

Utilizing Marxist-Leninist Viewpoints to Construct the Vietnamese People's Army in the Present Era

Mong Nghi TRAN¹, Thi Thuy Duong Le²

Abstract

The formation of the military is a historical and social occurrence that possesses significant class attributes. According to the Marxist-Leninist texts, the armed forces are considered as a tool of organized violence controlled by the ruling class. They are trained, taught, and utilized to fulfill the purposes and ideals of the ruling class. Following the October Revolution, the establishment of the socialist state gave rise to a new kind of military known as the socialist army or the army of the working class. This army possessed inherent distinctions from prior armed formations, since it operated in alignment with the objectives of the proletariat and the socialist state. In accordance with Marxist-Leninist ideas, the construction of the socialist army must encompass all aspects of politics, ideology, organization, discipline, weapons, technological equipment, and science. This complete approach is necessary to safeguard the revolutionary accomplishments and the socialist rule. The directives outlined by the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam for developing a "streamlined, strong, and modern" army demonstrate the Party's ongoing adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles in establishing the Vietnamese People's Army at present. This study examines the essential elements and original aspects of applying these rules, which contribute to the protection of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Keywords: *Marxist-Leninist theory; socialist army; Vietnamese people's army; national defense, streamlined; strong; modern.*

Introduction

The armed forces play a crucial role in protecting a nation's independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity. Class factors and the objectives and principles of the ruling regime have significantly influenced the nature and attributes of military institutions throughout history. The Marxist-Leninist classics offer a thorough theoretical framework for comprehending the fundamental nature of the armed forces and their establishment in various social systems.

Following the success of the October Revolution in Russia and the subsequent creation of a socialist state, it became necessary to build a new kind of military force known as the socialist army or the army of the working class. This evolution represented a notable change in the nature, roles, and socio-political attributes of the military, in contrast to prior armed forces that served the ruling classes and governments in various social systems.

The directives established by the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam about the development of a military force that is efficient, powerful, and up-to-date demonstrate the Party's innovative use of Marxist-Leninist ideas in establishing the Vietnamese People's Army at present. The objective of this method is to bolster the political power, combat proficiency, and contemporary nature of the military, enabling them to effectively carry out their duty as the central force in safeguarding the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The paper aims to gain a thorough understanding of how the Party applies Marxist-Leninist principles to build a modern and efficient army, thereby improving the capabilities of the Vietnamese People's Army to defend the socialist homeland in the present circumstances.

V.I. Lenin's idea of protecting the socialist homeland is a notable addition to the theoretical body of knowledge in Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party of Vietnam has effectively and innovatively

¹ Defense and Security Education Center – Can Tho University 554, Highway 61, Hoa Duc Hamlet, Hoa An Commune, Phung Hiep District, Hau Giang Province. Email: tmngghi@ctu.edu.vn

² Department of Political Science - Can Tho University, Campus II, 3/2 street, Ninh Kieu district, Can Tho city, Viet Nam. E-mail: lttduong@ctu.edu.vn.

utilized this approach to guide the people in attaining national independence, unifying the country, and constructing and safeguarding the Homeland.

Lenin's Socialist Homeland Defense Doctrine

V.I. Lenin, inheriting the ideas of arming the masses from C. Marx and F. Engels, drew upon the global context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This context included the struggle against imperialist aggression and the need to protect the nascent Soviet government, which was the world's first socialist state. Lenin aimed to arm the masses in order to defend the achievements of the socialist revolution. He subsequently condensed, added to, and expanded upon these concepts to become the doctrine of safeguarding the socialist country. Lenin discussed crucial aspects related to the protection of the socialist homeland by the working class and laboring people. These included the essential need, objectives, tasks, approaches, resources, and power required for defending the socialist homeland. He also emphasized the leading role of the Communist Party in state administration, the development and reinforcement of national defense capabilities, the establishment and growth of a new kind of military force, the matter of equipping the population, and the connection between constructing and safeguarding the socialist homeland.

According to V.I. Lenin, in order to safeguard the revolutionary accomplishments, the working class must eventually resort to armed defense of the socialist motherland. He expressed the belief that our survival is contingent upon defending the socialist republic, even if it means resorting to armed conflict. The dominant elite will never surrender authority to the marginalized underclass. However, the oppressed social group must actively prove that they possess the ability not only to defeat the system of exploitation, but also to effectively arrange themselves and rally all members to protect their interests³. Moreover, the act of safeguarding the homeland is intrinsically connected to the preservation of the Communist Party, the nation, and the socialist framework. He expressed his support for the concept of defending the country, but clarified that the impending war is specifically aimed at protecting the socialist homeland, preserving socialism as the foundation, and safeguarding the Soviet Republic as a member of the global socialist alliance⁴.

During the early days of the Soviet state, V.I. Lenin stressed the importance of the proletariat and laboring masses using armed force to protect their country. This involved mobilizing the collective power of the Communist Party, the people, and the working masses, which included workers, peasants, and soldiers. The Soviet government played a crucial role in organizing and leading these efforts, with the armed forces serving as the central component. Lenin placed significant emphasis on developing and strengthening the political and spiritual aspects of the working class. He asserted that the ultimate determinant of victory in any conflict lies in the collective determination and sacrifice of the masses who shed their blood on the battlefield⁵. In addition, Lenin consistently prioritized the construction and fortification of national defense in terms of both potential and posture, thereby augmenting the country's defense capabilities. He recommended utilizing periods of peace and favorable circumstances to develop the economic, political, social, cultural, scientific, technical, and military capabilities of the nation. This involves preparing the country for combat readiness and mobilizing the entire Party, people, and army to transform defense capabilities and posture into tangible strength for safeguarding the socialist homeland. The duty for this lies with all individuals under the guidance of the Communist Party and the organization and administration of the proletariat state. He stated, "It is the unequivocal obligation of all working classes to make every endeavor to revive and enhance the country's defense capabilities"⁶ and "Due to our strong support for protecting our country, we insist on a diligent approach to both defense capabilities and the readiness of our nation for combat"⁷. V.I. Lenin always emphasized the essential integration of the two strategic objectives of constructing and safeguarding the socialist homeland, regarding it as a fundamental concept in the process of organization. The individual put forward a conceptual framework and fundamental guidelines regarding the structure, construction, and functioning of a novel working-class military. They emphasized the imperative for both the Communist Party and the state to prioritize the establishment of a

robust armed force, which would serve as the central pillar in safeguarding the nation, achieved through the arming of the entire population.

The act of upholding the accomplishments of the Russian October Revolution, spearheaded by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, as well as the protection of socialist nations, confirms the profound scientific and revolutionary principles of Lenin's philosophy on national defense. These principles possess both historical relevance and practical value, serving as ongoing guidance for the defense of the socialist country in the present day.

A Marxist-Leninist View of the Army

The Army's Class Structure

The army is a historical social reality that is shaped by class struggle and has a significant class component. As per Marxist-Leninist theory, the fundamental nature of any army is to function as a tool of armed force for the organized class that supports, educates, trains, and employs it. The army's objectives, values, and battle motivations mirror those of the class that established it. Throughout history, the armies of ruling and exploiting classes and states have consistently served as tools of armed aggression, used to fight wars and subjugate the working masses. Prior to the emergence of socialist states, all militaries belonged to the exploiting classes and were engaged in protecting the interests of the ruling and exploiting classes. This included the armies of slave-owning states, feudal states, and bourgeois states. As V.I. Lenin noted, "The army serves as a tool of oppression not only under a monarchy, but also in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones"⁸.

The Rise of the Socialist Army

Following the Russian October Revolution of 1917, the construction of the socialist state necessitated the formation of a distinct military force known as the socialist army, or the army of the working class. This particular army possesses inherently distinct social dynamics, operational roles, and political-social attributes when compared to other armies throughout history. The emergence of the working-class army is closely connected to the revolutionary mobilization of the working class and the formation of the socialist state, fulfilling the crucial requirement of safeguarding revolutionary accomplishments by the use of armed power. The socialist army serves as the main military force of both the working class and the socialist state. The main objectives of this organization are to defend the rights and well-being of the working class and laborers, decisively counter any acts of aggression by imperialism, international reactionary forces, and domestic hostile actions, securely protect the accomplishments of the revolution and the socialist system, and fulfill important international responsibilities for the benefit of the working class and the global revolutionary movement.

Constructing the Socialist Army: Principles and Facets

According to Marxism-Leninism, in order to gain control and safeguard the achievements of the revolution, the socialist military must be strong in multiple dimensions, including political-spiritual, ideological, organizational, disciplinary, weaponry, technical equipment, and scientific knowledge. All of these aspects are to be led by the Communist Party.

Political-Spiritual and Ideological Aspects

According to V.I. Lenin, the primary and most crucial aspect of establishing the army's political foundation is ensuring its composition is predominantly working-class. The primary objective of politically constructing the army is to strengthen the Party's control over the army, guaranteeing unwavering allegiance to the Party's revolutionary objectives and principles, as well as the interests of the working class, the people, and the nation.

V.I. Lenin stressed that the Communist Party's comprehensive leadership over the army is the most essential principle and key source of strength for the socialist army. This leadership is responsible for

establishing the objectives, principles, duties, orientations, and strategies to reinforce and augment the army's fighting capabilities.

The role of party organizations and cadres is to fully comprehend and execute the political line and policies of the Party, through the establishment of command structures and the implementation of the cadre system inside the army.

Lenin criticized the idea of "depoliticization" put forward by bourgeois professors, arguing that the army cannot and should not remain neutral. He believed that the slogan of "keeping the army out of politics" only benefits the bourgeois class.

Transcendent Element

Vladimir Lenin stressed the crucial role of the people's determination and sacrifice on the battlefield in determining the outcome of all battles. The conviction in the righteousness of the fight, the recognition that one must willingly lay down their life for the well-being of their fellow warriors, is what uplifts the troops' morale and empowers them to withstand unparalleled difficulties⁹. He emphasized the correlation between the spiritual aspect and the political and party-related tasks performed inside the military. He stated that in places where political work, particularly the work of political commissars, is conducted meticulously, the morale of the troops is significantly elevated¹⁰. As per V.I. Lenin, the fighting objectives, ideals, organizational principles, and leadership methods of the army are determined by the working class and the socialist state. The socialist army is primarily influenced by the working-class ideology, which serves as the foundation of its political power and shapes the soldiers' spiritual lives.

Lenin stressed that triumph in warfare ultimately hinges on the morale of the masses engaged in combat, their conviction in the righteousness of the cause, and their readiness to make sacrifices for the well-being of their fellow soldiers.

Political Work in the Army: He emphasized the correlation between the spiritual element and political work and Party activity within the army, asserting that the troops' morale is highest in cases where this work is conducted most comprehensively.

Ideological Dominance: As per V.I. Lenin's perspective, the working-class ideology should exert its supremacy over the socialist army, serving as the foundation of its political power and shaping the soldiers' spiritual existence.

The Army's Combat Strength

The Human Factor as the Decisive Element According to V.I. Lenin's study, the human factor is acknowledged as the crucial ingredient for attaining success in the domain of combat. Nevertheless, he stressed that relying solely on the human aspect is inadequate; it must be combined with sophisticated weaponry and technical apparatus. The human factor, which includes the bravery, resolve, and preparedness of soldiers, is undeniably vital, but it necessitates the backing of tangible resources to achieve true effectiveness in combat.

The Essential Material Basis, Lenin emphasized that the morale of the army, regardless of its level or steadfastness, cannot be the only assurance of success in military engagements. In order to be effective, a strong martial spirit and morale must be supported by a sufficient material infrastructure. The material foundation encompasses weaponry, provisions, and extensive instruction to guarantee the army's operational preparedness. In the absence of these essential material components, even the most committed and enthusiastic troops would be exposed and incapable of attaining decisive triumphs against a well-equipped opponent.

The crucial significance of scientific advancement V.I. Lenin perceptively acknowledged the profound influence of scientific considerations on the components that comprise the military's fighting capability. He stressed the interconnectedness between the improvement and strengthening of the army's fighting

capabilities and scientific progress. Science is crucial in designing and producing sophisticated weapons, implementing state-of-the-art technology, developing tactical and strategic doctrines, and overall modernizing military forces. Lenin emphasizes the necessity of incorporating scientific advancements into every facet of military development in order to establish a powerful and fearsome combat force that can effectively protect the socialist motherland.

From a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, the human element, although crucial, needs to be supported by a strong material base and the incorporation of scientific progress in order to fully optimize the combat capabilities of the military. Adopting a comprehensive strategy that includes the human, material, and scientific aspects is crucial in developing a contemporary and efficient military force that can protect the revolutionary accomplishments and the socialist system.

Organization and Discipline are the Fundamental Pillars of a Military Force that is Capable of Combat.

Overview of Military Branches, Equipment, and Extensive Training Friedrich Engels, a major Marxist theorist, underscored the significance of many elements in constructing a proficient military establishment. He examined the importance of structuring the military into separate divisions, guaranteeing the availability of sufficient resources, and establishing thorough programs for instruction and learning. Engels acknowledged that the intangible fortitude of troops, encompassing their morale and resolve, played a pivotal part in supplementing these structural and tangible elements.

V.I. Lenin, a prominent figure in the Marxist-Leninist movement, examined the crucial importance of strict military discipline in molding a powerful army. He insisted that the socialist army uphold stringent, rigorous, and cohesive discipline in both determination and execution, as this discipline forms the bedrock of military prowess. Lenin saw that a dearth of discipline would erode the army's unity, efficacy, and capacity to promptly and efficiently carry out commands, ultimately jeopardizing its war preparedness.

According to Lenin's vision, one of the main goals of the Party's work and political efforts within the military was to build a force that is highly capable in combat. This involved developing strong military discipline and creating an army with a high level of combat readiness. He saw that developing a well-trained and prepared military force necessitated a focused endeavor in teaching political knowledge, strengthening ideological beliefs, and instilling revolutionary ideas and principles. Lenin viewed the Party's leadership and political activities as crucial factors in creating a highly skilled and resilient combat army.

From the Marxist-Leninist standpoint, the army's organizational structure, disciplinary foundation, and extensive training are crucial components in establishing a communist force that is capable of battle. Engels and Lenin stressed the significance of efficiently structuring the military divisions, guaranteeing appropriate equipment and training, imposing rigorous discipline, and consistently improving the army's readiness for fight through the Party's guidance and political efforts. This comprehensive strategy, based on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, seeks to establish a strong and capable military unit that can protect the interests of the working class, the socialist state, and the revolutionary accomplishments.

Conclusion

The Marxist-Leninist theory provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the essence of armed forces and their construction under different social systems. With the establishment of the socialist state following the October Revolution in Russia, a new type of army emerged – the socialist army or the army of the working class. This army fundamentally differs from previous military forces in its social nature, functions, and political-social characteristics, serving the interests of the working class and the socialist state.

Building a robust socialist army is an imperative to defend revolutionary achievements and the socialist system. As expounded by Marxist-Leninist classics, this endeavor requires a holistic approach encompassing various aspects: political-ideological, organizational, disciplinary, weaponry, technical equipment, and scientific knowledge.

The political-ideological dimension is of paramount importance, ensuring the army's unwavering loyalty to the Communist Party's revolutionary goals, the interests of the working class, and the socialist homeland.

The Party's comprehensive leadership and continuous political work within the army are crucial in fortifying its working-class nature, ideological dominance, and spiritual strength.

Organizational factors, such as structuring the army into distinct branches, providing adequate equipment, and implementing comprehensive training programs, are essential for building an effective military force. Strict military discipline, both in will and action, serves as the foundation upon which the army's combat capability is built.

Moreover, the integration of scientific advancements, cutting-edge technologies, and modern military doctrines is indispensable for enhancing the army's combat strength and ensuring its readiness to confront contemporary security challenges.

The guidelines set forth by the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam on building a "streamlined, strong, and modern" army reflect the Party's creative application of Marxist-Leninist principles in constructing the Vietnamese People's Army. This approach aims to enhance the political strength, combat capabilities, and modernity of the armed forces, enabling them to fulfill their role as the core force in defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and its revolutionary achievements.

In summary, the Marxist-Leninist theory provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for building a formidable socialist army capable of safeguarding the interests of the working class, the socialist state, and the revolutionary cause. By adhering to these principles and adapting them to contemporary realities, the Vietnamese People's Army can continue to serve as a reliable and potent force in defending the socialist homeland.

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