

THE VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES – 55 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Fifty-five years ago, on 2 December 1953, the board of historical, geographical and literary studies, was officially established in Tân Trào base, Sơn Dương District, Tuyên Quang Province under the direct management of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Labor Party. This was the precursor to the present-day the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

The newly-established board of history, geography, and literature had 14 staff and was headed by Trần Huy Liệu. It was entrusted with the following tasks:

1. To collect, research and compile documents on the history, geography and culture of Vietnam.
2. To study and introduce the history, geography and culture of foreign countries.

The Academy has undergone more than 50 years of development under various names: the Vietnam Committee for Social Sciences, the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities, and finally, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. The Academy now directly manages 31 institutes for scientific studies, 8 appropriate authorities, 17

post-graduate training foundations, and 30 scientific magazines, six of which are published in English. The Academy has 1,425 officials, including 134 professors and associate professors, 273 doctors of science and PhDs, and 301 masters of social science.

The Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences is an organization directly under the Government whose functions include studying the fundamental issues of the social sciences; providing a scientific basis for the Party and the State to develop policies and strategies for rapid, stable development with a socialist orientation; providing consultation and post-graduate programs in the social sciences; and finally, taking part in developing the potential of the social sciences in Vietnam.

During the last 55 years, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has made great achievements, helping to build up and defend the country of Vietnam.

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1. Achievements in scientific research

During the past 55 years, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has actively conducted general scientific studies, applied research, and consultation for policy-making and training. Programs and themes of the research conducted by the Academy have centered around both practical and theoretical problems that are both urgent and pertinent to the country and the times, in the major fields of social life, such as social economy, politics and political systems, culture, human beings, ethnic groups, religion, and regional and international relations. Results of this research have been published in scientific magazines inside and outside the country and in at least seven thousand books. At this solemn ceremony, I would like to present some of the general results of the Academy's main activities during the past 20 years.

1.1. Contributing to raising awareness of socialism and the path towards socialism taken in Vietnam

Studying the issues of socialism and the period of transition into socialism as it occurred in Vietnam is one of the main political tasks of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. The Academy has taken responsibility for conducting many key, nationwide programs on Marxism, Leninism, the ideology of Ho Chi Minh, and the path to socialism in Vietnam. The Academy's research, conducted through different lenses, including philosophy, economics, politics, culture, society and history, have contributed to defending and affirming the immortal values of

Marxism and Leninism. At the same time, they have highlighted the creative application of the fundamental values of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of Vietnam, highlighted the theoretical and practical contributions of Hồ Chí Minh's ideology to the Vietnamese revolution, and helped provide a theoretical basis that increases general awareness of socialism and the path towards socialism taken in Vietnam.

In particular, the research results of the the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences during the period of innovation from 1986 until now have contributed to providing a scientific basis to guide the policies of nationwide renovation, primarily regarding economic reform, and have helped to shape the Vietnamese Communist Party's take on socialism and the path towards socialism taken by Vietnam. Many Academy staff directly participated in drafting the documents of the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Party Congresses, as well as the documents of Central Committee meetings and the official "summary of 20 years of innovation." Staff are now helping to supplement and develop the Strategy for National Development and to design the strategy for socio-economic development for the 2011 to 2020 time period, as well as preparing documents for the 11th Party Congress.

1.2. Providing a scientific basis for the formation of economic development policies

During the period of innovation, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has concentrated on interpreting the indispensable existence of the multi-

sector economy with many forms of ownership; analysed the decisive role of the State economy as a driving force for development of the domestic private economy and external economic relations. On the basis of Vietnam's past experiences during the period of innovation, and referring to the world's experiences, both specialized and interdisciplinary research institutes under the Academy have carried out intensive studies on the market economy, explored the need to construct a market economy with a socialist orientation in Vietnam, interpreted the essence and specific characteristics of this market economy, affirmed simultaneous construction and perfection of various types of market. In this way the Academy has helped to form mechanisms for the reasonable allocation of resources and income and to propose a variety of methods necessary in order to liberate and develop the productive force of the country, to build up the material and technical facilities of socialism, and to enhance the general material and moral life of the people.

The Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has participated in building a theoretical and practical basis for the policies regarding industrialization, the modernization of the country, the development of a knowledge economy, and international integration. Key programs and themes, such as "Direction, objectives, implementation, and solutions for the industrialization and modernization of the country" and "Industrialization and modernization with a socialist orientation - the road and

steps to take," have produced results that focus on analyzing the relationship between the development of a socialist-oriented market economy and the acceleration of industrialization and modernization. The Academy considers that the establishment and simultaneous development of the institutions of the socialist-oriented market economy is a breakthrough to step up the industrialization and modernization process in Vietnam. The Academy has interpreted the scientific foundations of the simplified model of industrialization and modernization by promoting a comparative advantage, especially the "moving comparative advantage" implemented in the context of integration and created by the Vietnamese people relying on maximum promotion of the nation's potential and taking initiative in integrating the international economy under the influence of economic globalization. Finally, the Academy has provided scientific foundations for the formation of economic policies by the 9th and 10th Party Congresses.

1.3. Contributing to innovation of the political system

In recent years, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has contributed to making people understand that the essence of innovation and improvement of the political system is to build democratic socialism and to this end it has highlighted the responsibilities of the ruling party and the tasks required for construction of the party in this new context. Research works such as "Building the Socialist State of Jurisdiction of the people, by the people

and for the people,” “Increasing ability to hold power and lead the party in the new context,” and “Civil society – international models and experiences and problems raised in Vietnam” have contributed to the renovation and improvement of the political system in the new era, under the guidance of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Also, the Academy has actively participated in reforming and perfecting the legal system, interpreting the theoretical and practical basis for laws, and proposing contents for the *Legislative Strategy, present to 2020*.

1.4. *Contributing to the development of culture, society and humanity*

During the past few years, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has implemented a variety of scientific research programs on culture, and the results have pointed to the conclusion that culture is both the goal and the driving force of socio-economic development, that it is an important endogenous resource for development, and that it is the moral foundation of society. This research affirms that Vietnamese culture has achieved unification in diversification, and that the consolidation of unification in diversification of culture is the key to maintaining equality among and bringing into full play each one of the diverse cultures belonging to Vietnam's ethnic groups. The Academy must analyze and interpret the values of Vietnamese culture throughout history, as well as the significance and role of those values in innovation, and to speed up industrialization and modernization in such as way that the country develops

along a socialist line in the context of more and more dramatic globalization and international integration. Many officials of the Academy participated in drafting the resolution of the 2nd central conference (8th term) on “Developing education, training, science and technology during the period of industrialization and modernization of the country” and the resolution of the 5th central conference (8th term) on “Promoting an advanced Vietnamese culture rich with national identity.” The Academy has also organized programs on culture, such as “Theoretical and practical foundations of Vietnamese culture in the period of industrialization and modernization,” “Evaluation of the state of cultural studies from 1991 to the present,” “Information on culture and development in the context of globalization,” and so on.

In order to help maintain the cultures of ethnic minorities, many books of great scientific value have been published: *The general collection of folk literature of the Việt peoples* (19 volumes), *The epics of Tây Nguyên* (62 volumes) ^(*), *Treasury of folk-songs of the Viet peoples* (2 volumes), *Treasury of proverbs of the Việt peoples* (2 volumes), and *General collection of Vietnamese culture* (42 volumes). Hundreds of thousands of documents in Chinese and Nom script have been collected, of which 9,299 Nom characters were encoded in the Unicode standard of the Ideographic Rapporteur

(*) The publication of *The Epics of Tây Nguyên* was recognized as one of the ten most important cultural events in Vietnam in 2007.

Group and the International Organization for Standardization. The Institute of Archeology is currently carrying out the project "Excavating, correcting, editing, researching, preserving, evaluating and promoting the cultural value of the Thăng Long Imperial Citadel at 18 Hoàng Diệu" and is actively compiling scientific documents in order to apply for UNESCO recognition for the Thăng Long Imperial Citadel and the Hanoi Ancient Citadel as World Cultural Heritage sites.

The Academy has done important human and social research regarding the development process, which has established: first, the theoretical foundations of the need to connect economic growth with the guarantee of advance and social justice, as this is regarded to be the most effective means toward a stable, harmonious development of the society; and second, the theoretical foundations regarding the central role of people as both the recipient and driving force of socio-economic development. In other words, development focused on people is the most important goal of all socio-economic policies and is the most significant theme in the scientific research carried out by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. The Academy's *National Report on Human Development in Vietnam in 2001* received a prize from the UNDP.

1.5. Achievements in historical, ethnographic and religious studies

Historical research by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has cleared up many questions regarding the birth of

the Vietnamese nation and its development through historical periods, which uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Vietnam. This research also demonstrates the resilience, indomitability, diligence, intelligence and creativity of the Vietnamese people in building and defending the country and sheds light on the formation and development of the South and Central Highlands – inseparable parts of Vietnam throughout its history.

Through their research and fieldwork throughout the country, historians, ethnographers and cultural activists under the Academy have affirmed that the solidarity among the ethnic groups in Vietnam is one of the factors leading to the successful building and defence of the nation.

The Academy has continued to study the changes in national background among a number of ethnic and local groups in the new era, showing how the factors of history, awareness, economic interest, natural resource rights, and preferential policies of the Party and the State have contributed to determining and resolving the urgent issues of ethnic groups in a context of numerous ethnic and religious changes in the Central Highlands, northwest, northeast and southwest Vietnam.

Research results have helped to inform the world and life view of the younger generations. At the same time, they have helped introduce images of Vietnam to the world and have helped advance Vietnam's process of international integration. The research results also provide useful reference

materials for policy makers and managers at central and local levels.

In the field of religious studies, the Academy has contributed to new theoretical points regarding religion and belief: religion and belief are demanded by many people; culture and religious morality have characteristics conducive to building up society; and relations between the State and the religious system in Vietnam in the context of globalization. The research has highlighted two fundamental tendencies in the life of religious communities in Vietnam today: to participate in the development of the country and to actively modernize religions so that they become social religions. The Academy has also made practical contributions to constructing the law on religion of the State of Vietnam.

1.6. Providing a scientific basis for designing and implementing foreign policy, the open-door policy, and integration

Research on international and regional matters is an important part of the scientific activities of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences with a view to, on the one hand, helping Vietnamese people clearly understand other countries and civilizations, and, on the other hand, helping design and implement the Party and State policy of “diversifying international relationships.” The Academy has done basic research on the era, the world situation, foreign policies of the Party about the world and the region, and this has helped interpret the Party’s standpoint that Vietnam wants and is willing to be a friend and trustworthy

partner of all countries in the world, striving for peace, independence and cooperation in development. At the same time, the Academy has also helped scientifically explain the guideline of the Party and the State regarding foreign nations, that is: to maintain Vietnamese independence and sovereignty while diversifying its foreign relations; to have a thorough grasp of how to handle both cooperation and disagreement in international relations; to try to increase cooperation and avoid confrontations or driving the country into isolation; to strength regional cooperation and expand relations with all countries, especially powerful countries; and to actively participate in multilateral, regional and global organizations. In order to interpret the theory of economic globalization and international integration in today’s global context, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences was one of the first organizations to articulate the point of view that Vietnam should take initiative and actively participate in international economic integration at bilateral, regional and global levels.

1.7. Compiling and publishing Vietnam’s major scientific research works

One of the important tasks of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences is to research and compile major sets of books that are typical of both Vietnamese and global knowledge. In pursuit of this, the Academy has been carrying out *History of Vietnam* (15 volumes), *History of Vietnamese Culture* (6 volumes), *History of Vietnamese*

Literature (10 volumes), *History of Vietnamese Philosophical Ideology* (3 volumes), *The General Collection of Folk Literature of the Viet Peoples* (19 volumes), *The Epics of Tay Nguyen* (62 volumes), *The General Collection of Folk Culture of the Ethnic Minorities* (23 volumes) and *Ho Chi Minh Prize-Awarded Works by the Scientists of The Vietnam Academy of Sciences* (22 volumes).

2. To establish a comprehensive database on social sciences

The Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has a voluminous database of information on social sciences with millions of old and new scientific books, magazines, journals and documents from Vietnam and other countries, as well as a large number of artifacts. These are a precious asset for Vietnam's social sciences, meeting the demands the scientific research of current and future generations and actively contributing to social science in the region.

3. Achievements in training and international cooperation

In addition to activities of scientific research, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has paid special attention to post-graduate programs in order to build high-quality human resources for the Academy and develop a contingent of qualified social officials for the country. Currently, the Academy has good material and technical facilities, modern information, documentation, and library systems, and scientific officials with good qualifications and practical experience.

This is fundamental for the Academy to be able to promote post-graduate training. Up to the present, the Academy has trained more than 1,000 doctors and masters in the social sciences. The Academy is promptly preparing for the establishment of an Institute of Social Sciences.

During its 55 years of development, the Academy has always attached great importance to international cooperation. It is a member of the World Council of Science Academies and has established relations with the Russian Academies of Sciences, China Academy of Social Sciences, Czech Republic Academy of Sciences, Japan Academy of Sciences, Poland Academy of Sciences, Korea Academy of Sciences, Cambodia Academy of Sciences, Lao National Academy of Social Sciences, American Council of Social Sciences, India Council of Social Sciences, French Council of Social Sciences, and many more. The Academy also maintains relations with international universities and organizations. Through international cooperation, the Academy has introduced the country and people of Vietnam in general, and the urgent problems raised by its development process in particular, to the world. At the same time, the Academy has also selectively acquired and introduced new knowledge and experience from outside, contributing to answering the practical problems that arise during the process of development in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has successfully held large-scale international seminars, including

the Seminar to celebrate the 100th anniversary of President Ho Chi Minh's birth and the international seminar "50 years since the Dien Bien Phu Victory" and has coordinated with the Hanoi National University in organizing the international seminar "Vietnam in the 20th century", as well as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd International Seminars on Vietnamese Studies.

During the past few years, the Academy has been highly appreciated by high-ranking officials of the Party and State. According to the former General Secretary affirmed, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences "has step by step tried to overcome its late start to make the social sciences and humanities gradually catch up with the times and meet the demand for the country's development in this new context"¹. Former General Secretary Le Kha Phieu emphasized that "a great number of good quality works on social sciences and humanities have been produced. In particular, the Academy has made a considerable contribution to supplementing, explaining and interpreting the Party's viewpoints on socialism and the path to socialism in the country"². Finally, General Secretary Nong Duc Manh highly valued and acknowledged the important

contributions of the Academy: "Numerous findings in the social sciences and humanities have been used as a basis for drafting resolutions and making the policies of the Party and the State, contributing to the success of the innovation process"³.

In the coming years, the Academy will have to undertake large tasks focusing on:

1. Organizing research into the most basic and urgent issues facing the social sciences in Vietnam, the region, and the world in the 2nd decade of the 21st century. Continuing to examine the realities of the process of innovation in the country and to develop creative theories of socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam towards to goal of "a rich people, a strong country and a fair, democratic, and civilized society." Providing a scientific foundation for strategies and policies aimed at developing the country rapidly and stably until 2020 and providing a perspective thereafter until 2030.
2. Stepping up research, development, preservation and integration of the values of traditional culture among Vietnam's ethnic groups. Contributing to building an advanced culture rich in national identity.
3. Organizing studies and basic surveys on economy, culture, and society in key areas of the country, and carrying out economic and social analyses and

¹ Speech by Đỗ Mười, General Secretary of Central Committee of the Party, when he visited and worked with the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in 1996. See *Nhân Dân* newspaper, 2 March, 1996.

² Speech by Lê Khả Phiêu, General Secretary of Central Committee of the Party, when he visited and worked with National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in 1998. See *Nhân Dân* newspaper, 18 February, 1998.

³ Speech by Nông Đức Mạnh, General Secretary of Central Committee of the Party, when he visited and worked with the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in 2002. See *Nhân Dân* newspaper, 29 April, 2002.

forecasts in order to meet the demand for sustainable development.

4. Combining research with training in the field of social sciences. Constructing an Institute of Social Sciences in order to meet the demand for trained officials with MA and PhD degrees in the social sciences for the Academy and for the country as a whole.

The above-mentioned tasks are taking concrete form as programs and projects to be carried out in 2009-2010 by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences with the highest possible quality. These programs will contribute practically to the Political Program 1991 by designing a strategy for building Vietnam into a modern industrial country by 2020 and by preparing documents for the 11th Party Congress.

Together with the great achievements made by the Party and the people in the cause of innovating and developing the country along a socialist orientation, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has continued to develop and make great contributions to the revolutionary cause of the country. The Academy has been awarded the Ho Chi Minh Medal and the Independence Medal Second Class; the Institutes of History and Archeology under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences have been commended as Hero Units in the era of innovation; and Professors Tran Van Giau and Vu Khieu have been commended as Labor Heroes in the era of innovation. Twenty-six scientists belonging to the Academy have been presented with the Hồ Chí Minh Prize and other State-awarded

prizes by the President. In addition, many teams and dozens of individuals from the Academy have received the Independence Medal First Class, the Labor Medal, and other prizes.

The Academy's development and success are thanks to the consideration of the Party and State, industries, and localities, as well as the assistance of international friends in the Academy's efforts to overcome the difficulties and challenges of the last 55 years.

However, despite its achievements, the Academy still faces unresolved problems. Research results have not really kept pace with new developments and needs in the country. Many basic theoretical and practical issues relating to the country's process of socialist-oriented innovation and development have not yet been interpreted. There have been relatively few projects of high theoretical and practical value. There is a shortage of leading officials and experts. The information, documentation, and library systems are modernized at a slow pace, as well as research methods.

On the occasion of its 55th anniversary and of having received the Golden Star Medal, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences is glad about its attained achievements, realizes the shortcomings that must be overcome, and looks forward to the future, determined to do its best work, with the motto, "innovation, breakthrough, quality and effects" in order to complete the important tasks entrusted by the Party, the State and the people.

On this occasion, on behalf of the whole faculty and staff of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the leaders of the Party and the State in various Ministries, Industries, and localities for their consideration and assistance during the last 55 years. I would also like to thank the research agencies, universities inside and outside the country, and international organizations who gave their enthusiastic cooperation and broad support, as well as the faculty and staff of the Academy who through the generations have contributed their intelligence and efforts to the development of Vietnam's social sciences.

On behalf of the whole faculty and staff currently working in the Academy, I would like to express our respect and gratitude to late professor and academician Trần Huy Liệu, late professor and academician Nguyễn Khánh Toàn, late professor Đào Văn Tập, Professor Văn Như Cương,

Professor Đặng Xuân Kỳ, Professor and Academician Nguyễn Duy Quý, Professor Trần Phương, late Professor Phạm Huy Thông, Professor Vũ Khiêu, Professor and Doctor Phạm Xuân Nam, Professor and Doctor Lê Hữu Tầng, Doctor Hồ Ngọc Hải and Associate Professor and Doctor Trần Đức Cường for their contribution to the development of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences in their capacity as former leaders.

In today's celebration, we together commemorate the deceased scientists and officials of the Academy who made sacrifices in the struggle for national independence and defence of the country.

We are undertaking monumental tasks entrusted by the Party, the State and the people. With our sense of responsibility and effort, the faculty and staff of the Academy are determined to complete our entrusted tasks with the highest scientific quality and will strive to be the leading research agency on social sciences in Vietnam.