

THE VITALITY OF HO CHI MINH'S IDEOLOGY IN THE MODERN ERA

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Abstract: *the Vietnamese nation has produced many great ideologists, but no one owns full ideas and completely transforms the reality like Ho Chi Minh. In this article, the author demonstrates the capacity of properly understanding Ho Chi Minh's era and explains things that made immortal vitality in His ideology. This interpretation is not only to affirm the great value of Ho Chi Minh's ideology in modern era but also to reject all misrepresentations of His ideology.*

Keywords: *Ho Chi Minh, ideology, modern era, vitality, Vietnam.*

In the modern world, human imprints and event repercussions are often faded due to the overwhelming amount of information and fast-paced development of life. President Ho Chi Minh was one of the rare cases of history when he had "gone" more than half a century, but the more time receding, the more vitality and value in his ideology shined. The spiritual product that he left behind is not only an invaluable asset of the Party and people of Vietnam but also a valuable part of human culture. The interpretation of the immortal vitality of Ho Chi Minh's ideology in the modern era not only helps us better understand and firmly believe in the Party's ideological foundation but also the great values in his ideology will be the most effective counter to the misrepresentation of hostile forces.

1. Acknowledging the true nature of the era - the outstanding competence of ideologist Ho Chi Minh

In the history of mankind, no righteous thought has arisen in itself but has been associated with the urgent need of life. K. Marx once said, "every era, the society needs its great people" [16, p. 88]. To become a "great man", first of all, they must have a deep understanding of the *era* because it is the basis for determining the direction and method of action downstream along the direction of history. If "*era*" is a scientific concept used to diverge history based on the theory of socio-economic morphology of Marxism - Leninism, "The Modern Era" ("The Current Era") is the term referring to human history since the Russian October Revolution (1917) to the present. Awareness of the era is actually a perception of the historical law of movement in order to take appropriate action. On the contrary, if not taking into account the era factor or relying on superficial understanding about it, the subject of action will be "lost in history". Ho Chi Minh succeeded in terms of both ideology and practical activities, both in the cause of national liberation and the establishment of new regimes, first of all thanks to his profound cognitive capabilities of the era.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the direction to save the country was the biggest question of the Vietnamese people. Unlike his predecessors, from a very young age, Ho Chi Minh wanted to "*go abroad to see clearly*" [1]. That will expressed his broad vision and special attention to the *issue of the era*. Political sensitivity, the desire to liberate the nation and the vibrant process of practical activities motivated Nguyen Ai Quoc to Marxism - Leninism. Armed with scientific methodology, He gradually realized the significance of the October Revolution and the character of the *new era*. This is the premise for success because as Lenin said, "only by understanding the characteristics of an era, we can take into account the detailed characteristics of this country or the other" [22, p. 174]. From Lenin's affirmation, that the Russian October Revolution "opened a *new era* in world history" [23, p. 184], Ho Chi Minh offered some basic views on the "Era" issue.

Firstly, Ho Chi Minh stressed the meaning of opening the era of the October Revolution.

By breaking the weakest "link" of capitalism and creating a realist socialist regime in Russia, the October Revolution was the stature of great liberation. Ho Chi Minh wrote: "The October Revolution opened the way of liberation for nations and humankind, opening a *new era* in history" [14, p. 388]. While much of the world was enslaved, the light of the October Revolution illuminated that grievous part. In his article titled *Lenin and the colonial nations* (1925), Ho Chi Minh emphasized: "In the eyes of the colonial nations, in the history of the life of suffering and losing the rights of colonial nations, Lenin was the creator of a new life, a lighthouse that showed the way to liberation for all oppressed humankind" [6, p. 148]. Thus, the October Revolution has taken the role of opening a *new era* in human history.

Secondly, Ho Chi Minh identified the essential characteristics of the new era.

He asserted: The new era is "*the transition from capitalism to socialism all over the world*" [14, p. 388]. In other words, it was the era of decay, towards the collapse of capitalism and the era of socialism's victory on a worldwide scale.

For oppressed nations like Vietnam, the new era is "*the era of revolution against the empire, the era of national liberation*" [11, p.164]. The advent of Soviet Russia (later the Soviet Union) not only weakened the capitalism but with great, practical and material help of the Soviet Union, it made the "national liberation movement rise like a

storm, disintegrating parts of the colonial system of imperialism, paving the way for hundreds of millions of people to break free from the chains of slavery and move to independence and freedom” [14, p. 390].

The new era is also *"the era of a new foreign policy, a policy of peace and friendship among nations"* [11, p. 162]. After the October Revolution, Lenin proclaimed what Ho Chi Minh and the people of the colonial states desperately wanted: Every nation in the world had the rights to self-determination. As a stronghold of peace and against aggressive wars, the Soviet Union was not only a support for oppressed nations but also a champion force ready to repel any invasion. Therefore, imperialism was forced to adjust its foreign policy when it could not "create rain and wind" as before.

In Ho Chi Minh's awareness, the new era is also the *era of social progress and scientific inventions*. It was also the era of *new morality* - socialist morality with a deep opposition to egoistic individualism.

In fact, depending on the context, Ho Chi Minh emphasizes one or another characteristic of the new era but in general, "our time is a glorious era, an era of victory of socialism, of national independence, it is the weakening era of imperialism" [12, p. 2]. It is also "the era when Marxism - Leninism became the ideal and conscience of all progressive people on earth" [13, p. 491]. The precise identification of the nature of the era is a testament to Ho Chi Minh's outstanding intelligence.

Thirdly, Ho Chi Minh emphasized: In the new era, the ethnic issue must be settled on the working-class stance.

With worldwide coverage range, Ho Chi Minh found that: "In this era, the national liberation revolution is an integral part of the proletariat revolution all over the whole world; the national liberation revolution must develop into a socialist revolution in order to achieve complete victory" [14, p. 392]. That means, the national liberation revolution must follow the trajectory of the proletariat revolution; national independence is the first step towards socialism because only socialism can guarantee the implementation of the values of Independence - Freedom - Happiness.

The advent of a *new era* in human history is the objective law, and the right perception of it to find a direction downstream along the direction of history is the talent and merit of Ho Chi Minh. That is the starting point that leads him to success.

2. Characteristics that make the era vitality of Ho Chi Minh's ideology

The stormy twentieth century has closed with the contributions of many great people, including Ho Chi Minh. What make the "doctrine" stature, strength and era vitality of Ho Chi Minh's ideology are the typical characteristics emanating from his ideology.

Firstly, *the core content of Ho Chi Minh's ideology - "national independence is attached to socialism" is consistent with the nature and rule of the era.*

The desire for freedom is a human characteristic, so when colonialism pushed countless nations into slavery, the struggle against colonialism and for national independence was an inevitable trend of the era. Going to find a way to save the country, Ho Chi Minh became the representative of the oppressed peoples struggling for the rights to be human, the right to live in equality and freedom. Armed with the scientific methodology of Marxism - Leninism and by practical experience, Ho Chi Minh made some truthful discoveries about the way of saving the country and the direction of national construction for the Vietnamese nation: "In order to save the country and liberate the nation, there is no other way than the proletariat revolution" [12, p. 30] and "only socialism and communism can free the oppressed nations and the workers over the world from slavery" [12, p. 563]. He also has a very creative system of views on the mode of liberation, that the colonial revolution must proceed proactively and creatively, without relying on the national revolution and it would succeed before the national revolution.

Implementing his ideology, the Vietnamese nation not only gained freedom and independence but the Vietnamese people's victory also contributed to the destruction of the colonial system and failed both old and new colonialism on worldwide scale. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh was dubbed as the person who "helped transform the world map. The person who pushed the history wheel towards progress" [3, p. 50]. The British scientist Bertrand Russell wrote: "President Ho Chi Minh's carefree and selfless career for Vietnam's independence and unity for more than half a century has made Him not only a father of the people of Vietnam but also the famous architect of the world got rid of colonialism" [21, p. 111].

Thus, "National independence attached to socialism" is both a "handbook" to save the country and a direction to build the country of the colonial nations. Drawing a revolutionary path consistent with the nature of the new era, Ho Chi Minh was not only the guide of the Vietnamese revolution but also the leader of the national liberation movement on a worldwide scale.

Secondly, *Ho Chi Minh's ideology crystallizes the eternal values of mankind, namely peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.*

The world has honored Ho Chi Minh as a culture activist of peace because he always endeavored to settle conflicts with other nation through the path of cultural dialogue, always looked for ways to repel the war according to the motto "while there's life, there's hope"; when forced to defend, he actively limited the space of war in Vietnam to protect regional and world peace. Ho Chi Minh was very fond of peace but it must be *true peace* - peace in independence and freedom because as he declared: "All nations of the world are created equal; every nation has

the rights to live, to be happy and to be free” [7, p. 1]. For Ho Chi Minh, independence and freedom are not only political goals but also moral values. A patriot, a proud nation would not commit to living a life of slavery. When the world was full of injustice, Ho Chi Minh's thought "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" became the great truth of the times and a measure of human dignity.

For Ho Chi Minh, Independence - Freedom - Happiness is an inseparable value system. He clarified: “In an independent country, the people do not enjoy freedom and happiness, then independence means nothing” [7, p. 64]. Therefore, achieving national independence must go forwards to socialism because "*only socialism and communism* can free oppressed nations and laborers around the world from slavery” [12, p. 563], only socialism can harmonize the relationship between individuals and social community, only socialism will create conditions for each person to fully develop "**human** capacities" according Marx's saying. Therefore, socialism in Vietnam "is both rational and sentimental. Rationality here is the rules, is science. Sentiment here is humanity, cherishing human values” [15, p. 9]. For Ho Chi Minh, socialism is *identical with independence, freedom, happiness, democracy and social progress* - the eternal aspirations of humanity. Therefore, all those who have been fighting for that aspiration, will find in Ho Chi Minh the encouragement and fervor.

In the current period, Ho Chi Minh's ideology "There is nothing more valuable than freedom and independence" remains the value because the more integrated the world is, the stronger the need for independence. Especially when big countries are playing the role of "banker", creating "rules of the game", globalization is a process full of contradictions; small nations must inevitably "integrate" but must find a way not to be "dissolved". Referring to the allusiveness of Ho Chi Minh ideology's justice, the President of the World Peace Council Romesh Chandra affirmed: “Anywhere fighting for independence and freedom, there is Ho Chi Minh and Ho Chi Minh's flag flying high. Wherever fighting for peace and justice, there is Ho Chi Minh and Ho Chi Minh's flag flying high. Wherever people fight for a new world, against poverty, there is Ho Chi Minh and Ho Chi Minh's flag flying high” [19].

Thirdly, *Ho Chi Minh's ideology expresses the aspiration of solidarity and friendly cooperation of nations.*

Recognizing the trend of association and integration of the world, from an early age, Nguyen Ai Quoc asserted: "The An Nam revolution is also a part of the world revolution. Those who do revolution in the world are comrades of the Annamites” [6, p. 329]. This can be considered as the beginning of His international solidarity strategy. It should be emphasized that such a strategy not only was born for political purposes but also originated from the love for fellows: “Everywhere is in the same home/ Because in the four seas, humans are brothers” [10, p. 558]. That sentiment in the communist Nguyen Ai Quoc must be very deep, so since 1923, the Soviet poet Osip Mandelstam could feel: “Through the noble manner, in the warm voice of Nguyen Ai Quoc, we are like hearing tomorrow, like seeing the immense tranquility of world-wide friendship” [5, p. 463].

When becoming the head of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh immediately declared: Vietnam is willing to "make friends with *all* democratic countries and not make enemies with anyone” [8, p. 256]. He constantly educated people about friendship and morality "helping friends is helping yourself". Although the cold war then forced nations - peoples to *join* this "side" or "opposition" - Ho Chi Minh asserted: "Despite different social regimes and different forms of consciousness, countries can live together in peace” [10, p. 12].

Very serious about the issue of solidarity, so when there was discord between the Soviet Union and China, He tried to make a "bridge" and persevere in carrying out a balanced foreign policy. Talking about Ho Chi Minh's bravery in dealing with this complicated relationship, US journalist Bernard Fall commented: “Since the tension in Soviet - China relations, Hanoi has cleverly steered between different water flows” [2, p. 146]. Implementing the strategy of international solidarity to the last breath, in Ho Chi Minh's *Testament*, Ho Chi Minh entrusted to the Vietnam Workers' Party the responsibility to contribute to restoring solidarity in the communist movement. In fact, Ho Chi Minh was the one who always sought to gather instead of eliminating, always tried to find the "common denominator" rather than "deepen" the difference. With the spirit of "seeking unity in diversity", Ho Chi Minh is not only a person with modern international thinking, a spirit of cultural tolerance but also an ambassador of Vietnam all over the world.

Fourthly, *Ho Chi Minh's ideology expresses the spirit of innovation and integration - a big trend of the current era.*

Ho Chi Minh is particularly sensitive to the new. He defined revolution also from this perspective: “Revolution is to transform the old into the new, transform the bad into the good” [6, p. 284]. Very loyal to Marxism but with critical thinking and innovative spirit, He still asked the question: "Marx built his doctrine on a certain philosophy of history, but which history? European history. What is Europe? That is not all humanity” [5, p. 509-510]. From that awareness, Ho Chi Minh not only applied but also developed Marxist - Leninist creations with a series of new theses suitable to the Vietnamese revolution. . In the process of building socialism, He advised his cadres not to be dogmatic, to "grip old banality” [8, p. 338], but to constantly innovate. In his *Testament*, though he did not directly use the concept of "Renewal", he sketched an *innovation strategy* on the big and advised: "This is a fight against what is old, spoiled, to create new, good things” [14, p. 617]. The *Renewal* career initiated by the 6th Party Congress has returned to that spirit and the achievements brought by the *Renewal* are truly great. That is a testament of Ho Chi Minh's strategic ability of forecast.

At the time when the world is developing at an unprecedented speed like today, Ho Chi Minh's ideology of innovation has become even more significant. At this time, if you do not want to be left behind and then become subordinate, dependent, the action subjects must inevitably innovate in the Ho Chi Minh's "taking the invariant to deal with the variables".

Ho Chi Minh also laid the foundations for Vietnam's open-door policy and international economic integration. In Ho Chi Minh's perception, economic integration not only comes from the need of economic development but also to strengthen world peace. Therefore, as soon as the new revolutionary state was born and not recognized by any country, the policy of opening doors and calling for investment was affirmed by Him in the *Appeal to the United Nation* (December 1946). In international trade, Ho Chi Minh stated, "Vietnam will deal with *all* countries in the world who want to honestly deal with Vietnam" [9, p. 46].

Today, comprehensive international integration has become an inevitable trend, but in the 40s - twentieth century, Ho Chi Minh's policy on economic cooperation with countries with different political institutions was truly a new thinking. He understood Marx's prediction, that "the history becomes world history".

Fifthly, Ho Chi Minh's cultural-ethical ideology not only promotes mutual understanding among nations but also leaves a model of human culture.

For Ho Chi Minh, culture is not something too sublime, it must become "culture of life", that is, the culture must contribute to eliminating what is outdated, ignorant, frivolous, and luxurious in the customs and raising people's intellectual standards for each person to liberate all their "human capacities".

Culture is also the "identity card" of each nation, helping the peoples over the world understand each other better, respect each other and complement each other to progress towards prosperity. Ho Chi Minh was very profound to think that the acquisition of human culture must go hand in hand with the promotion of national culture because in addition to the benefits, it is also the dedication in the spirit "we have enjoyed good things from the others, there must be something good from us for others to enjoy" [18]. In the relationship between preserving the national culture and acquiring human culture, we have to take the ethnic culture as the root because only when retaining the originality and identity, that nation will have something to contribute for the humanity. Containing very profound views, therefore, UNESCO assessed: Ho Chi Minh's ideology "embodies the aspirations of nations who wish to affirm their cultural identity and desire to strengthen the mutual understanding between nations" [20].

Ho Chi Minh was also an ideologist with special interest in morality. Saying that does not mean K. Marx, F. Engel, V.I.Lenin did not discuss morality but only wanted to emphasize: In Ho Chi Minh, the idea of revolutionary morality and human morality was mentioned more deeply and more comprehensively. Talking about the importance of morality, Ho Chi Minh always affirmed that morality is the root of man, is the strength of the revolutionaries and the Revolutionary Party, is conditions for people to reach talent, is a factor to create the appeal of revolutionary doctrine... According to Ho Chi Minh, the highest morality is to strive to sacrifice for the national independence, the happiness of the people and all humanity.

Ho Chi Minh's moral ideology was persuasive not only for its scientific and humanistic characteristics but also for his "light-like" life and his complete dedication to His people and His country. Not only the Vietnamese people, the great minds of the era also acknowledged: "Speaking of a person whose whole life has left deep love to the people, there is no one else but Ho Chi Minh" [4, p. 101]. Ho Chi Minh's humanism is the humanism of the new era - communist humanism with the philosophy of practical action and improvement.

Ho Chi Minh's moral ideology is topical for a world of many paradoxes today. It can be noticed that: The world is increasingly rich and modern, but due to the excessive development of individualism, the gap between rich and poor and inequality between classes and nations has increased, many people have fallen into a crisis of life and belief. That led to an increase in violence and misleading lifestyles of a part of the population. To the extent, there are people using the phrase "barbaric in civilization" to talk about the modern world. From that fact, the Indian Prime Minister Nehru concluded correctly: "The world today is experiencing a crisis ... What is needed now is access to peace, friendship and fellowship. Dr. Ho Chi Minh is a symbol of that approach" [25, p. 240]. Ho Chi Minh's humanistic and ethical ideology with the philosophy of human life full of kindness and altruism will awaken the "good" part of every human being, helping them find the right life ideal and ethical behaviors to get true happiness. For the people of Vietnam, imbued with Ho Chi Minh's morality and ideas will contribute to preventing moral decline in the Party and in society.

Ho Chi Minh's ideology deeply reflected the core issues of the times, so, "the world has changed, but Ho Chi Minh's ideology has lived forever" [24, p. 97]. The self-pervasive spread of Ho Chi Minh's cultural values will also create a contrast and cause those who have plotted to misrepresent him to reveal their knowledge and personality weaknesses themselves. Therefore, the years passed by, but Ho Chi Minh "is not a memory of the past. He is a wonderful person for all eras" [17, p. 66]. It is the proper appreciation that humanity has given to "our Uncle Ho" ./.

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