

Original Research Article

The Political Thought of Nguyen An Ninh in the Ideological Transition of the Late 19th Century and Early 20th Century

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Abstract: The period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century was a period of great changes in Vietnamese history. The French colonialists invaded and turned Vietnam into a colonial, semi-feudal society. Vietnamese feudalism and Confucian ideology are increasingly powerless against the demands of the fight against foreign aggression for national independence. In that context, a number of typical thinkers, from Pham Phu Thu, Dang Huy Tru, Nguyen Truong To, Nguyen Lo Trach, etc. to Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chau Trinh, Nguyen An Ninh, etc. have made a move political thought of great historical significance. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the issue of national independence was the top task of our nation. Therefore, it can be said that although by many different ways to save the country, the thinkers are all aiming for national independence. Such political thinking is essentially correct. In that context, Nguyen An Ninh's political thought has added a voice to the nation's sense of independence.

Keywords: Political thought, Nguyen An Ninh, ideological transition, late 19th century, early 20th century, Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

The change of thought in Vietnam at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is a topic that always attracts the attention and research of domestic and international researchers. In fact, many research works have been published, many seminars and scientific talks have been held, and many valuable achievements have been achieved.

It can be affirmed that in the face of increasingly severe economic difficulties, political turmoil, and the risk of losing the country, the progressive scholars at that time boldly put forth ideas to renew the country in all aspects of economy, politics, education, culture, military, and diplomacy in order to create the strength to develop the country and serve the struggle to protect national independence [1].

The change of ideology in Vietnam at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was away and a new means of saving the country. Therefore, understanding the ideological transition in this period also understands a policy of saving the country at that time, in terms of certain practical conditions.

Within the framework of an article, I have focused on researching and clarifying the following issues: Firstly, on the conditions and premise for the ideological transition in Vietnam at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. First of all, in terms of socio-economic conditions, this is a historical and social period in the world and Vietnam has many factors that strongly and deeply affect the process of formation, existence, and development of reform thought in Vietnam during this period. It was the great development of science, technology, and the scientific and technological revolution that made capitalism flourish and moved from liberal capitalism to imperialism.

Along with that, the invasion and domination of the French colonialists awakened the thinkers of this period to choose a new path to save the country. Besides, Vietnamese patriotism; the ideological and cultural quintessence of the East and the West are important theoretical premises leading to the formation, existence, and ideological change of this period [1].

In that context, Nguyen An Ninh appeared, as a patriotic fighter, he made his mark of struggle, contributing to enriching Vietnamese patriotic thought in the context was colonization by the French people [2]. During his operation, he left many imprints on the Vietnamese revolution in general and Vietnamese thought in particular.

As a thinker, Nguyen An Ninh creatively applied Marxist-Leninist materialism to Vietnamese practice. In his works, Nguyen An Ninh has excellently expressed his thoughts on worldview, methodology, and epistemology. The political thought of Nguyen An Ninh has contributed to enriching the Vietnamese ideological system both in the past and in the present. With the above research, we find that Nguyen An Ninh has established for himself a scientific worldview and correct methodology based on dialectical materialism. Nguyen An Ninh's political thought contains deep humanity.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background Vietnam's history at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century

The period of the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was a period of great changes in Vietnamese history. The French colonialists invaded and turned our country from an independent country into a semi-feudal colony with the urgent and burning requirement: "National independence and the plowmen have fields" [3]. Vietnamese feudalism and Confucian ideology are increasingly powerless against the demands of the fight against foreign aggression for national independence [4]. There was a deep division within the feudal landlord class [5].

The court was weak and resigned to being a henchman for the colonists. Therefore, our people's struggle movements according to feudal ideology (typically the "Van Than" movement and the "Can Vuong" movement) failed in turn. At this stage, capitalism had passed from the stage of free competition to the stage of imperialism and had established world domination. Most countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have become colonies and dependencies. Imperialism both competed to tear apart, and colluded with each other to enslave small nations.

Along with the fundamental contradictions in capitalist society - the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, imperialism gives rise to a new contradiction - the contradiction between the colonial peoples and colonial imperialism. People's life in colonial and dependent countries is extremely miserable, including the Vietnamese people under the shackles of the French colonial regime. Movements of the national liberation struggle in colonial and dependent countries began to develop and tended to spread.

Thus, historical events have strongly influenced the political, economic, and social situation of Vietnam; changing the class structure, greatly affecting the lives of all people, the French colonialists invaded Vietnam. After the "pacification" period, the French colonialists implemented the policy of "colonial exploitation" - in fact, increased exploitation and plundering of the colony. Therefore, the life of the working people has been difficult and even more miserable. As a result, Vietnam changed from an independent feudal country to a semi-feudal colony.

Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the lives of all classes of people became more and more impoverished. The conflict between the entire Vietnamese people and the invading French colonialists and the colonial regime became more and more acute, becoming both fundamental and major contradictions. In addition, the conflict between farmers and landlords became more acute. This is a big obstacle, hindering the development of Vietnamese society.

Therefore, only by successfully resolving the above contradictions - which mean finding a way to save the country and regain national independence, Vietnamese society will continue to develop. That is the objective and urgent requirement of the Vietnamese revolution since the early twentieth century.

Thought transition in the late 19th century and early 20th century in Vietnam

In Vietnam, after the weak Nguyen Dynasty signed a "peace" to surrender, in the late 19th century, the French colonialists embarked on colonial exploitation for the first time. Vietnamese society began to undergo profound changes and divisions. The penetration of French capitalism has given rise to two new classes in Vietnamese society: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The impact of progressive thought in the West, as well as the Xinhai revolution and the reform movement of Khang Huu Vi and Luong Khai Sieu in China, also had a great influence on Vietnam, especially the transformation of ideology political thought. In that context, some typical thinkers, from Pham Phu Thu, Dang Huy Tru, Nguyen Truong To, Nguyen Lo Trach, etc. to Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chau Trinh, Nguyen An Ninh, etc. made a political-ideological shift of great historical significance [5].

The contents of his bourgeois-democratic ideology have created an important shift on the ideological level: From the emergence of innovative ideas within the framework of feudal ideology to bourgeois-democratic ideas and progress closer to Marxism-Leninism. This political thought is the absorption of values and quintessence of the East and the West, especially democratic and progressive Western ideas. Although there were new, revolutionary, and progressive contents, showing enthusiastic patriotism and hatred for the enemy, due to the conditions and circumstances at that time, there were expressions in the political thought of this period present wavering, ambiguous, even sometimes coming to compromise with the France colonialists [5, 6].

From the criticism of a feudal ideology, bourgeois democrats proposed reform thought at the end of the 19th century and then initiated the bourgeois-democratic ideology in our country at the beginning of the 20th century, creating It had a great influence on Vietnamese society, giving rise to diverse and vibrant patriotic anti-French movements of our people, especially movements with bourgeois-democratic tendencies such as the Dong Du movement (Phan Phan). Boi Chau), Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc (Luong Van Can, Nguyen Quyen), Duy Tan (Phan Chu Trinh), etc.

The patriotic movements against the French on the bourgeois Democratic ideological stance as well as the feudal Confucian ideological stance in the past have all failed. The root cause is the lack of a correct and scientific political line, the lack of leadership of an advanced class. The Vietnamese revolution faced a serious crisis on the way to save the country. Although the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement failed, its people and innovative ideas still have a certain significance for the cause of saving the country and the people in the future.

On that land, [2] Nguyen An Ninh participated in the political thought transition in this special historical period in the 30-the 40s of the twentieth century. Therefore, it can be said that political thought at the end of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century was a transitional step, an intermediate stage to move from feudal ideology to bourgeois democracy and proletarian ideology. Overcoming those limitations is the basic requirement and requirement for the development of Vietnamese society [1].

Political Thoughts of Nguyen An Ninh

Nguyen An Ninh was born on September 15, 1900, in his maternal hometown, Long Thuong commune, Can Giuoc District, Cho Lon province (now part of Ho Chi Minh City) [7]. His father was Nguyen An Khuong, a patriotic Confucian intellectual who had participated in the Dong Du movement led by Phan Boi Chau. From a young age, Nguyen An Ninh was taught patriotism by her father and tutored in Chinese literature. After that, he attended high school at French-Vietnamese schools in Cochinchina [6].

At the age of 16, his family sent him to Hanoi to study at the College of Medicine and Pharmacy. After studying for half a year, Nguyen An Ninh decided to transfer to study Law at the main French College of Indochina University. In 1918, he went to Paris (France), continued his undergraduate studies in law at the Sorbonne University. Two years later, he completed his studies and was awarded a bachelor's degree in Law with distinction [7].

It was also during this time that Nguyen An Ninh began to participate and be active in the patriotic movement of the Vietnamese in France. He joined the "Group of Five Dragons" (including Phan Chu Trinh, Phan Van Truong, Nguyen The Truyen, Nguyen Tat Thanh, and Nguyen An Ninh) [8]. In the group, he was trusted and loved by Phan Chau Trinh and Phan Van Truong. He is a friend and an effective collaborator of Nguyen Ai Quoc, co-founded the Union of Colonial Ethnicities, and co-wrote and promoted the Le Paria newspaper. In addition, Nguyen An Ninh also spent time researching revolutionary theories in the world. He also connected widely with leftist and communist activists in France and a number of other countries in Europe.

On October 3, 1923, Nguyen An Ninh returned home and began to engage in patriotic and revolutionary activities against the French colonial government. On January 25, 1923, he gave his first speech in front of a large number of young intellectuals in Saigon with the theme "Combining an education for the Annamites". Then, on October 15, 1923, he gave a second lecture at the Cochinchina Study Promotion Association with the song "The ideal of Annam youth" [2].

In these two speeches, Nguyen An Ninh vehemently attacked the policies of the colonial government, calling on the people, especially the young people, to enthusiastically shake off the ties of custom, despite the opposition oppressed by the French colonialists to find a way to save the country and build for the nation a new free and modern culture.

The people of all classes, especially the patriotic youth in Cochinchina enthusiastically endorsed Nguyen An Ninh's ideas, but the colonial authorities were extremely angry. Cognac Governor Cognacq and chief secret agent Arnoux summoned him to the Governor's Palace to threaten and ban him from speaking in public places [1].

From the early years of revolutionary activities (1923), Nguyen An Ninh was extremely anxious and anxious about determining the revolutionary path, his mindset was written by Nguyen An Ninh in his article Can make a revolution direct or not in La Cloche Félée (May 19, 1924).

In that article, his biggest concern was whether Vietnam could have a revolution and if so, which way? According to him, if the Vietnamese people followed the path of the bourgeois democratic revolution of Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chau Trinh, it would not be possible to liberate the nation. But following the proletarian revolution is also very difficult. He wrote: "In the countryside, young Nguyen Ai Quoc is enduring a miserable life to maintain a newspaper on which he voiced his patriotism" [7].

Nguyen An Ninh realizes a negative reality, that is, many people's revolts against the colonial invasion and then suppressed, resulting in the loss of their strength, money, and people as a result do not make the colonialists falter. He wrote: "Occasionally there are some discrete, shallow mass movements that only need about a hundred guns, a few machine guns to be extinguished, and only a month later the silence fades in everyone's angry children memories of a helpless people. What consequences did all those things have? That exhaustion, loss of energy of the race"? [7]. Due to the fact that the Vietnamese revolutionary potential at that time was still very weak, the most important issue for national liberation was not follow any path.

For choosing the revolutionary path, if determined correctly, it is not possible to have the force to implement that road, the most important issue is how to fight colonialism and improve the lives of people today. For that purpose, Nguyen An Ninh advocated organizing unions and associations to fight for the basic rights of the people, to fight against the injustice and tyranny of the colonialists. He wrote: "Whether" "yes" or "no" to make a revolution, a certain job in the immediate future can be done is to fight against the acts of tyranny embedded in colonial customs, etc" [7]. Accordingly, the anti-colonial struggles, the basic issue is to protect the legitimate interests of the people, the living conditions, but should not set political goals, when the people are guaranteed, the goal is politics also gained from those struggles.

Nguyen An Ninh explained: "An Annamese people can organize a federation, for example, without a political goal, only need the muscular strength of their hands or feet to protect the weak colonial thugs threaten or bully"? [7]. According to Nguyen An Ninh's thought at that time, the purpose of the Vietnamese revolution at this time needed to "stop the violent people, trust in power, make them ashamed, use any means to expose them, so that they cannot live" [7]. Thus, right from the early years of independent operation, Nguyen An Ninh agreed with communism but said that it could not be done in the immediate future due to the immature conditions.

In 1926, he was imprisoned by the colonial government for 2 years. After being released from prison, he founded the Cao Vong Party Youth, a patriotic organization operating on the principle of secret societies in Cochinchina. He also collaborated with officials of the Vietnam Khach Mang Youth Association in mass mobilization and organizational development of the Association. He was again imprisoned by the French in late 1928.

After being released from prison for the second time (1931), Nguyen An Ninh again enthusiastically participated in patriotic and revolutionary activities, standing side by side with the way communist and patriotic soldiers fought to preserve and restore the movement after being released from prison. the defeat of the revolutionary climax of 1930 - 1931. Together with communist soldier Nguyen Van Tao, at the end of April 1932, Nguyen An Ninh founded a public French newspaper La Lutte (Trigger). This is a very prestigious revolutionary newspaper in Saigon and Cochinchina. Along with the communists, Nguyen An Ninh actively campaigned in the 1933 elections for the Cochinchina District Council. This was the first time communist and patriotic soldiers successfully organized it. Lively public struggles.

After the resounding victory of the French Popular Front, in June 1936 the Popular Government was established in Paris, led by Léon Blum, and announced that it would send an inspection delegation to survey the situation of the French colonies. Including Indochina. Taking that opportunity, some opportunistic elements in the landlord class and the bourgeoisie of Cochinchina intend to enlist in the name of the "native population" to submit their claims to the Popular Government. Meanwhile, the basis of the Communist Party of Indochina has not yet been restored and the Party has no

specific policy on this issue. Nguyen An Ninh was very sensitive to launch the movement "Indochina congress", a movement of mass movement. Nguyen An Ninh's initiative was quickly supported by the Indochinese Communist Party. Within the last two weeks of September 1936, about 600 Action Committees were established in Saigon and Cochinchina, mostly led by Communist Party members, actively campaigning to gather the people and awaken the masses.

CONCLUSION

From a student at Indochina University, Nguyen An Ninh became a soldier, a leader with great prestige, and the strong influence of the Vietnamese patriotic movement for nearly 2 decades (from 1923 to 1943). He is also a great thinker, culturalist, and journalist. His works on political thought, religion, and culture have had a profound influence on the historical and cultural process of modern Vietnamese thought.

He was one of the most typical people of the first class of "Western-educated" intellectuals, bravely committed, devoted himself, devoted all his talents, courage, and life to the cause of national liberation from the oppression picture of colonialism. To better understand the stature of Nguyen An Ninh, here are the comments and assessments of some great leaders and scientists about him.

Nguyen Van Linh, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam wrote: "Nguyen An Ninh is a great patriot, a great intellectual." Pham Van Dong, former Prime Minister wrote: "I affirm that Nguyen An Ninh is a patriot, a resilient revolutionary soldier, resolutely fighting for the Fatherland and nation, until his last breath. Nguyen An Ninh has the stature of a leader of a revolution, so we must remember the important contributions of a historical figure".

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