

# Socialism And The Practice Of Socialist Construction In Vietnam - From A Cultural Perspective

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## Abstract

Socialism, in its primordial sense, is the needs and aspirations of the oppressed and exploited working classes. Socialism is also a path and a method of struggle for people to liberate themselves as well as liberate society from private ownership, oppression, and exploitation to build a new progressive, fair, and equal society. In Vietnam, the renovation since the 6th National Party Congress (1986) has achieved outstanding achievements which are historically meaningful. After more than 35 years of renovation, the Communist Party of Vietnam has made significant contributions to the practice of building socialism. In the process of building socialism, our Party and State have always been deeply aware of the position, roles, and strengths of culture. Today, Vietnamese culture is an advanced one imbued with national identity, reflecting the harmonious development between tradition and modernity, and between the economy, culture, and society. The 13th National Party Congress Resolution stated: "Develop people comprehensively and build an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity so that culture can truly become an internal strength and a driving force for national development and national defense" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, volume 1, p.115-116). Therefore, in Vietnam's socialist construction, culture is a strong force with immeasurable contributions.

**Keywords:** way and method of struggle; fair and equal; the power of culture; harmonious development between tradition and modernity; cultural exchange and acculturation; imbued with national identity; internal strength.

## INTRODUCTION

Idea (Idéa in Greek) is a form of human consciousness reflecting the real world. The idea of socialism emerged as a system of conceptions of the practical needs and dreams of the oppressed and exploited working classes; the path and method of struggle to establish a social regime in which the means of production belong to society as a whole. There is no oppression, exploitation, or injustice so that everyone is equal in all aspects and has a free, prosperous, happy, and civilized life.

The ancient ideas of socialism were mainly expressed as dreams and aspirations of the oppressed. Initially, they were spread and disseminated by unwritten

stories. Such oppression and exploitation of Sparta and Athens, as well as of ancient Rome, is at the root of all slave and oppressed poor people's resistance.

In the Utopian socialism of the 16th and 17th centuries, many outstanding delegates appeared, such as Thomas More (1478 - 1535), Thomas Campanella (1568 - 1639), and Jerzad Owenstelli (1609 - 1652). Despite some differences in levels, in general, socialist thoughts through various periods have shown a critical spirit, condemning absolute monarchy and capitalism.

In the Critical-Utopian socialism of the early 19th century, in philosophy and social science, it must be mentioned the advent of classical German

philosophy with great philosophers, such as Hegel (1770 - 1831) and Feuerbach (1804 - 1872); A. Smith (1723 - 1790) and D. Ricardo (1772-1823) of classical British political economy; H. de Saint Simon (1760 - 1825), S. Phurie (1772 - 1837) and R. Owen (1771 - 1858) of Critical-Utopian socialism. Their scientific values and dedication have laid the foundation for the next generation of thinkers and scientists to build their own theories.

C. Marx (1818 - 1883) and F. Engels (1820 - 1895) grew up in a country where philosophy brilliantly developed with some outstanding achievements, such as the materialism of L. Feuerbach and the dialectic of Hegel. By their erudition, C. Marx and F. Engels critically absorbed the values of classical philosophy and the treasure of theoretical thoughts left by previous generations. Besides, they soon immersed themselves in the struggle of the working class and the labor. These things allowed them to meet each other and become like-minded friends, which helped them realize the nature of economic, political, and social events taking place in capitalism.

In his era, V.I. Lenin (1870 - 1924) applied and developed scientific socialism after the October Revolution. After the success of the October Revolution, due to the requirements of constructing a new regime, V.I. Lenin started to analyze and clarify the content and nature of the transitional period to socialism, determining the program of building socialism, building and organizing economic policies, and identifying new economic policies to use and learn from capitalism's economic organization and management experiences to improve the outdated smallholder economy of Soviet Russia.

The application and development of scientific socialism since V.I. Lenin passed away (1924 - present). All the small and important victories of the working class and the world's revolutions of the 20th century contributed directly, fundamentally, and significantly to socialism and the successful application of basic principles of scientific socialism into the practice of communist movements and international workers in each country as well as of the whole world socialist system.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to achieve the purpose and complete the research task, the author used the method of dialectical materialism and historical materialism of Marxism - Leninism as the most general methodology. At the same time, author also uses the methods of abstraction, generalization, analysis and synthesis; inference and induction, logic, and the qualitative method.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The practice of building socialism in Vietnam – From a cultural perspective.**

Vietnam has a civilization that dates back over four thousand years. During the time of building and defending the country, the Vietnamese have accumulated, created, and promoted many national values and unique cultural identity that form the spirit of the country. President Ho Chi Minh once emphasized that a nation stays alive when its culture stays alive. Culture lights the way for the nation. Culture plays an extremely important part in the cause of resistance wars and the great national construction of our nation. Being deeply aware of the position, role, meaning, and importance of culture in the development of our country and our people, right from the first political platform of the Party of 1930, our Party has already mentioned the issue of national cultural development.

In Vietnam, the revolution launched and led by the Communist Party of Vietnam since the 6th National Congress (1986) has achieved significant achievements which are historically meaningful. Based on the practice of the world revolution and Vietnamese revolutionary experiences, our Party was acutely aware that there was only one path to national independence and socialism; our country would be truly independent and free; and our people would become the owners of their own destiny and the path of the country's development.

Build and develop a socialist-oriented market economy in parallel with strengthening the roles of the State in construction and management; appropriately deal with the relationship between economic growth and development and social justice.

Economic construction and development must go together with the preservation and promotion of national cultural identity and ecological environmental protection; promote democracy and build the legal State of the people, by the people, and for the people; renovate and complete the political system, gradually build and perfect a socialist democracy system with all rights belonging to the people...

After more than 35 years of renovation, the Communist Party of Vietnam has not only succeeded in national construction and defense but also made significant contributions to the theoretical treasure house of Marxism-Leninism in general and of scientific socialism in particular, including Vietnam's economic and cultural achievements. Besides the ideology of national independence associated with socialism, the rule of the Vietnamese revolution is also mentioned. In the current context, our Party has also substantially contributed to the treasure house of scientific socialism with the "three pillars", "developing economy is the main task, building the Party is the key, and developing culture is the spiritual foundation of society. All of these create three pillars for rapid and sustainable development in our country." At the 13th National Congress, our Party further confirmed that national defense and security are important and on a regular basis.

It can be seen that the position and roles of culture have been taken seriously, which have been repeated many times in the Party's strategy throughout the periods. Culture is considered the spiritual foundation of society, the internal strength, and the driving force for national development and protection. Developing culture synchronously in harmony with economic growth, social progress, and justice is a fundamental orientation of the socialist construction in Vietnam. The culture we build is an advanced culture imbued with national identity, showing unity in diversity and depending on progressive and humanistic values.

According to Marx and Engels, the concept of "culture" is not only the human relationship with nature but also the nature of labor, called the "first historical act". Culture is a concept that reflects the whole picture, manifestation, and promotion of

natural abilities in all forms of human activities, and that is the total reflection of value systems created by humans in their practical - historical - social process. F. Engels wrote: "Each step forward in the field of culture is a step towards freedom" (K. Marx and F. Engels, 1999, pp.136-137). Talking about culture is talking about people, which refers to the promotion of "natural abilities" in order to make humans and society better.

President Ho Chi Minh once affirmed: "Backward customs and traditions are big enemies; they implicitly hinder the process of the revolution" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol. 7, p.287), and some outdated elements of the "three obediences and four virtues" need to be discarded. He once said: "In the country's construction, there are four equally important issues we need to pay attention to, such as politics, economy, society, and culture." "Culture cannot be separated but is a part of the economy and politics" (Ho Chi Minh, 2002, vol. 6, pp.367-369). Economy and culture are the material and spiritual foundations of society; in Ho Chi Minh's ideology, both serve the political task of building a society of wealthy people, strong country, democracy, justice, morality, and civilization. The harmony between economic, political, cultural, and social development creates sustainable development. After the success of the August Revolution of 1945, in the Council of Government's first session (September 3, 1945), President Ho Chi Minh stated six urgent missions for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, three of which are related to culture: first, to eradicate hunger and ignorance; second, to educate the people on spirit; third, to freely exercise religion and belief.

Under the leadership of the Party with management and administration of the State for over 92 years, which is a sign of synergy of the Vietnamese political system, building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity has been continuously consolidated and developed. The mission of building culture must go hand in hand with the mission of building and developing the country. Keeping the role of culture in the revolution in mind, right from early 1943, the Communist Party of Indochina published the Outline on Vietnamese Culture. The outline confirmed: "The cultural front is

one of the three fronts (economic, political, and cultural) in which communists must operate. It is necessary to carry out not only a political revolution but also a cultural one" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, volume 7, p.316). The cultural outline of the Party (1943) presented three principles of the revolutionary movement on the cultural front, such as "Nationalization", "Popularization", and "Scientization". The three are closely linked and dialectically affect one another, creating a new culture with new qualities for the Vietnamese.

The Documents of the 3rd Party Congress (September 1960) clearly stated that the policy of building a culture includes socialist content and ethnicity. In the process of building socialism, the Party identified cultural and ideological development as revolutions carried out simultaneously and closely connected with the revolution in the relations of production as well as science and technology. The guidelines for cultural and ideological revolution and socialist cultural construction with national, popular, and scientific characteristics have continued to be developed and supplemented in the early years of the advancing to socialism process.

The 4th National Party Congress (December 1976) determined to build a new person and culture, and fight against reactionary and toxic ideas and content. The 5th National Party Congress (March 1982) clearly stated that the new culture we build is a culture with socialist content and ethnicity, with the Party spirit and deep humanity, imbued with patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

The 5th National Party Congress (March 1982) clearly stated that the new culture we build is a culture with socialist content and ethnicity, with the Party spirit and deep humanity, imbued with patriotism and proletarian internationalism. The 5th National Party Congress also deeply presented the concept of "The new socialist man" and introduced the motto "The State and the people co-create culture".

At the 6th National Party Congress, after synthesizing discourses from the delegates, the Party officially included in the Resolution Building a culture and socialist art deeply imbued with national identity, which was highly focused in cultural and art policy. At the 7th National Party Congress, building a

culture imbued with national identity received attention from the Party again and the Party was consistent in building an advanced culture imbued with national identity. At the 8th National Party Congress, the Party maintained "Building an advanced culture imbued with a strong sense of national identity." The Party determined that it is one of the ten important contents that must be focused on. In fact, it has been maintained throughout the next National Party Congresses, showing the attention of the Party to culture and determination to build an advanced culture imbued with national identity, worthy of the nation's thousands of years of history.

It can be seen that the Vietnamese national cultural identity are the sustainable values quintessence of 54 ethnic groups cultivated from the bitter and victorious years of building and defending the country. The core spiritual value for future generations was presented in the Documents of the 5th Conference of the Central Committee, Course VIII (1998): Patriotism, the will to strengthen the nation, the spirit of solidarity, the sense of community to unite the individual - family - village - country; kindness, tolerance, respect for love, morality, industrious and creative virtues in labor; delicate behavior, simplicity in lifestyle... National identity is also obvious in unique expressions.

The 9th National Party Congress determined the guidelines for other fields: "Develop education and training, science and technology, and build an advanced culture imbued with national identity"; "Expand foreign relations and actively engaging in international economic integration"... The 9th National Party Congress also continued to affirm: "Our Party and people persevere in building Vietnam socialistically on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's ideology" (Dinh, 2021). The report at the 10th National Party Congress (2006) stated the theoretical awareness of socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam is becoming clearer and clearer with 8 basic features; besides, it emphasized the first lesson that people must persevere with the goal of national independence and socialism on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's ideology in the innovation process. At the 11th National Party Congress (January 2011), in A political platform of

building the country in the transition to socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011), it was once again affirmed: "Getting to socialism is the aspiration of our people, the right choice of the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh, in accordance with the development trend of history". The political platform of building the country in the transition to socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) set forth the policy: "Build an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity, develop comprehensively, show unity in diversity, and imbue with the spirit of humanity, democracy, and progress; associate culture with the entire social life, becoming a solid spiritual foundation and an important internal strength for development. Inherit and promote the good cultural traditions of Vietnamese ethnic groups; absorb the quintessence of human culture; build a democratic, fair, and civilized society for true human interests and dignity, with increasing knowledge, morality, physical strength, and aesthetics" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2015).

In the document submitted to the 12th National Party Congress, it was also emphasized that the mission of linking culture closely to every field, every activity, and every social relationship, becoming an endogenous force for sustainable development. Create a healthy cultural environment; create conditions for the development of Vietnamese personality, morality, and soul; improve knowledge, competence, and creative skills; maintain physical health; increase social responsibility, civic duty, and sense of respect; observe laws and promote the role of creativity in national construction and defense.

In the political report at the 12th National Party Congress, the Party determined: "Build a healthy cultural environment in accordance with our socialist-oriented market economy and international integration" (the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p.127). At the 25th Diplomatic Conference in November 2006, the Party determined that cultural, political, and economic diplomacy are identified as three pillars of Vietnamese diplomacy. On the basis of acquired experience, the Prime Minister approved the Cultural diplomacy strategy till 2020, which identified cultural diplomacy as a common mission for the entire country.

The 13th National Party Congress identified that the rapid and sustainable development of the country mainly relies on the maximization of the human factor, which means people are considered the main factor, goal, and motivation. Hence, "Building Vietnamese into developed people comprehensively, closely, and harmoniously with the contribution of traditional and modern values" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, volume 1, p.47) is an important task. Top. In the Document of the 13th National Party Congress, it was stated that the cultural values and strength of the Vietnamese are considered an important endogenous power contributing to comprehensive national strength. "... Comprehensively and synchronously develop cultural fields, a cultural environment, and a rich, diverse, civilized and healthy cultural life; absorb the cultural quintessence of mankind so that our culture actually becomes the spiritual foundation, internal strength, and breakthrough driving force for socio-economic development and international integration" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, volume 1, p.47).

Since the "World Decade of Cultural Development" (1986-1995), in search of their own development path, countries around the world have been interested in cultural issues with a new attitude. Because culture is not only the endogenous force uniting communities but also the root of a nation. Preserving national culture is an inevitable and objective need for culture's position, role, importance, and cultural identity with regard to national existence and development. In addition, facing many risks and challenges due to the negative side of the market economy, the industrial revolution 4.0, and globalization... humans must pay more attention to preserving national culture.

Today, culture and society have a dialectical relationship with the economy, security, and politics of each country. It can be seen that an unjust society will threaten economic development and cause conflicts in security and politics. Culture is the power of individuals, nations, countries, and regions. Humans keep creating cultural values, changing in accordance with situations and eras to develop society. In the 21st century, along with economic, political, and social changes, especially the significant

development of science, technology, information technology, and to name just a few, the unbalanced and inharmonious development makes human beings more deeply aware of the role and position of culture in all human creative activities.

Culture plays a huge role in promoting the economic and political development of the country. The role of culture is to improve the quality of ideology and morality as well as the cultural and scientific qualities of the nation, thus creating spiritual, intellectual, and ideological motivation for economic development and social progress. This value of culture is increasingly standing out in the reality of building socialism in Vietnam today.

### **PROPOSING SOME SOLUTIONS FOR BUILDING AND DEVELOPING AN ADVANCED VIETNAMESE CULTURE IMBUED WITH NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Firstly, improve the Party's leadership competence in building and developing culture as well as the Vietnamese people in the period of national industrialization and modernization. Strengthen coordination of socio-political organizations and social organizations in propagandizing and raising awareness for the whole society about the position and role of building and developing culture so that they can meet the requirements of sustainable development of the country while mobilizing resources to participate in the cultural development. It is necessary to promote propaganda, dissemination of the Party's guidelines, decisions, and the State's policies and laws on the preservation of national cultural values, especially Resolution TW5 Course VIII, on "Building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity" in order to raise people's awareness and consciousness in preserving, protecting, and promoting the cultural values of the country. The 13th National Party Congress clearly stated that building a Vietnamese culture comprehensively developed, aiming for truth - goodness - beauty, imbued with national spirit, humanity, democracy, and science.

Secondly, make culture a strong spiritual foundation of society and an endogenous force to

ensure sustainable development and solid defense of the country with "rich people, strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization" as the goal. Innovate comprehensively the contents and methods of leadership of the Party, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's cultural management, especially implement Ho Chi Minh's last instruction, "culture illuminates the way for the nation, culture leads the nation to become independent and self-reliant" is the process' fabric of Vietnamese cultural development for a prosperous and happy Vietnam. Require staff to acknowledge culture as the root that Vietnamese people must know culture. Focus on research, identify and implement building the national cultural value system, and the human standards associated with the preservation and development of the Vietnamese family value system in the new period. Implement breakthrough solutions to effectively prevent the deterioration of morality and lifestyle, repel social negativity, and eliminate bureaucracy, sectarianism, disunity, opportunism, and pragmatism. Valiantly fight against and eliminate harmful, distorting, reactionary products and information that adversely affect socio-political stability and fine customs; nurture Vietnamese people with good personalities and lifestyles. Preserve and foster fine and sustainable values of Vietnamese cultural traditions, especially for younger generations to have a close and harmonious connection between traditional and modern values.

Thirdly, strengthen propaganda to raise awareness of promoting national culture. Organize cultural exchange, economic, and sports activities that are practical, effective, and associated with the reality of the country. Regularly organize traditional educational activities to educate the unique material and spiritual values so that people have an opportunity to introduce them to the world. Through festival activities, further promote patriotism, revolutionary heroism, the spirit of solidarity, pride, and the will to strengthen the nation, reinforce and boost people's confidence in the leadership of the Party; thereby, create strong changes in deep understanding, pride, and honor of the nation's history and culture.

Fourthly, regularly examine human resources; link and coordinate with training organizations; pay

particular attention to the quality of human resources to ensure stability. Review and supplement projects; train staff to do cultural work to meet the standards; acquire the talents and abilities to undertake the assigned work. In addition, it is also necessary to develop a team of leaders and experts who have professional qualifications, good moral qualities, work with enthusiasm and professional manners, have responsibility for and dedication to serving the country, and always show political bravery, knowledge, honor, and morality. Be an exemplary model of ethics and integrity, resolutely fight against corruption and negativity, possess pure personality traits and enthusiasm for the revolution, always care for the Party, for the country, for the people of cadres and party members.

Fifthly, build a Vietnamese culture imbued with a national identity that must be scientific and popular, absorbing the cultural quintessence of mankind. Cultural development is an important goal of socialism, and it is even necessary to go ahead and pave the way for the industrial revolution. In building a national culture, people need to pay attention to Building psychology: the spirit of independence and self-reliance; Building morality: the thought of “one for all”; Building society: all causes related to the welfare of the people in society; Political construction: civil rights; Economic construction. Building socialism means building a prosperous and happy life for the people, developing significantly in terms of culture and morality, in which all for one and one for all, all are friends, comrades, and brothers; people are liberated from oppression and exploitation; they have a “rich” material and spiritual life, having opportunities to develop their abilities to the fullest. To build a fair society, we must fight against negative thoughts and behaviors including individualism, bureaucracy, command, embezzlement, waste; conservatism, and timidity; must thoroughly eradicate the remains of the exotic culture that make socialism stagnant, inflexible, and unattractive.

Sixthly, building socialism in Vietnam does not mean depending only on the reality of Vietnam and its people, nor does it mean closing and isolating the country. Because the world has become more connected, it is important to see what the world has

done in reality, acquire and inherit the cultural values of humanity selectively and scientifically to preserve and improve the traditional values, creating sustainable internal strength. Actively promote international cultural integration and make Vietnam become a fascinating destination for international cultural exchange. At the same time, absorb the human quintessence wisely following the reality of Vietnam, and raise people’s awareness, especially the young’s, of harmful exotic cultural products; let Vietnamese culture reach out to the world (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, vol. 1, pp. 143-147). This is a comprehensive, dialectical, historical, and objective point of view, which is the basis for Vietnam to cooperate and compete with others, “integrate” without “dissolving” in the process of building socialism in Vietnam.

## **CONCLUSION**

Socialism is a set of concepts about the needs for practical activities and dreams of working classes dominated; for guidelines, ways and methods of struggle in order to establish a social regime where means of production belong to the whole society. There is no oppression, exploitation, or injustice, everyone is equal in all fields and has a free, prosperous, happy, and civilized life. In order to successfully build socialism in the current context, preserving national culture is an urgent issue. This is affirmed in the Documents of National Party Congresses, culture and ideology are revolutions. Preserving national culture is not only awareness and responsibility but also national pride because “Like our Dai Viet, civilization was proclaimed for a long time”. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong affirmed: “We consider culture as the spiritual foundation of society, the internal strength, the driving force for national development and defense; identify that developing culture synchronously in harmony with economic growth, social progress and justice is a fundamental orientation of the process of building socialism in Vietnam. The culture we build is an advanced one imbued with national identity, showing unity in diversity, based on progressive and humanistic values; Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh’s ideology play a leading role in social spiritual

life, inheriting and promoting fine traditional values of all ethnic groups in Vietnam, absorb the achievements and cultural quintessence of mankind, strive to build a civilized and healthy society for the sake of genuine interests and human dignity with higher levels of knowledge, morality, fitness, lifestyle, and aesthetics” (Nguyen Phu Trong, 2021) contributing to the successful building socialism in Vietnam./.

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