socialism on a worldwide scale, the age in which national independence is closely linked to socialism. The class standing in the center of the age is not the bourgeoisie, but the working class.

In the new age, the national liberation revolution and the effort to abolish the feudal system can only win thorough victory if led by the working class, "a class that always stands in the forefront of the fight in all periods of history, a class whose revolutionary nature is most clearly evident when the revolutionary ship encounters perils, when it must traverse treacherous rapids or when the country faces serious challenges and must deal with unprecedented difficulties"(7), a class "that is always in the center of the historic events of the country."(8)

Nguyen Ai Quoc was the first Vietnamese revolutionary to realize this truth. He affirmed:

"The working class is the bravest, the most revolutionary class, the class that always courageously struggles with the imperialists and colonialists."(9) In the new age, the national and democratic revolution cannot win victory without the participation of workers and farmers, the two main forces of the revolution. Nguyen Ai Quoc realized this truth at an early date, realized what Lenin called the "most remarkable thing in life."

In Vietnam, the feudal class became reactionary. The bourgeoisie became weak and powerless. The theories of both the feudal class and the bourgeoisie

were bankrupt. In light of their own experience of more than 50 years, the Vietnamese lost confidence in both of these theories and waited night and day for a new theory that would liberate them.

With a deep understanding of the requirements of history and the aspirations of the people, Nguyen Ai Quoc was determined to find the newest and most correct theory.

He began his search at a time when capitalism was displaying the full measure of its decadent and corrupt nature in the final stage of capitalism and in the war.

The imperialist war (1914-1918) fully exposed the fraudulent nature of the bourgeois slogan "liberty, equality, fraternity." In his 10 years of watching, listening and studying abroad, Nguyen Ai Quoc quickly saw that behind the slogan "liberty, equality, fraternity" were countless injustices and deceptions. The European bourgeoisie and the American bourgeoisie had trampled upon the human rights and the equal rights of the people.

It was these historic circumstances that helped Nguyen Ai Quoc to quickly determine the backward and anti-progressive aspects of the American bourgeois revolution and the French bourgeois revolution under the conditions that existed then and quickly led him to Marxism-Leninism.

Nguyen Ai Quoc purposely lived and worked with oppressed, exploited laborers in order to conduct his revolutionary activities, and this is one of the important reasons why he quickly accepted Marxism-Leninism and became the first Marxist of Vietnam. In 1960, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the French Communist Party, Ho Chi Minh said:

"As for myself, as a result of studying the glorious revolutionary tradition and being forged in the realities of the brave struggle of the workers and the French Communist Party, I found the truth of Marxism-Leninism and changed from a progressive patriot into a fighter for socialism."(10)

The time he spent working in the French worker movement was also the period during which Nguyen Ai Quoc gradually studied Marxist-Leninist theory, beginning with the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism concerning national liberation. However, once he had accepted scientific socialism and become a fighter for socialism, Nguyen Ai Quoc not only saw his responsibility to the liberation of his nation, but also his responsibility to the common cause of the world revolution. The patriotism of Nguyen Ai Quoc was closely combined with proletarian internationalism. In his very first book he pointed out that the working class and laboring people must closely link the revolution in the colony with the proletarian revolution in the imperialist country, must use them as the two wings of a bird, must consider the Vietnamese revolution a part of the world revolution.

On 3 February 1930, after 10 years of ideological, political and organizational preparations, 10 years of preaching Marxism-Leninism, 10 years of establishing

the correct revolutionary viewpoints and lines for struggling against the political viewpoints and lines of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, the Vietnam Communist Party was born.

The birth of the Vietnam Communist Party with its correct revolutionary platform, its tight system of organizations throughout the country was a great turning point in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. The birth of the Vietnam Communist Party marked the end of that revolutionary period in the history of our country during which we had no line to follow, marked the end of the crisis that had lasted for two-thirds of a century regarding this. The birth of the Vietnam Communist Party ushered in a new age in the history of our country, the age in which the working class stands in the center coordinating the various revolutionary tides, is the class determining the substance of and the guidelines for the development of society; the age in which our people write their own history in a self-conscious and organized manner; the age in which our people participate in the great undertaking of liberating mankind from each yoke of oppression and exploitation.

In the ending of the old age as well as the opening of the new, Nguyen Ai Quoc was always in the lead.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Lenin: "Complete Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1963, Volume 21, p 157.
2. "The Classical Authors of Marxism on the Science of History," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1963, p 314.
3. Lenin: "Complete Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1963, Volume 21, p 161.
4. Ibid.
5. Tran Dan Tien: "Nhưng mau chuyen ve doi hoat dong cua Ho Chu tich" [Short Stories on the Active Life of President Ho], Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1975, pp 12 and 13.
6. Ho Chi Minh: "Vi doc lap tu do, vi chu nghĩa xã hội" [For Independence, Freedom and Socialism], Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p 229.
7. Le Duan: speech at the 4th National Trade Union Congress, 9 May 1978.
8. Ibid.
9. Ho Chi Minh: "Vi doc lap tu do, vi chu nghĩa xã hội"...p 210.
10. "Nhưng loi kêu gọi của Ho Chi tich" [Appeals of President Ho], Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1962, Volume 6, p 135.

BOOK INTRODUCTION: THE FIRST BOOK OF PICTURES ON THE SUBJECT "OUR PEOPLE ARE VERY HEROIC, OUR PARTY IS TRULY GREAT!"

Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN/[Communist Review] in Vietnamese No 2, Feb 79 pp 35-38

[Article by Dao Tung]

[Text] "Our people are very heroic, our party is truly great!"

These words spoken by President Ho Chi Minh are the theme running throughout the book of pictures "Under the Glorious Banner of the Party" published by the Vietnam News Agency in 1976 in commemoration of the 4th National Congress of Delegates of the Party (first printing) and printed for the second time in commemoration of the 49th anniversary of the birth of our party (1979).

On the occasion of the commemoration of the 49th anniversary, this book has been distributed to all basic party organizations. This is the first time that the history of the revolutionary struggle of our party has been illustrated in pictures in the form of a book printed by domestic workers, a book that meets high technical standards, a book that is both informative and artistic in nature.

Our Vietnamese Fatherland Was Built Through Thousands of Years of Diligent Labor and Brave Struggle by Our People

Following the eight pictures that take the place of a written introduction, chapter 1 presents our forefathers' tradition of brave struggle to build and defend the country. The picture of the temple of the Hung Kings and the picture of the Ngoc Lu kettle drum call to mind one of the earliest civilizations of mankind, the civilization which our nation worked diligently to build on the sacred ground of our fatherland. The victorious struggles against the cruel aggression by the feudal powers to the north still appear impressive in the historic pictures of the Trung Sisters, Mrs. Trieu, Ngo Quyen, Ly Tung Kiet, Tran Hung Dao, Le Loi and Nguyen Hue. The pictures of the temples of the heroes of the various nationalities, each with its own form of architecture, its own character, appear truly elegant but solemn, classic and simple as well.