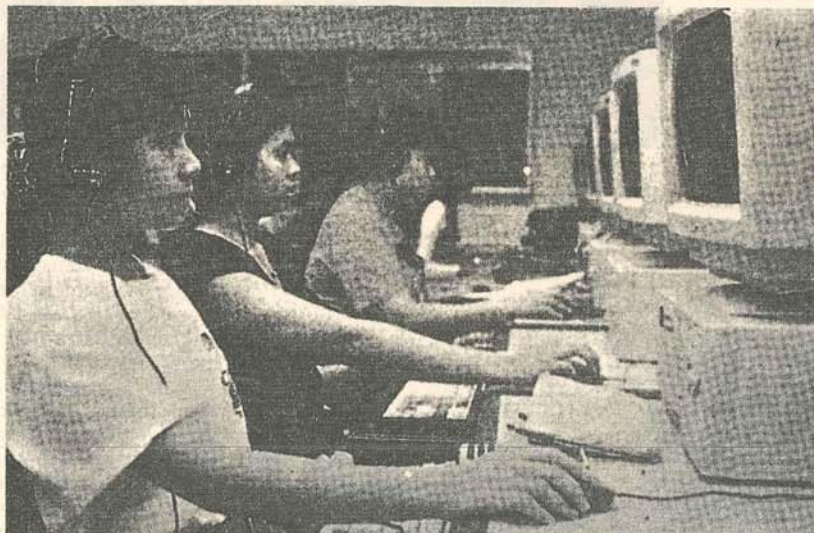


TRAINING AND EMPLOYING TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO BUILD AN INTELLIGENT CIVILIZATION

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One hundred years before our ancestors had to worry about the fate of the country under French rule and had to look for a way to emancipate it. Our generation, before the turn of the century, is facing a new situation: the country is in the danger of falling behind. Fortunately, this danger has been discovered on time and the *đổi mới* policy has been adopted.

The world is at the threshold of the next century and starting a new wave of labor division- the fourth one- caused by the intelligent technology. Three previous labor division processes have produced three civilizations: agriculture civilization, industry civilization and market civilization. In the fourth one, it's estimated that an intelligent civilization will make its appearance. All nations are engaging in an economic race for this civilization in order to secure a firm position for the country in the next century.

In this race, the most remarkable tendency is to invest in secondary and tertiary education, because it is the best way to develop intelli-

gent resources and accelerate the process of training young people in new professions. During the period between the 1960s and 1980s, the techno-scientific revolution accelerated the training and retraining process in developed countries. Reforms introduced by President Kennedy have doubled the growth rate of education in the US. Kennedy, thinking of the competition between the US and the USSR, has said that the success and failure in this competition would be determined in American high schools and universities. He has considered universities as sources of American strength and energy. Due to this orientation, the US has saved the day: in the late 1950s, the USSR surpassed the US in the exploration of outer space, but after that, the US made great achievements in this field.

Universities produce "the brains" while vocational high schools supply "skilled hands". Who are more important? The brains or skilled hands? Both of them have to represent proportionate percentages. But in the techno-scientific revolution,

the ratio of brains to skilled hands tends to change: the number of brains will become larger and larger. We should be aware of this tendency and keep our country from being an outsider of the race to the next century.

Knowledge is the dynamic of all times and humankind. A lack of knowledge and brain will lead to inactivity. To countries poor in natural resources and production, intelligent resources will be of great importance to their development. We should be aware that Vietnam is in the list of underdeveloped countries, so to produce brains in order to keep abreast of the latest developments of the world is very urgent. At present, we must visualize a daunting prospect of our country if we fail to develop education and train an army of experts and intellectuals. To reduce investment in university education is unacceptable. How can we secure an army of experts when in universities, most students learn by repetition? When we lack modern facilities for study, we can blame our poverty. But the obsolescence of many textbooks, the absence of many necessary subjects

from university syllabuses and the prevalence of obsolete scientific concepts could be only explained by the reluctance to modernize the education service. At present, we are facing a choice of two alternatives: we either have our obsolete machines and equipment operated by badly-trained workers or modernize the production and employ graduates from universities and vocational schools.

It's worth mentioning that many experts and laborers with university degrees have been employed wastefully. In many economic concerns or organizations, experts had to do work unrelated to their skills, engineers had to work as workers. All of this resulted from education plans which lacked scientific bases and failed to meet demand of the economy. So it's necessary to form an interrelation between universities and the economy in which programs to train and retrain experts will be financed by economic concerns employing these experts.

Waste of grey matter could be seen in the low price paid for labor in domestic market. Those who go abroad to work, even they do the simplest jobs, can easily earn high wages and enjoy high living standard, whereas many professionals working in home country find it difficult to make both ends meet even if they do their jobs to the best of their ability and make good achievements. Low living standard has forced intellectuals to do subsidiary jobs which bear no relation to their ability or status. Thus, a heart-rending event keeps on happening: intellectuals, after years of study consuming a lot of money, instead of contributing to the technoscientific revolution, have buried their knowledge by degrees because they had to scrape a living from subsidiary occupations. Recently, many scientists have considered working abroad as a simple laborer or an expert as a good luck. They have spent a lot of time on studying foreign languages, and waiting for a contract; and paid almost no attention to their present work. The economy at present is badly in need of experts, but there is no mechanism or policy for giving them preferential treatment and helping them study with the result that they have to go abroad looking for opportunities. Taking the long view, it's a wasteful use of grey matter which leads to a pragmatist way of life, contempt for knowledge and intellectuals, and the cult of material wealth. This irrationality becomes greater because the waste of material wealth is criticized by the public while the waste of grey matter goes

unnoticed.

Can we be allowed to blame the poverty of the country for all of this? Can salary paid by the Government be reduced to a mere formality, instead of becoming an incentive to work harder, just because of the poverty? Formal salary can't solve socioeconomic problems and help the country keep pace with the world but to produce halfway achievements. What is expected now is a measure to help intellectuals enjoy such a reasonable living standard that they can concentrate their mind on producing the best material or spiritual values.

Besides the waste of grey matter in home country, we haven't had any mechanism for encouraging representative bodies in foreign countries



or Vietnamese experts working abroad to improve knowledge or gather scientific information needed for the development of domestic intelligent resources. This method is very easy and cheap, and moreover, it makes Vietnamese citizens in foreign countries aware of the obligation to develop domestic intelligent resources. Information is a condition for developing a nation and bridging the gap between it and the world. A lack of information, or inconsistent information, will become an obstacle to the development and widen the gap between Vietnam and the world. We are badly in need of information but we have paid no attention to the source of information which could be tapped from Vietnamese organizations and individuals in foreign countries. It's hard for us to blame the poverty for this lack of attention. In a period full of opportunities and challenges, we have to know our own weak and strong points so we can find out the best measures to overcome our diffi-

culties. To know ourselves, we have to take an objective and scientific attitude.

It's worth noting that decadent behavior is becoming more common among intellectuals: moral standards fall, inner spiritual life declines, snobbery attitude is widespread, etc. While many people with religious faith live up to higher moral standards compared with many intellectuals.

It seems to me that the more advanced the technology and learning, the more necessary the morals. The human knowledge has made great progress over time, but there is no corresponding progress of morals. As we know, scientific knowledge without conscience can lead to noth-

ing but the decadence of soul. It's hard to imagine how far the technology and science could conquer the world and how far they could damage the human being. We will enjoy benefits or suffer great disasters from it. This all depends on the way we use technoscientific achievements. University education is responsible for preventing the spiritual decay of graduates and connecting knowledge with conscience, learning with morals. Universities should modernize knowledge supplied and inherit progressive achievements of the world. This task requires them to make great efforts and carry out basic researches into all fields.

How to train and employ scientific experts is posing a lot of questions to which we find out only a few answers. Difficult questions requires great concentration of mind. We will certainly find out solution if we are determined enough ■