

Ho Chi Minh's Ideas on Human Rights

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Abstract

President Ho Chi Minh was the man who devoted all his life to turn the Vietnamese nation from a colonized country to a independent nation, and to bring the Vietnamese people from the status of a dependent people to the status of citizens and masters of the country. During his lifetime, Ho Chi Minh gave a system of arguments on human rights, from the conception to the expression in the fields of politics, economy, culture, society, and etc. He was both an great thinker and fighter of the twentieth century. Ho Chi Minh's ideology system, including his thought on human rights, really became a part of the culture of the Vietnamese nation. Ho Chi Minh's ideological legacy on human rights and his achievements in protecting and developing human rights are invaluable materials and spiritual foundations for the Vietnamese people in the new millennium. This article focuses on researching the origin, foundation and content of Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights.

Keywords: *Thought, Ho Chi Minh, Human rights*

Introduction

Human is the most important issue of science. Human-related issues, including human rights, have always been prioritized by scientists in one way or another. Human rights are a multi-faceted category, as well as a historical category, arising and developing together with the categories of class, state and law.

Today, in the face of globalization and international integration, the human rights issue more than ever needs to be addressed very urgently. Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights not only stopped at the right to equality, the right to life, the right to freedom and the right to pursue happiness, he also discussed the right to master the country, the right to equality before the law and the right to be protected by the law, the right to participate in all aspects of social life. It is an inherent right of the people, won by the people's struggle. According to him, national independence, territorial integrity and national reunification are prerequisites for the human rights of oppressed peoples. So, on what basis was Ho Chi Minh's thought formed? How are the contents and values of human rights affirmed by Ho Chi Minh? This research on Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights is to clarify these issues having scientific and practical values.

Research Method

The method used in this research is qualitative analysis and explanatory research. The analysis process was carried out by using historical information and with historical and dialectical materialism methods.

Results and Discussion

Origin and foundation of Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights

Ho Chi Minh's thought in general and his thought on human rights in particular are the products of the nation and the times. From his worries, reflections and sorrows before the pain of losing his country, Ho Chi Minh went abroad to study French and Western civilization, find out what is hidden behind the slogan "*freedom, equality, benevolence*" is, and how to return to help the people. These practical conditions helped him approach theoretical ideas and the light of the times to find the way to national liberation, the way to regain basic and legitimate human rights for the people, for the nation.

Human rights in Vietnamese traditional values are often closely associated with national rights, with independence for the nation, and freedom for the people, not for individuals. Restoring peace for the homeland has become the aspiration of each individual and every citizen who has lost his country. That tradition of patriotism has great strength in cheering up so many generations of Vietnamese heroes, many people fighting and winning, and that is fully reflected in Ho Chi Minh's thought along the way. seek and struggle for national liberation with the aspiration: "*I have only one desire, the ultimate desire, to make our country completely independent, our people completely free, all compatriots have food, clothing, everyone can study*" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 187)

The thought of human rights in Eastern culture and Western culture all have influences on Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on human rights. Typical of which is the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. As an important political-legal document, officially gave birth to the United States of America- an independent and sovereign state. It is the basis for the state of the United States to promulgate the Constitution in 1787 and this is also the first Constitution in the world. The Declaration said that "*All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*". And, the French Declaration of Human Rights and Civil Rights in 1789 reiterated and emphasized the idea in the American Declaration of Independence. It said "*All men are born free and with equal rights, and must always remain free and have equal rights*". The two declararions means that people are born free, have equal rights and must always be free, equal in rights, all social distinctions can only be based on common benefits (Article 1) and the purpose of political organizations is to preserve the natural and inalienable rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression." (Article 2). Human rights are solemnly proclaimed before the whole world by two declarations of innate, inalienable human rights; calling on states, social organizations and everyone to respect, ensure and protect human rights; awakening humanity's awareness of human rights as the highest and most sacred values that are generally recognized, thereby determined to fight for, keep and develop them.

The two Declarations "*have worldwide political and legal significance, directly influencing the political-legal documents on human rights of the United Nations and of the member states of the United Nations*" (Hien, 2015, p.11). For Ho Chi Minh, these are documents of great

value in the struggle for national liberation. He also solemnly incorporated the idea of respecting human rights in those two documents into the Declaration of the birth of Vietnam later.

In the ideological legacy of the Marxistscholars, the issue of human rights has a considerable theoretical and practical value. From the political views of Karl Marx- Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin more clearly points to the origin, nature and institutional factors of human rights, which can be summarized as follows: First, the origin of human rights man is what gives man strength in his relationship with nature and society. Second, human rights are the system of human relations with objects (nature, society). In which, man is the subject of conquering and occupying the object according to his own need to develop freely. Human freedom is an end in itself. Man makes history by his own power. Third, the factors that regulate human rights are understood in the sense that the objective factors regulate the process of reaching freedom, and regulate and regulate human relations with nature and society. Those are factors such as socio-economic conditions, political institutions, democratic level, cultural level, etc. It is these views of Marxism-Leninism that have had a direct and main impact on the process of forming Ho Chi Minh's thought in general and his thought on human rights in particular.

Contents of Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights

Human rights and national independence are united

According to Ho Chi Minh, the root cause of the extreme suffering of the people in colonized country was mainly the class oppression and national oppression. A nation that is invaded or has lost its sovereignty cannot have freedom for its people, much less equal rights in civil, political, social, cultural and economic terms; In Ho Chi Minh's thought, human rights and national independence are unified, inseparable and the core throughout his revolutionary life. Discussing human rights through the rights of Vietnamese women in Ho Chi Minh's thought, Dung (2019) wrote *“Thus, according to Ho Chi Minh, if women want to have real equal rights, they themselves must first strive to rise up, overcome the thought of inferiority, peace of mind, rely on stomp. Not only that, women need to unite, help each other to make progress, fight against all discrimination including respecting men and despising women in the family as well as in other fields outside of society”*.

In the process of finding the way to liberate the nation, liberate the class, and liberate the people, Ho Chi Minh harmonized and selectively absorbed the cultural traditions of his family, homeland, and country of Vietnam, quintessence of human culture, especially Marxism-Leninism. Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the source of inequality between men and women is that women are excluded from the social production process. He pointed out the great role and ability of women in the social production process, indicated that the condition for women's liberation is to bring women back to participate in social productive labor, turning housework and family work into great social work, associated the cause of women's liberation with the socialist revolution, considered the issue of women's liberation as both the goal and the driving force of the proletarian revolution. Thereby, he made the right choice and decision for the nation's revolutionary cause, including the liberation of women, and gave them legitimate rights and benefits.

In 1919, on behalf of the Association of An Nam patriots, Ho Chi Minh sent to the Versailles Peace Conference *The Claims of the people of Annam people* including 8 points to call on the

leaders of the Allied countries to apply the principles concept of self-determination for the French colonial territories in Southeast Asia. In many works such as “*Tâm địa thực dân*” (Colonial Mind), “*Bình đẳng*” (Equality), “*Vực thẳm thuộc địa*” (Colonial Abyss), “*Công cuộc khai hóa giết người*” (Murdering Civilization), “*Đông Dương*” (Indochina), etc. Ho Chi Minh focused on denouncing colonialism. He strongly condemned the ruling regime, the brutal exploitation of the French colonialists in Indochina in the fields of politics, economy, culture and education. In particular, in the work “*Bản án chế độ thực dân Pháp*” (Judgment of French Colonialism), he strongly condemned the crimes of colonialism that stripped all human rights and national rights in the colonies.

The core content of the colonial issue is independence and freedom. Ho Chi Minh said: *Tự do cho đồng bào tôi, độc lập cho Tổ quốc tôi, đấy là tất cả những điều tôi muốn; đấy là tất cả những điều tôi hiểu.* (Freedom for my people, independence for my Fatherland, that's all I want; That's all I understand.)

In early 1930, Nguyen Ai Quoc drafted the first political program of the Communist Party - a correct and creative program for national liberation, whose core ideology was independence and freedom. Ho Chi Minh defined the political goals of the Party as: “*a) Overthrow the French imperialists and the feudalists. b) Make the South country completely independent*” (Minh, 2011, t3, p.11). In May 1941, Ho Chi Minh directed the establishment of an independent Vietnam ally, published the independent Vietnam newspaper, and directed the drafting of ten policies of the Viet Minh. In the performance of the ten policies of the Viet Minh, he wrote: *Cờ treo độc lập, nền xây bình quyền* (The flag hangs independence, the foundation is building equal rights). In August 1945, Ho Chi Minh summed up the will of the Vietnamese people to fight for independence and freedom in his immortal saying: “No matter how much you have to sacrifice, even if you have to burn the entire Truong Son mountain range, you must be resolute to gain independence.

After the success of the August Revolution, on behalf of the Provisional Government, he read the Declaration of Independence, solemnly affirmed in front of the whole world: “Vietnam has the right to enjoy freedom and independence, and in fact it has become a free country. The entire Vietnam nation is determined to put all its spirit, strength, and wealth in order to maintain that right to freedom and independence” (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p.2-3).

The national resistance war against the French colonialists broke out. Expressing his determination to protect national independence and sovereignty, Ho Chi Minh issued a call for resistance, affirming: “No! We would rather sacrifice everything, but definitely not lose our country, definitely refuse to accept it. slavery” (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p. 534). In a letter to the United Nations in 1946, Ho Chi Minh once again affirmed: “Our people sincerely desire peace. But our people also resolutely fight to the end to protect the most sacred rights: territorial integrity for the Fatherland and independence for the country” (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p. 522).

When the American imperialists expanded their war, massively pouring expeditionary troops and modern war equipment into the South, and at the same time waged a war to destroy the North with increasingly fierce scale and intensity, Ho Chi Minh uphold the great truth of the times: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom” (Minh, 2011, Vol.15, p.131). Independence and freedom are the goals of the fight, the source of strength for the victory of the Vietnamese nation in the twentieth century, a great thought in the era of

national liberation. "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" is the action slogan of the Vietnamese people and also a source of encouragement for oppressed peoples around the world who are fighting against colonialism.

National independence and national reunification is a rule of existence and development of the Vietnamese nation, the way of life of the Vietnamese people. The struggle against colonialism and independence of the Vietnamese people is also a struggle for the unity and integrity of national sovereignty. Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the purpose of the August Revolution was: "to regain peace, unification, independence and democracy for our Fatherland, for our people, and the purpose of the resistance war against the French colonialists was to preserve it and develop the victories of the August Revolution, is peace, unity, independence and democracy.

The independence and reunification of the Fatherland is the aspiration and will of Ho Chi Minh and the whole Vietnamese people. In 1946, before going to France to solve the issue of Vietnam's independence, with the Central, South, and North reunifying, he wrote a letter to the Southern compatriots (June, 1946) affirming: "The Southern people are the people of Vietnam. Rivers may dry up, mountains may fade, but that truth never changes!" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p.280). After returning from France, he announced to the nation: Because of the current situation in France, the two issues of independence and reunification of Vietnam have not been resolved, but sooner or later, Vietnam will definitely be independent. Central, South and North will definitely unify.

With the signing and implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Indochina, Vietnam was temporarily divided into two regions. Ho Chi Minh determined that the purpose of the Vietnamese people after the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Indochina was to struggle to maintain peace in order to realize reunification, complete independence and democracy in the whole country. Since 1965, the US imperialists increasingly intensified their wars to invade Vietnam with the strategy of "local war" in the South and destructive war in the North. In many interviews with international journalists, Ho Chi Minh affirmed: Vietnam is one, the Vietnamese people are one, and the Vietnamese people will fight to the end for independence and unification of the country.

Ho Chi Minh's thought on the right of the nation to be independent and unified did not follow a dogmatic pattern, but was formed and developed in association with the national liberation struggle movement, including the people's struggle movement. The Vietnamese people, in order to abolish the yoke of colonialism, gain national independence and unify the country, form an independent national state and continue to develop according to the choice of each nation, reflecting the greatest truth of the times that is "*nothing is more precious than independence and freedom*".

Human rights are closely linked with the process of building and perfecting the legal regime, building a disciplined society

In all states, rights are legal, rights are recognized in law and protected by the laws of the country, including human rights and civil rights. In Vietnam, democratic rights have been established since 1945 when Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam led the people to succeed in the August Revolution, establishing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh's concept of people's democracy is a modern concept. According to Ho Chi Minh, there should be democratic institutions and mechanisms, that is, those institutions and mechanisms must be fully and clearly built and expressed to ensure the exercise of the people's right to mastery. Human rights were mentioned by Ho Chi Minh in many contents and aspects. He not only mentioned human rights in general, but also mentioned the rights of specific people according to gender, class, and social classes, especially he attached great importance to the legalization of human rights into law civil rights.

The idea of a legislation for the people existed in Ho Chi Minh as early as 1919 in the Declaration of the People's Claim of Annam. That thought was clearly expressed by him at the first meeting of the provisional government on September 3, 1945, when Ho Chi Minh proposed to soon build a democratic constitution. On November 9, 1946, the National Assembly approved the draft Constitution submitted by the Constitution Drafting Committee headed by Ho Chi Minh (after being revised according to the referendum from May 1946 (Constitution of 1946)).

With this Constitution, for the first time in Vietnam's history, former slaves really became the owners of the country, and were guaranteed democratic freedoms such as: national equality, equality of men and women, equality of citizens in all aspects of politics, economy, culture, the right to participate in government and national construction work according to their talents and virtues; freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief and religion, freedom of residence and movement in the country and abroad; inviolability of body, residence, correspondence, private property rights. In terms of human rights, this law has declared the most basic rights and only allows arrest and detention of citizens when there is a judicial order (decision).

Not only in the political and civil fields, Ho Chi Minh also affirmed that the state plays an important role in ensuring human rights, economic, cultural and social rights for the people.

Since the mid-20s of the twentieth century, Ho Chi Minh has outlined a way to deal with economic, cultural and social rights in the revolutionary Vietnam. In the work "*Revolutionary Road*", Ho Chi Minh said that the Vietnamese revolution should follow the path of the Russian October Revolution, this revolution would make "*the people enjoy the happiness of freedom, true equality, not freedom, equality and falsehood like the French imperialism boasted in Annam*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.2, p.304). The above thought is expressed very clearly in the 1946 Constitution - the first Constitution of the revolutionary Vietnam, which was drafted by Ho Chi Minh as head of the drafting committee. Articles 1 and 6 of the Constitution clearly state: "*All power in the country belongs to the entire Vietnamese people, regardless of race, gender, rich or poor, or religious class.*", "*All citizens Vietnam has equal rights in all aspects of politics, economy and culture*", "*Women have equal rights with men in all aspects*". Article 10: "*Vietnamese citizens have the right to: Freedom of speech; freedom of publication; freedom of organization and assembly; freedom of belief; freedom of residence and movement*" (Vietnamese Constitution 1959)

Ho Chi Minh advocated to settle the employer-employee relationship in the direction that the employer, worker and state benefit. People think that the employer cannot pay less for the worker for the sake of profit, and the worker cannot work little but demand a lot of money. In 1953, in "Political common sense", the existence of freedom and equality of economic sectors was correctly explained by Ho Chi Minh. He said that at the time of 1953, our country's

economy had the following components: the feudal landlords' economy exploiting rents, the state-owned economy, the cooperative economy, the individual economy of farmers and capitalists, private capitalist economy, national capitalist economy. In the condition that many economic sectors exist, Ho Chi Minh pointed out that "*the economic policy of the Party and the Government consists of four things: 1-Public and private benefits. 2- Owners all benefit. 3- Workers and farmers help each other. 4- Circulating inside and outside*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p. 175).

Ho Chi Minh harshly condemned the economic inequalities of the feudal colonial regime. In the new regime, he soon affirmed: everyone who has the ability to work must work, who work more, will enjoy more, who work less, will enjoy less. Those who demand the new government must pay special attention to the elderly, children, disabled people, policy beneficiaries of war invalids, and families of martyrs. To deal with economic rights satisfactorily, Ho Chi Minh was the first to propose the contracting mechanism. Nearly half a century ago, in 1957, Ho Chi Minh clearly stated: "*The contract of employment is a condition of socialism, it encourages workers to always make progress, for the factory to progress. Contract work is for the common good and for private gain... doing a good contract is appropriate and fair under our current regime*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.10, p.537)

As the head of state, Ho Chi Minh has set out guidelines and very effective measures to realize the goal that everyone can get an education. Those who consider this to be a citizen's right, the State must meet and deal with that right. The 1959 Constitution, the Constitution drafted by Ho Chi Minh as the head of the drafting committee and the person who signed the decision announced on January 1, 1960, wrote: "*Citizens of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have the right to study..., have the right to self-determination. scientific research, literary and artistic creation and other cultural activities. The State encourages and helps citizens' creativity to pursue scientific, literary, artistic and other cultural causes*" (Vietnam Constitution 1959). Raising people's intellectual level, first of all, eliminating illiteracy and illiteracy is a citizen's right, and is the duty and responsibility of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the August revolution, solving that pressing pressing problem required creativity.

It can be seen that, for Ho Chi Minh, the State and the law have an important role in ensuring the rights of the people. He emphasized that the Government and the army and people have three things: "*Increase production to make everyone have enough to wear and eat; expand education, so that everyone can read and write; Practicing democracy to make everyone enjoy the right to democracy and freedom.*" (Minh, 2011, Vol, p.444)

It can be seen that, for Ho Chi Minh, the State and the law have an important role in demonstrating the rights of the people. He emphasized that the Government and our army and people have three things: "*Increase production to make the people happy. everyone has enough to wear and eat; Expand education, so that everyone can read and write; practicing democracy to make everyone enjoy the right to democracy and freedom.*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.5, p.444)

Peaceful relations, cooperation with countries around the world to ensure human rights

As a true international soldier, Ho Chi Minh not only fought for the independence of the Vietnamese people, but also fought for the independence of all oppressed peoples. He studied and accepted the human rights factors stated in the Declaration of Independence of the United

States of America in 1776, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1791 of the French Revolution, such as the right to equality, the right to life, the right to liberty, freedom and the right to pursue happiness. He asserted "*Those are the truths that no one can deny*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p.1). But it doesn't just stop there. From human rights, Ho Chi Minh generalized and elevated to national rights: All nations in the world are born equal, every nation has the right to live, to be happy and to be free.

Upholding the spirit of independence and self-reliance, implementing the principle of the right of the nation to self-determination, but Ho Chi Minh did not forget his international obligation in supporting the struggles for national liberation in the world. He enthusiastically supported the Chinese people's resistance war against Japan, the resistance wars against the French colonialists and the American imperialists invading Laos and Cambodia, and advocated that the victory of each country's revolution should equal the victory of each country's revolution which contributed to the overall victory of the world revolution.

Ho Chi Minh drew attention to the Communist International on measures to "*make the colonial peoples, hitherto separate, understand each other better and unite to lay the basis for a Western alliance.*" In the future, this alliance will be one of the wings of the proletarian revolution" (Minh, 2011, Vol.2, p. 124).

After the Second World War, the French colonialists returned to invade. The people of the three Indochinese countries continued to stand up to the resistance. Helping the Lao revolution, as well as the Cambodian revolution, is Ho Chi Minh's consistent policy, considering "*helping you is helping ourselves*", respecting each other's independence and sovereignty, helping you is not doing for you but to make you strong to do it yourself.

President Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to strengthening friendly relations and cooperation with neighboring countries, properly handling relations with major countries, striving to expand Vietnam's international relations in the direction of diversification. - is "*friends with all democratic countries and holds no enmity with anyone*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.5, p.220).

Throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh always raised the banner of peace, fighting for peace, a real peace for all peoples - "*peace in independence and freedom.*" That peace is not an abstract peace, but "*a genuine peace built on justice and democratic ideals*" (Minh, 2011, Vol.4, p. 66), against the war aggression for the basic national rights of nations, which are also the rights of every citizen. During the two resistance wars, Ho Chi Minh's and Vietnamese people's peaceful attitude towards justice, his eagerness for peace in respect of the independence and reunification of the country of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese people touched the hearts of mankind. It has the effect of inspiring and drawing the world's progressive forces to the side of the Vietnamese people, demanding an end to the war and restoration of peace. In fact, a world people's front has been formed, with both the French people and the American people in solidarity with Vietnam against the war of aggression. International solidarity for peace, independence, democracy and social progress is an important content in Ho Chi Minh's thought on the requirement to ensure the implementation of human rights for the people.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights is an extremely rich and profound content. Researching and understanding Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights can find answers to a

series of theoretical problems in building and perfecting human rights values in Vietnam today. The Communist Party of Vietnam from the 6th Congress to the present has always emphasized the goal of national independence associated with socialism, realizing a rich people, a strong country, democracy, justice and civilization, and gradually becoming more and more secure, better guarantee in the implementation of human rights and citizenship in Vietnam. The Communist Party of Vietnam advocates "*Caring for people, protecting everyone's legitimate rights and interests, respecting and implementing international treaties on human rights to which Vietnam has signed or acceded.*" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001, p.134) The XIII Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed that the whole Vietnamese nation is in tune with the flow of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and integration. Internationally with "*aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country, striving until the middle of the twenty-first century, our country becomes a developed country, following socialist orientation*" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.112). Clearly, in Vietnam, the guarantee of human rights in both theoretical and practical awareness is showing an effort to apply Ho Chi Minh's thought on human rights.

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