

# Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on a Democratic State

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**Abstract:** - *The Resolution of the 11th National Assembly stated that 'Continuous development of the rule by law state is actually of the people, by the people, and for the people' [4, p.246] is the key task of the entire political system of Vietnam nowadays. Thus, it is safe to say that studying Ho Chi Minh's ideology on a rule by law state and confirming its values in the development of a rule by law socialist Vietnamese state is one of the basic orientations in theory study in Vietnam since our Party 'setting Marxism and Leninism to be the ideology foundation and the purpose of any activity' [4, p.88]. In those values, building a rule by law state that is of the people, by the people, and for the people is one of the main values of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on a rule by law state.*

**Keywords:** *democracy, rule by law, state, value*

## Introduction

Ideology on a rule by law state is one of the most important and interesting contents of Ho Chi Minh's ideology system. Due to the necessity of completing a rule by law socialist Vietnamese state, it is essential to study and confirm the fundamental values of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on a rule by law state. Our strategies to build and complete a rule by law socialist Vietnamese state is a confirmation of the suitability of the national development orientation and it is also a crying need to meet the actual requirements. Ho Chi Minh's ideology on democracy and rule by law is considered to be an important guideline on the development and completion of a rule by law state in Vietnam nowadays. Thus, it is safe to say that the clarification of the values of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on a rule by law state is extremely necessary, especially when we are focusing on the development and completion of a rule by law socialist state which is a core value of the political renovation of Vietnam, particularly the ideologies on a democratic state that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

## Contents

### 1. Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on a Democratic State

Since the first steps in building the government in Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh soon understood

and gave instructions to build a democratic government. To him, rule by law, human rights, constitution, and laws are basic factors of a new government in Vietnam. According to Ho Chi Minh's ideology, a rule by law state is based on the principle of 'putting laws first' and 'making citizens the foundation' or, in other words, setting democracy to be the foundation of law.

In many countries, particularly western countries, the ideology revolution prior to social revolution are to raise civilian position to be the subject of history and society. By studying the historical national defense, Ho Chi Minh understood the importance of civilians in the revolutionary activities. Starting with the perspective of Marxism and Leninism that revolution is the task of civilians, Ho Chi Minh stated that human is the purpose and motivation of revolution. Human is the most valuable thing and it is the factor that affects the revolutionary victory. Thus, revolutionary activities should be carried by the people under the guidance of the Party and after the victory of that revolution; people must be in charge of the government. In fact, based on the actual needs of Vietnam revolution, historical course, and references from other countries, Ho Chi Minh chose to build the first democratic state in Vietnam after regaining government from the colonists. This ideology of his was a significant

contribution, which is based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy, on State, Socialist State, and Proletariat Dictatorship State.

Ideology on democracy is the core value in Ho Chi Minh's ideology system in general and in a rule by law state in particular. Thus to confirm the function of civilians, after regaining freedom, our Party together with all civilians built and improved civil government. A month after regaining freedom, in the work Government is the Servant of Civilians, Ho Chi Minh stated 'government activities are for the sole purpose of ensuring freedom and happiness for its people. Thus civil government must put civilian's rights first. It should do whatever is good for the civilians and avoid the things that harm its people' [7, p.22]. In short, special attention should be paid on things that can improve people's life standards. According to Ho Chi Minh, if the government wants its people to love it, it must put the people's rights first and it must be transparent. He also clarified the nature of revolution and democracy of civil government when he said the source of power of the government was the union with its people and its willingness to serve the people as far as happiness and freedom are concerned since civilians were the resources of the government and the government was the leader of civilians. Thus government and civilians must form a strong union. Therefore, in building a state that is of the people, for the people, and by the people, Ho Chi Minh paid special attention on utilizing democracy so that civilians could freely choose and vote for their candidates to be in the government authority. Right at the first meeting of the provisional government dated September 03, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh suggested the government to organize the general election 'ASAP' since this election played an important role since it was a chance for the people to utilize the democracy and to show the spirit of union, freedom, and equality. The civilians selected the Congress via general election. The Congress would assign the Government. That Government belonged to all the people. On September 03, 1945, the provisional Government of Democratic Republic of Vietnam stated 6 urgent tasks including the task of building a Government and conducting general selection to select National Assembly to choose a

Constitution for Vietnam. President Ho Chi Minh suggested the Government that 'As we were formerly ruled by the absolute monarchy, then the colonial regime which was no less despotic, our country had no constitution and our people could not enjoy democratic freedoms. Therefore, I propose the Government to organize a GENERAL ELECTION as soon as possible according to the universal suffrage regime. All citizens, male and female, aged full 18 years old shall have the right to vote and to stand for the election, regardless of their economic situation, religion, ethnicity.' [7, p.8]. His suggestion was like a legislative declaration of Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh used the sentence 'Civilians are the owner of the state' many times to clarify the nature and outstanding characteristic of a rule by law socialist Vietnamese government with the content that the government is of the people not the other way around. According to Ho Chi Minh's ideology, a rule by law state praises the legality and constitution in the government operation and activities. However, the important thing is the law system and government are made by the people and their purpose is to serve civilians. Congress is the highest authority of the government that authority is voted by the people and it shall represent the rights and interests of its people. The State only conducts activities that are permitted by laws and civilians might do all the things not prohibited by laws. Laws ensure the people's development of freedom at maximum level and maintain social security. The democratic aspect and legal aspect of a rule by law state exist in a dialectic manner that is closely related and mutually interact and one is the base for the other. The State ensures the right of freedom and democracy for the civilians at maximum level but strictly prohibits the act of taking advantage of these rights to violate common interests of the government and the people.

## **2. Building a Democratic State that is actually of the People, by the People, and for the People – The Outstanding Value in Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on a Rule by Law State**

Marxism and Leninism states that powers only belong to citizens in a democratic mechanism since citizens can build and develop a system of

government and laws at their will rather than the ruler's will. 'In democratic mechanism, state mechanism, laws, and the state itself, at certain level, is a certain political mechanism – self decision by the citizens and a determined content of people' [2, p.351]. This means democracy shapes legality. Laws are only of the people, for the people, and by the people in a democratic state. Thus, democracy is considered to be the foundation of laws. If there is no democracy and the law system is not based on democracy, then the rule by law state is only on theory or in form. Therefore, democracy plays an important role in formation of a rule by law state.

In his ideology on state, Ho Chi Minh kept his idea on a democratic state where management belongs to the majority. In that state, democracy is the core characteristic which is shown in all powers of the government and society belong to citizens. Civilians can carry out their management rights directly or indirectly. Direct democracy means the civilians have rights to decide issues related to national destiny. One of the issues is the election of members of the government. The significance of democracy in new government is the ones selected by the civilians shall represent the rights and interests of civilians and they will be assigned to conduct some important things in the development of government and mechanism. However, at ultimate scale, those members are selected by the civilians and they will represent willingness of civilians and conduct democracy on behalf of civilians. That's indirect democracy.

Ho Chi Minh also pointed out that those candidates must meet certain ethic and capacity standards. The most important requirement is to be loyal to the Party, the state, and the interests of civilians which is 'loyal to the nation and devoted to the citizens'. The citizens select those candidates based on trust but they can also waive them if they are no longer loyal to national interests. President Ho Chi Minh played an important role in building a democratic state in Vietnam which had never been done before. A democratic state, according to Ho Chi Minh's ideology, is special since all people of that state have democratic rights.

The victory of the August 1945 Revolution brought about the birth of Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh was the creator, the soul, and the leader of that state. In the national development process, Ho Chi Minh really focused on democracy. In the first meeting of the provisional government he proposed six urgent tasks with the third one 'Organizing the general election ASAP with the public ballot' [7, p.133]. This was an urgent task to make our country a democratic country. This mission is also the function and responsibility of citizens in developing the state. The general election was held on January 06, 1946 in special situation when the entire country was entering the second resistance war against French colonialism. This was the first time in our history that we carried out our national development on a democratic base. The general election with 90% attendance of citizens was considered to be one of the first victories of Ho Chi Minh and our Party in the process of creating democracy and it was the support, union, and determination of all citizens in the process of developing and protecting revolutionary achievements. This was an important task that showed democratic rights on politics of citizens. It was a form of direct democracy which was a chance for civilians to practice their democratic rights since the general selection was 'a chance for the entire nation freely choose people with capacity and dignity to shoulder national task. In the general election, anyone who wished to take in the national tasks could stand and any citizen could vote. The civilians selected the Congress via general election. The Congress would assign the Government. That Government belonged to all the people' [7, p.133].

The Congress born after the general election assigned the official government of Democratic Republic of Vietnam including 22 members. President Ho Chi Minh was the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thus the birth of Congress and Government voted by citizens was an act of democracy by civilians. Not only did the citizens have right to vote, but they also had the right to monitor and waive the activities of the Congress members if they could not fulfill their assignments. Ho Chi Minh stated 'Citizens can waive Congress members and People's Committee members if they are no longer worthy' [8, p.591]. The candidates selected by the citizens had to stay

close to citizens to understand them. Ho Chi Minh stated that the candidates that civilians selected based on their trust had to stay close to civilians, listen to them, and be under their control. They had to be relations with civilians. Away from these relations, the government could easily be corrupted, 'away from citizens, looking down on citizens'.

Ho Chi Minh's ideology on democracy was highly valuable at this point. Firstly, the statement that citizens can not only vote for but they can also waive the candidates if they are no longer loyal to national interests shows the management function of citizens and enhance their responsibilities in the state. This ideology avoids the dependence of citizens on their candidates. And the candidates voted by civilians had to try their best to be worthy of the civil trust. This was not only raise spirit and responsibilities of civilians but it made the candidates constantly learn and train to improve their knowledge and capacity to be worthy of the important tasks that civilians assigned to them. The knowledge and warnings of Ho Chi Minh on possible issues during the operation of government and how to avoid them are still valuable in the fight against corruption until these days. This was a guidance of Ho Chi Minh in building a real democratic state that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

### **Conclusion**

In the process of national innovation, our Party always praises innovation in political system that puts the development and completion of a rule by law socialist state at core. Via 30 years of innovation, the ideology of the Party on building a rule by law state is getting completed which makes a foundation for building a state of the people, by the people, and for the people. The 12th National Assembly of the Party amended the theory on a rule by law state that we are trying to complete. This makes the Party's perspectives more meaningful and gives new developments to meet the actual requirements of the country. Nowadays, with the requirements of the innovation, especially the task of building a socialist oriented market economy and enhancing democracy and international economic integration, the development of a rule by law socialist state in Vietnam must be done

synchronously with suitable steps. More importantly, the utilization of democracy and enhance of citizen function and position becomes one of the most important solutions to complete democratic mechanism in Vietnam. This not only meets the actual requirements and confirms the suitability of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on a rule by law democracy that he studied and gradually conducted on his entire revolutionary career.

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