

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!



W. K. K. K.

SELECTED WORKS
OF
HỒ CHÍ MINH

Volume I

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
Collection “Works of Maoism” #13

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<https://foreignlanguages.press>

Paris, 2021

First edition, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021

ISBN: 978-2-491182-94-6



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Note from Foreign Languages Press

This edition of the first volume of the *Selected Works* of Hồ Chí Minh contains documents written between 1914 and 1945. In these 30 years, Hồ Chí Minh held many jobs, including photographer, journalist, poet, and teacher—and he was also a prisoner and guerrilla fighter. He was known under many pseudonyms; some estimates are that he used up to 200 different pseudonyms in his life. Yet, throughout this time, he remained always a nationalist and a communist.

This volume covers the periods of Hồ Chí Minh's life in Paris (and before) as a journalist and member of the Communist Party of France (1914-1924); his years in Russia and Hong Kong as a delegate of the Communist International, and later as the founder of the Communist Party of Vietnam (1925-1931); following two years of jail and three years in Russia, his years in China as a fighter of the Eighth Route Army (1931-1940); his return to Vietnam where he organized the Việt Minh, then back to China where he was arrested and imprisoned by the Kuomintang, and after being freed by Chinese communists, his leadership in the fight for independence (1941-1945).

During this time span, Hồ Chí Minh wrote over 300 documents and 150 poems, which were compiled in Vietnamese by Thế Giới Publishers. We are glad to present in this volume a selection of 131 documents and 100 poems from those documents. Of them, 53 were previously available in the *Selected Works*, Volume I and II (published in 1960) and *Selected Writings* (1977) and 6 were translated and published outside of the official compilations. The 72 other documents were translated for the first time from French to English for this compilation.

To translate these documents, we used as sources:

- (1) Archives of various newspapers for which Hồ Chí Minh was writing, such as *L'Humanité*, *La Vie Ouvrière*, and *Correspondance Internationale* (French *Inprecor*).
- (2) Alain Ruscio's compilation *Ho Chi Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, which contains many previously unknown documents.
- (3) Unclassified archives of the reports that the Ministry of Colonies requested from the French intelligence in Aix-en-Provence containing

several letters and information that identify HCM's authorship of various unsigned documents.

We systematically compared the documents we found with the 3rd edition of the Vietnamese *Collected Works* published in 2011 by Thế Giới Publishers to verify their authenticity. Other documents not contained in the *Collected Works* were included only if we could verify with certainty their authenticity.

In reproducing the documents, we made the decision to replace Vietnamese names with their modern spelling in *Quốc Ngữ*, which contain diacritics to help to read them properly, with the exception of some cases where a name is popularly known in its Westernized form (e.g. Hanoi instead of Hà Nội, Haiphong instead of Hải Phòng). And we retained the different signatures Hồ Chí Minh used at the time—sometimes with diacritics, sometimes without, sometimes with intentional typos.

After some discussion, we also decided to keep the pejorative vocabulary that Hồ Chí Minh used, such as “Annam” (the colonial name of Việt Nam), or “natives.” As the author knowingly used this terminology, we believe replacing them would betray his intentions. Included also are approximately 200 footnotes containing biographical, historical, and linguistic information.

Lastly, we would like to thank Alain Ruscio for generously and kindly sharing his knowledge on the life and works of Hồ Chí Minh and without whom this work would have been far more challenging.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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Letter to Phan Châu Trinh¹

July 2, 1914

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 21.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 4.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Dear Master,

Gunfire rings in the air as corpses cover the ground. Five great powers are involved in a conflict. Nine countries are at war. I'm suddenly reminded of what I told you a few months ago about the storm that was brewing. Fate still has surprises in store for us and it is impossible to say who will win. Those who are neutral are still undecided and the combatants cannot guess their intentions. The circumstances being such, that if someone sticks his nose in the matter, he cannot but take the side of one or the other adversary. The Japanese seem intent on putting a toe in the water. I think that in three or four months the fate of Asia will have changed, and greatly so. Too bad for those who are fighting and agitating. All we have to do is keep quiet.

I send my regards to you and to little Dat.² I hope to receive an early answer from you. My address: P. Tất Thanh, 8, Stephen Street, Tottenham Road; London.³

NGUYỄN TẤT THÀNH

¹ Phan Châu Trinh (1872-1926) was a well-known and respected Vietnamese nationalist. He graduated from the same university as Hồ Chí Minh's father and was his personal friend. Châu Trinh advocating for deep reforms of the colonial system and was opposed to violence.

² Phan Châu Giát was Trinh's (above) son. He died of tuberculosis in 1921.

³ Hồ Chí Minh lived in London from 1913 to December 1917, where he used both "Paul Tất thanh" and "Nguyễn Tất Thành" ("Nguyễn the accomplished") as his pseudonym.

Claims of the Annamite people⁴

June 18, 1919

Source: *L'Humanité*, June 18, 1919, p. 3.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Since the victory of the Allies, all the subjugated peoples tremble with hope at the prospect of an era of law and justice that must begin for them by virtue of the formal and solemn commitments made in front of the whole world by the various Allied powers during the struggle of Civilization against Barbarity. While waiting for the principle of Nationalities to pass from the realm of the ideal to that of reality through the effective recognition of the sacred right of peoples to self-determination, the People of the Former Empire of Annam, now French Indochina, present to the Noble Allied Governments in general, and to the honorable French Government in particular, the following humble claims:

- (1) General amnesty for all native political convicts.
- (2) Reform of the Indochinese justice system through the designation to the native people of the same judicial guarantees as to the Europeans, and the complete and definitive abolition of the Special Courts that are instruments of terror and oppression against the most honest section of the Annamite people.
- (3) Freedom of the Press and of Opinion.
- (4) Freedom of association and of assembly.
- (5) Freedom of emigration and of traveling abroad.

⁴ Between January to June 1919, the Peace Conference was held in Versailles with the goal of redrawing the borders after the First World War. *Group of Annamite Patriots*, an organization led by Hồ Chí Minh, seized this opportunity to write these claims and submit them to the different participants of the conference, as well as translate them in *Quốc ngữ* (Vietnamese) and spread them among the Vietnamese diaspora of Paris. This document was even spread in Việt Nam, where it was brought in by sailors. While the document was publicly ignored, unclassified archives of the French intelligence shows that it was taken very seriously by the colonial administration, that saw its content as a serious threat. Only six days after receiving it, they dispatched several agents to search for the location of this mysterious “Nguyễn Ái Quốc” and uncover his background.

- (6) Freedom of education and the creation in all the provinces of technical and professional schools for the use of the natives.
- (7) Replacement of the system of decrees by a system of laws.
- (8) A permanent delegation of native people elected to the French Parliament to keep it informed of natives' needs and wishes.

The Annamite people, in presenting the above-mentioned requests, count on the justice of all the Great Powers and command themselves in particular to the benevolence of the Noble French People who hold our fate in their hands and who, France being a Republic, are supposed to have taken us under their protection. By claiming the protection of the French people, the Annamite people, far from humiliating themselves, on the contrary honor themselves: for they know that the French people represent freedom and justice, and will never renounce their sublime ideal of universal brotherhood. Consequently, by listening to the voice of the oppressed, the French people will do their duty to France and to Humanity.

In the name of the Group of Annamite Patriots:

NGUYEN AI QUOC⁵

⁵ This is the first time that the pseudonym “Nguyễn Ái Quốc” appears. It literally means “Nguyễn the Patriot”—Nguyễn being the most common name in Việt Nam. Hồ Chí Minh used this pseudonym during his entire stay in France, and the prolificacy of his writings in various newspapers made it very popular, even in Việt Nam.

The Native Question

August 2, 1919

Source: *L'Humanité*, August 2, 1919, p. 3.⁶

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 10-15.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

On June 18, *L'Humanité* published the address of the Annamite representatives to the Peace Conference, demanding amnesty for all native political prisoners, reform of the Indochinese justice system by granting the native people the same rights as those accorded to Europeans, freedom of the press, of assembly and of association, freedom of education, the replacement of the traditional system of decrees by a system based on legislation, and finally, the creation of a permanent delegation of native people to be elected to the French Parliament. We can only endorse these just demands in this era of the people's desire for self-determination.

France began the conquest of Indochina at about the same time that Japan took its first steps towards the famous reform of 1868. But if, in the space of half a century, Japan has been able to establish a political system that today ranks among the leading world powers, France, it must be said, is still groping its way through its Indochinese policy. One may even wonder if there has ever been an Indochinese policy, given that, since the French occupation, our country has, so to speak, always lived from day-to-day, without knowing where the government wanted to lead it; a government which at times has spoken of the policy of assimilation, at others of the policy of association, without actually applying any of these policies. The current situation is as follows. Today, as in the past, the conquering and the conquered peoples live next to each other in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion. This depressing situation is interesting to examine from different points of view.

⁶ This article is the first that Hồ Chí Minh wrote for *L'Humanité*, official organ of the French Communist Party (PCF). From 1919 to 1924, he wrote close to 50 articles for both to *L'Humanité* and *La Vie Ouvrière*, the newspaper of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), —all discussing the national question.

From a psychological point of view, there is distrust and contempt on one side, resentment and despair on the other. Colonial publications, books and newspapers are filled with violent attacks against the conquered people and are loaded with insults thrown in the face of these same people—with all the more “bravery” because their authors know in advance that since the masses are unable to respond, they can only swallow these insults while grinding their teeth. One can read, for example, sentences like this: “There is only one way to govern this Annamite race, and that is through domination by force... To educate the Annamites or to allow them to educate themselves is, first of all, to provide them with fast-firing rifles against us, and, furthermore, to train skilled dogs that will be more annoying than useful...”

From the administrative and judicial point of view, a whole abyss separates the European from the native. The European enjoys all sorts of liberties and reigns as an absolute master, while the native, muzzled and kept on a leash, has only the right to submit without complaining: if he allows himself to protest, he will be declared a rebel or a revolutionary and treated accordingly. Even more unfortunate is the native person who tries to escape this most pleasant regime by moving abroad: the members of his family will be persecuted and he, if arrested, will be sent to prison or put to death. Often, in order to move around the country from one locality to another, the native person has to be in possession of valid papers. As for the judicial system, here is how it works for the native people. Whenever a European kills, murders, or rapes a native person and the case has not been completely covered up, the court before which the perpetrator is supposed to appear almost certainly acquits the latter. This is the application of the principle according to which one should always safeguard the prestige of the white population in the face of the yellow subjects. The French Parliament is well aware of this, as is shown in a report on Indochina's budget by M. Violette, a deputy.⁷

THE REIGN OF DESPOTISM

In the provinces the native people are left at the mercy of the goodwill and arbitrariness of the French administrators and of the greed of their docile servants—the mandarins—creatures born under the current regime. This is jus-

⁷ Maurice Gabriel Violette (1870-1960) was a socialist deputy. He advocated for reform of the colonial system. In 1925 he was nominated as the general governor of Algeria and led the repression against Algerian communists.

tice sold to the highest bidder. If in the past he could always appeal to the royal court, nowadays, when a poor Annamite does not know which saint to turn to, the only thing that seems to be left is divine justice. When it comes to those whom the colonial language calls “agitators,” the fate of these honest native people, to whom the sympathy of their compatriots is directed, is decided in secret conciliatory meetings known as criminal commissions.

The contrast is no less striking in the economic field. On the one hand, the native people, kept in ignorance and in a state of weakness by a clever system of obscurantism and degradation insufficiently concealed behind the appearance of education, continue to earn their living in the most arduous and ungrateful jobs and to fund almost the entire government’s budget through their blood, sweat and tears. On the other hand, French citizens as well as other foreigners, come and go as they please, reserving for themselves all the country’s wealth, monopolizing all the imports and exports, as well as the most lucrative trades, while unscrupulously exploiting the ignorance and misery of the native people.

Forced to yield to the power of the French, the Annamite people, whose history goes back to more than 3000 years, has experienced, from time to time, sudden moments of revolt, which have recently expressed themselves either through attempts at a general uprising, or through acts of desperation such as the peaceful demonstrations of 1908 (*Official Bulletin of the League of Human Rights* dated October 31, 1912) and through the latest bomb attacks in Cochinchina and Tonkin. Alas! These are vain protests that have each time provoked a series of bloody repressions. Moreover, they have provided the government, like Napoleon in the affair of the “plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise,”⁸ with pretexts to elegantly dispose of the Annamites who did not care to pretend to support its despotism. It is well known that during the war, Indochina was the scene of some tragic events, which led to the establishment of martial law, followed by mass condemnations and executions. Currently, the prisons of Guyana, New Caledonia, Poulo Condor, etc., are full of native political convicts. The machine gun and the guillotine quickly silenced the stubborn and the rebellious.

⁸ The plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise was an attempt to kill Napoleon in Paris on December 24, 1800.

JAPANESE COMPETITION

The situation of which we have sketched a few broad outlines could possibly have been perpetuated indefinitely if the war, which has shaken up the whole of Europe, had not given a new twist to the Indochinese question. Indeed, as a result of the war, Japan has obtained special privileges from France in Indochina. It is therefore to be expected that more and more Japanese people will settle in the country and work in all occupations, thus making life even more difficult for the native people. They will—kept in ignorance by the policy of demoralization and weakened by deprivation and “official” opium and alcohol consumption, with which the authorities and the concessionary companies feed them as much as they can—continue to live in a very restricted environment.

In theory, progress depends on the development of internationalism, and civilization is only supposed to gain by the extension and amplification of international relations. Moreover, it would be absurd to think that two neighboring nations such as the Japanese and the Annamese nations could remain isolated from each other. But, while the Japanese, thanks to their wise government, are extremely well equipped in the face economic struggles, the Annamites find themselves utterly powerless from the point of view of modern progress—and we have mentioned the causes for this situation—compared to their neighbors: the Chinese, the Japanese, the Siamese, and even the Hindus. The question then arises as to whether, in the presence of the new situation created for them by foreign immigration, the French government would believe it advisable, in their common interest, to free the native people and let them help the French by all the means at their disposal, to prepare themselves for the tough competition they will both have to endure with the Japanese and other foreigners.

If this analysis is correct, then we can hardly understand how our demands, published by *L'Humanité* in its June 18 issue, were able to cause such a stir in the colonial world. We are aware, in fact, that a high commander of the colonial workers' units has instructed—presumably in accordance with the orders from above—the unit leaders to seize all copies of the document outlining the Annamite demands found in the hands of the Annamite workers. Very moderate in form and in substance, our requests concern only the most essential reforms needed for our emancipation and the liberties without which the Annamite man is today nothing but a miserable slave. No one can deny that

without these freedoms, which are indispensable for the propagation of ideas and knowledge that modern life demands, any serious education is impossible.

NGUYEN-AI-QUAC⁹

⁹ Hồ Chí Minh's pseudonym "Nguyễn Ái Quốc" was been spelled and misspelled in many way in the French press. We decided to retain the spelling as they appeared in the newspapers.

Indochina and Korea

AN INTERESTING COMPARISON

September 4, 1919

Source: *Le Populaire*, September 4, 1919, p. 3.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 17-20.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The world will only enjoy lasting peace when all nations come together to exterminate the hydra of imperialism wherever they may find it. In the meantime, those who are victims of this unappeasable monster are vigorously demanding, in the name of the principle of nationhood, the right to govern themselves—and it is noteworthy that their voice is listened to with great sympathy among the working people of Europe and America. This worldwide opinion in favor of the colonial peoples suffering under the foreign yoke is not without concern for the exploiters of these peoples. The Japanese government, foreseeing the harmful consequences this global opposition may cause to its most cherished militarism, agreed to reform the Korean system in a more liberal direction.

KOREAN AUTONOMY

An imperial decree, promulgated in Tokyo on August 10, 1919, has granted autonomy to Korea and has placed Koreans and Japanese on an equal footing by proclaiming that they will enjoy the same rights. It is to be expected that the Koreans will not be satisfied with this and will continue to demand complete independence, as they will point out that this decree, like all legislative provisions, will be more or less effective depending on the way it is applied.

Hence, we do not take on the despicable task of defending Japanese imperialism; we condemn it in the same way as we condemn all forms of imperialism. We will not even attempt to make a detailed comparison between Japanese and French domination, although in many respects this comparison would be to the advantage of Japan, which has not come up with the idea of poisoning the Koreans by means of the forced consumption of alcohol and opium. But today, when the government in Tokyo officially declares that it is liberating

the Koreans by assimilating them completely as Japanese citizens, it is painful to note that after fifty years of occupation, the representatives of the French Republic in Indochina are stubbornly keeping the native people enslaved by depriving them of all the freedoms and rights that the Empire of the Rising Sun concedes “en bloc” to a people it conquered barely fifteen years ago.

INDOCTRINATING YELLOW PEOPLE’S MINDS

During the war years, serious nationalist movements took place in Korea and Indochina to shake off the foreign yoke. In the aftermath of the repression that followed the unrest, the Japanese government skillfully tried to erase the memory of these tragic events by implementing sweeping reforms. But the French colonial government was naive enough to believe that in Indochina, in order to win over the native people, it would be sufficient to continue fooling the people with official speeches, deceitful propaganda, and demonstrations of loyalty that were worth the price one paid for them. In a country where, through the fault—one might even say the will—of the government, greed reigns from top to bottom, there is no shortage of people willing to be “bought.” And regarding the efforts to indoctrinate our yellow minds, the colonial government has extremely powerful means at its disposal.

As it reserves for itself the unrestricted right—as far as publications in Eastern languages are concerned—to authorize only the works which it finds acceptable, the colonial government uses this exclusive privilege to help create Annamese newspapers that serve its own purposes, and which, with the help of secret subsidies, are charged with carrying out government propaganda and with placing, from time to time, some sweet smells for the noses of the most powerful people in the colony.

And it is this system of brainwashing that the government of Indochina wants to pass off as a system of freedom for the native press.

ANNAMITE SACRIFICES DURING THE WAR

If one draws up the balance sheet of the sacrifices imposed on the Annamite people by France during the war, one will find, as far as financial contributions are concerned, several hundreds of millions of francs provided by voluntary or forced subscriptions—that is, mostly forced. And as far as human contributions are concerned, a total of more than one hundred thousand workers and several battalions of fighting soldiers, some of whom were forcibly recruited

and dispatched to France and elsewhere, while the number of volunteers was very small. Of these Annamite workers and soldiers, several tens of thousands would never see their motherland again, some falling victim to travel accidents, overwork and dangerous operations in the war factories, or ill-treatment in the barracks, while others ended up dead on the French front of the great European carnage or on the poisonous plains of the Balkan countries. Today, it is enough to travel across northern France to meet thousands of unfortunate Annamites who, occupied with earthworks, constitute groups of forced laborers—without the traditional ball-and-chain attached to their ankles, since there is no fear of their escape.

Could France not be at least as benevolent towards Indochina as Japan is towards Korea?

NGUYEN AI QUOC

Letter to Mr. Outrey¹⁰

October 16, 1919

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 24-28.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 24-26.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Mr. Outrey,

While on vacation far from Paris, I only learned today of the parliamentary debates of September 18, during which you violently and rudely took me to task. I would not have bothered mentioning the insults that have come out of your mouth if, in attacking me, you had not at the same time attacked the honorable newspaper that has offered the hospitality of its columns to my last article. I have signed my articles, and I alone can claim responsibility for them. You understand that a French newspaper worthy of the name welcomes with impartiality all truths from whatever side they come. What does it matter if they displease those they unmask? In my articles, I have not made gratuitous assumptions. I have only put forward precise facts that you are aware of and that you have not disputed. You could not. In these conditions, without having to engage in a polemic with you, I will only ask you some questions with courtesy and moderation. I'll take care not to erupt into shouting matches and insults. To respond to rudeness with rudeness is to debase oneself. One is not right because one has thrown mud at one's opponent.

First of all, you have said over and over again that I was prosecuted in Indochina for my anti-French activities. Well, please tell me when, by which court and what these anti-French activities consisted of. That is the first question. If you cannot answer it properly, that is to say, with supporting evidence, allow me to ask you very courteously which of us, the defamer or the defamed, deserves to be called miserable. I would like to choose an epithet that could

¹⁰ Ernest Outrey (1863-1941) was the superior resident of Laos (1911), Cambodia (1911-1914) and Cochinchina (1914-1936). He was a strong advocate for colonialism and was known for his violence against "native" populations.

characterize you without offending you, but I cannot find any other word in the French vocabulary than liar.

I am able to guess your tactics and to foil them in advance. Do not hide behind disdain and contempt. Your personality and mine are equally indifferent in the matter. It is only a question of establishing the truth and nothing but the truth. I would add that if I had been prosecuted, condemned even, in Indochina for what the shameless colonialists call anti-French activities, I would not be ashamed of it. On the contrary, I would glorify myself. Because for them, one is anti-French when one publicly denounces their inhuman ideas and their unmentionable actions, which so considerably harm the good name of noble France and so scandalously contradict her sublime ideals of freedom and justice, which the whole world recognizes. Yes, Mr. Outrey, there are convictions that honor rather than humiliate. You have examples of this in all times and in all countries. You will easily find them even in the history of France. Anti-French activities are no longer effective; it is time to look for something else.

Then you went on to say:

In my capacity as representative of Indochina, I cannot allow the opinion to be given credence in this House that Indochina is being bullied by France and that the Annamites do not enjoy all the freedoms compatible with the political development of the masses. Indochina, under the aegis of France, is pursuing its destiny in peace, and the best proof of its happiness, you have seen, gentlemen, in the eagerness of the Annamites to come to its defense in the day of danger.

Who do you represent? Is it the twenty million Annamites who do not know you, even by name, except for a few civil servants or a few beggars, or the handful of your voters in Cochinchina? Do not say that Indochina is being bullied by France, but rather by the bad French who live off it, which is not the same thing. Do you understand the nuance? Since you spoke of freedom and peace in your sentence quoted above, let me ask you if, after having compared it with the law of July 29, 1881, one can maintain that the natives' system of press—organized by the decree of December 30, 1918 and by articles 214 to 217 of the new Annamite penal code (*Journal Officiel de l'Indochine* of August 1, 1917)—is not a regime of complete muzzling and hiding light under the bushel, and consequently does not confirm from one end to the other what

I have said, on the occasion of which you perfidiously blamed *Le Populaire* before the House. Please note that I am not arguing with you about words. I am referring you to the texts. You are brainwashing our yellow heads just as the Germans tried, in vain, to brainwash the white heads in the Ardennes.¹¹ And remember well that they had one of your former colleagues in the Civil Services of the Colonies, a graduate of the Colonial School, as their collaborator. Ah, you are so fond of invoking anti-French activities. Here they are, the real ones, then. You would have done better to keep quiet about the use of the Annamites in France. When the government consulted General Pennequin and another general on this question, did you not vigorously oppose the execution of the project, saying that it was unfeasible, that there were not enough Annamite soldiers to defend Indochina, etc... You were afraid that my compatriots, during their stay in France, would not fail to compare the arrogance of the French of Indochina with the exquisite courtesy and the great *savoir-vivre* of the French of France. The prestige of the colonialists first, the country second, am I right?

As for peace, I only ask you if you can deny the two great affairs that took place during the war: the Duy Tân plot, as a result of which the unfortunate king without a kingdom was deported to Réunion,¹² and the capture of the province of Thái Nguyên by the Annamites?¹³ You say that “Indochina is pursuing its destiny in peace.” Don’t you see that, right up to this old and gloomy palace of Hué, where the cloistered and debauched life of its inhabitants was supposed to plunge them into such luxury that everything that happened was indifferent to them, there was no lack of intention to direct the destiny of the country in a different way than you wanted—thus proving that we had enough of the tyrannical ways of which you are the champion. You have declared yourself a representative of Mr. Albert Sarraut as well as of all the Annamites who

¹¹ The French expression “*bourrer le crâne*,” literally “stuffing one’s head,” was used for the first time during World War I to describe the German war propaganda filling the soldiers’ heads with militaristic images and slogans. Today the expression has become synonymous to “brainwashing.”

¹² Emperor Duy Tân (1900-1945) was an emperor of the Nguyễn Dynasty. In 1916, he called Vietnamese people to rise up and struggle for national liberation. He was arrested and because of his young age was exiled to Réunion Island instead of being executed.

¹³ The Thái Nguyên uprising was a rebellion in 1917-1918. Starting as a political prisoner mutiny, it managed to seize the control of part of the city before being crushed few weeks later by the French colonial forces.

have been supporting you as a budget-waster for 30 years without knowing it with their contributions. Think again. Mr. Albert Sarraut is not unknown to me. Between your ideas and his, there is the whole distance of two opposites. The Annamites are trembling at the idea of the misfortune that would be caused to the Annamite people by the government of the metropolis if it appointed you as successor to Mr. Albert Sarraut. I repeat my opinion on the latter's administration by declaring that I fully agree with what has said the honorable socialist deputy, Mr. Marius Moutet, who is very much loved and respected only because he defends the general cause of our country, who does hasn't and has never desired to have, as you do, connections with the colonial administration that allows you to gain the support of a few officials and a few Annamite beggars by small favors. Will you continue, after the texts and the precise facts that I quoted above, to maintain that citizens Moutet and Longuet have said inaccurate things? Please accept, sir, my best regards.

“It is necessary to make a mess and do stupid things.”

January 19, 1920

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L’Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 29-30.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Lâm:¹⁴ Have you prepared some lecture or is the speaker short of inspiration?

Quốc: I do not lack anything. I had intended to put a check next to the subject of Indochina, but I found it ridiculous to speak on Indochina whereas no Indochinese would dare to come to the lecture. It happened to me last time at the Rue Château.¹⁵

Lâm: Putting the name “Annamite Revolutionary Group” was too frightening. Who would dare to come to such a meeting? If someone asks you where the group is, what will you answer?

Quốc: Now you are accusing me of being violent, but what are the results of all the “softer” activities that you have been doing for the past five years? Nobody knows about Annam. Sometimes, it is necessary to make a mess and do stupid things for people to know about us. If someone asks me where the group of revolutionaries is, I’ll say that it is the 20 million who are there, who are making demands every day, and are being silenced and suppressed. Finally, what can you do with me? Imprison me, deport me, cut off my head, I don’t care.

Lâm: If you push your courage to this point, then bravo, keep going.

(...)

Lâm: What have you been doing these days?

Quốc: Always looking for books.

Lâm: When will you be able to finish this book?

¹⁴ Nguyễn Quang Lâm, pseudonym “Jean,” was a French intelligence agent. He recorded and transcribed this conversation as part of a report on Hồ Chí Minh’s activities.

¹⁵ Hồ Chí Minh gave several conferences at the Rue Château.

Quốc: I can't tell you that yet. Because I need a lot of documents. I don't want this book to be written by me, which wouldn't give it an authentic value. I will take extracts from the works of French colonialists. I will try to make sure that the excerpts are well embedded. The structure of my book is as follows:

Chapter I: situation of Indochina before the occupation of the French.

Chapter II: what was brought to Indochina.

Chapter III: what it is today.

Chapter IV: what it will be in the future.¹⁶

¹⁶ Hồ Chí Minh never published this book. In different notes that were seized by the French intelligence, it appears that the title was supposed to be *Les Opprimés* and published two or three months after this discussion. In 1925, Hồ Chí Minh published *French Colonialism on Trial*, which contains the four questions that he wanted to cover in this book. See page 255 of this volume.

Speech at the XVIIIth National Congress of the French Section of the Workers' International¹⁷

(EXCERPT FROM SHORTHAND MINUTES)

December 1920

Source: Jean Fréville, *La nuit finit à Tours*, Editions Delga, Paris, 2021,
pp. 260-261.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi,
2011, pp. 34-36.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Pub-
lishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 11-13.

Chairman: Comrade Indochinese Delegate, you have the floor (Applause).

Indochinese Delegate: Today, instead of contributing, together with you, to world revolution, I come here with deep sadness to speak as a member of the Socialist Party, against the imperialists who have committed abhorrent crimes on my native land. (*Very good!*) You all have known that French imperialism entered Indochina half a century ago. In its selfish interests, it conquered our country with bayonets. Since then we have not only been oppressed and exploited shamelessly, but also tortured and poisoned pitilessly. Plainly speaking, we have been poisoned with opium, alcohol, etc. I cannot, in some minutes, reveal all the atrocities that the predatory capitalists have inflicted on Indochina. Prisons outnumber schools and are always overcrowded with detainees. Any natives having socialist ideas are arrested and sometimes murdered without trial. Such is the so-called justice in Indochina. In that country, the Vietnamese are discriminated against; they do not enjoy safety like Europeans of those having European citizenship. We have neither freedom of press nor freedom of speech. Even freedom of assembly and freedom of association do not exist. We have no right to live in other countries or to go abroad as tourists. We are forced to live in utter ignorance and obscurity because we have no

¹⁷ The XVIIIth Congress of the SFIO, commonly known as the Tours Congress, was held from December 25 to 30, 1920. In this Congress, Hồ Chí Minh sided with the left wing and, together with other comrades, approved the resolution to found the French Communist Party (PCF) and join the Third International. He was one of the first members of the PCF.

right to study. In Indochina the colonialists find all ways and means to force us smoke opium and drink alcohol to poison and beset us. Thousands of Vietnamese have been led to a slow death or massacred to protect other people's interests.

Comrades, such is the treatment inflicted upon more than twenty million Vietnamese, that is more than half the population of France. And they are said to be under French protection! (*Applause*) The socialist Party must act practically to support the oppressed natives. (*Ovation*)

Jean Longuet: I have spoken in favor of the natives!¹⁸

Indochinese Delegate: Right from the beginning of my speech I have already asked everyone to keep absolute silence. (*Laughter*) The Party must make propaganda for socialism in all colonial countries. We have realized that the Socialist Party's joining the Third International means that it has practically promised that from now on it will correctly assess the importance of the colonial question. We are very glad to learn that a Standing Delegation has been appointed to study the North Africa question and in the near future, we will be very glad if the Party sends one of its members to Indochina to study on-the-spot the questions relating to this country, and the activities which should be carried out there.

A right wing delegate had a contradictory opinion.

Indochinese Delegate: Silence! You for the Parliament. (*Applause*)

Chairman: Now all delegates must keep silence! Including those not standing for the Parliament!

Indochinese Delegate: On behalf of the whole mankind, on behalf of all the Socialist Party's members, both left and right wings, we call upon you! Comrades, save us! (*Applause*)

Chairman: Through the applause of approval, the Indochinese Delegate can realize that the whole of the Socialist Party side with you to oppose the crimes committed by the bourgeois class.

¹⁸ Jean Longuet (1876-1938) was Karl Marx's grandson, and a leader of the right wing of the SFIO. His intervention here is justified by the fact that he regularly wrote articles on the national and colonial question for *L'Humanité* and *Le Populaire*. Longuet rejected the decision to found the PCF at the Tours Congress.

The Defeated People of Indochina

April 8, 1921

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, April 8, 1921.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 41-42.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

During the penultimate “war of the Right and Justice,” fought in favor of the people’s right to self-determination, the Annamites were obliged to participate, “voluntarily,” in the defense of the motherland. They were told the same story as the French: “The Krauts will pay!”

Now, here we are, two years after the final victory: Mother has fallen asleep victoriously, the expensive vacations of our great statesmen to the colonies do not change much either, and the Krauts still do not pay. And so our most protective Mother turns maternally to her adoptive children and tells them, maternally, once again: “Since the Germans do not want to pay, it is up to you, the Annamite workers, to pay in their place.”

But let’s listen to the words of the good Mr. Sarraut: “As long as Indochina is able to take on certain financial burdens that the Metropolis cannot bear,” declared the People’s Commissioner for the Colonies during the discussion on the budget for the Colonies, “Indochina will support them, because it is France, it is the Metropolis, that saved it from Germanic aggression.”

In the name of the thousands of Annamites who left their skin in France during the war, I would like to thank you, Mr. Sarraut. Be sure that we are not unfamiliar with the fact that it was the victory of the Marne that prevented the Germans from marching on the Mekong and spreading the barbarism of Prussian capitalism and imperialism in our rice fields. That without you and our honorable representative, Mr. Outrey, we would have lost the precious liberty of being intoxicated by alcohol and the priceless equality of being poisoned by opium; that without you the native proletariat would no longer be able to endure the fine speeches and promises fraternally given by you; that without you... But let’s move on and return to your statement.

“I believe,” you go on to say, “I believe that one day, not very far into the future, Indochina will cease to be a burden on the Metropolis and will be proud and happy to make its contribution towards its development.”

Of course, at that time, not very far into the future as you say, the proletariat of the Metropolis will have done its duty: it will have kicked out all the parasites, and being emancipated, it will have emancipated its Indochinese brothers; liberated from the imperialist yoke. The latter will no doubt be proud and happy, more proud and happy than you can ever think of, contributing to rebuild, along with the workers of France, their common Fatherland. In the meantime, don't hesitate to make the defeated people of Indochina pay the bills. Use any means to do so. If the people's safes are empty, one can always start looking in the tombs of dead kings.

NGUYEN.

Indochina (Excerpts)

April, 1921

Source: *La Revue Communiste*, No. 14, April 1921.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 39-40.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp. 18-19.

It is wrong to say that this country, inhabited by more than 20 million exploited people, is now ripe for revolution ; but even more wrong to say that it doesn't want a revolution and is satisfied with the regime, as claim our masters. The truth is that the Indochinese: people have no means of education and action. They can have neither press, meetings, associations, nor travels. It is a veritable crime for one of them to be found in possession of foreign newspapers or periodicals with somewhat advanced opinions, or a French working-class publication. Alcohol and opium, as well as the subsidized colonial press in the pay of the authorities, complete the government's obscurantist undertaking. The guillotine and prisons do the rest.

Morally and physically poisoned, gagged and penned up, this human herd may be thought to be forever destined to the altar of the capitalist god, to have stopped living and thinking, to be of no use in social transformation. Not at all! *The Indochinese are not dead, they still live, they will live forever.* Systematic poisoning by colonial capitalism has not stamped out their vitality, even less their consciousness. The wind from working-class Russia, revolutionary China or militant India has cured them of intoxication. It is true that they don't get educated by books or speeches, but in another fashion. Suffering, destitution and brutal oppression are their only educators, and while the Socialists are remiss about their education, the colonial and native (mandarin) bourgeoisie are paying it affectionate attention. The Indochinese are making tremendous progress and, occasion permitting, will show themselves to be worthy of their masters. Under a mask of passivity, they hide something that is seething, rumbling and will, when the time comes, explode formidably. It is up to the elite to hasten the coming of that moment. The tyranny of capitalism has prepared

the ground: the only thing for socialism to do is to sow the seeds of emancipation.

The Rights of the “Poilus”¹⁹

May 7, 1921

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, May 7, 1921.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 43-44.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

“The ‘poilus’ have rights over us,” said “Father-Victory” Clemenceau. “The ‘poilus’ have rights over us,” repeat the Annamite victims. For the former, the poilus have the sacred right to be killed in defending the treasure chests; treasure chests made with the sweat of their workers and filled with the blood of their soldiers. For the latter, the poilus—or what remains of them—these sacred rights, granted by colonial capitalism, consist of continuing bourgeois civilization, i.e., poisoning the native people after having massacred many of them for the benefit of capitalism.

According to the Indochinese newspapers, opium licenses will be granted to the widows of French soldiers killed in the war, as well as to French cripples.

Hence, the colonial government has committed two crimes of “lèse-humanité”²⁰ at the same time. On the one hand, it is not satisfied with carrying out itself the dirty work of poisoning and wants to delegate this task to the poor victims of the fratricidal butchery. On the other hand, it considers the life and blood of its victims worthless and believes it can “reimburse” the loss of a limb or the mourning of a dead relative by simply throwing them a rotten bone.

We have no doubt that the mutilated and the war widows will reject this revolting proposition by spitting their indignation in the face of its author;

¹⁹ “Poilu” is an informal term for a late 18th century–early 20th century French infantryman, meaning, literally, hairy one. It is still widely used as a term of endearment for the French infantry of World War I. The word carries the sense of the infantryman’s typically rustic, agricultural background.

²⁰ “Lèse-humanité” is a term derived from the French expression “lèse-majesté,” meaning “to do wrong to majesty.” Here it is used to describe an offense against the dignity of Humanity as a whole.

and we are convinced that all the civilized world and all the good Frenchmen are on our side in condemning the colonial sharks who do not hesitate to poison a whole nation in order to fill their pockets.

NGUYỄN AI QUỐC

Indochina

May 1921

Source: *La Revue Communiste*, No. 15, May 1921.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Is the communist regime applicable in Asia in general and in Indochina in particular? This is the question confronting us today.

To this question, we can answer affirmatively. In order to understand, we must examine the present situation of the Asian continent historically and geographically. This vast continent, with a surface area 80 times larger than France (45,000,000 square kilometers) and a population of nearly 800 million souls, has a rather complex political composition.

Of all the Asian nations, Japan is the most seriously affected by the contagious disease of capitalist imperialism. Since the Russo-Japanese war, the disease has manifested itself more and more disturbingly, first by the annexation of Korea, then by collaboration in the war of the “Right” (the Great War).

To prevent it from sliding into the abyss of an irremediable Westernization, that is, before it could take deep roots in the Japanese islands, a Socialist Party was formed. Like all bourgeois governments, the Mikado government is doing everything it can to fight the movement. Like all workers’ forces, the Japanese Party—despite government repression—is making fairly rapid progress.

Congresses have been banned in Japanese cities; strikes and popular demonstrations have taken place.

China, which has been and still is the golden calf of European and American capital, has just woken up. The coming to power of the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen in the South promises us a reorganized and proletarian China. It is perhaps not too much to hope that in the near future these two sisters—the new China and working-class Russia—will walk hand-in-hand fraternally for the good of democracy and humanity.

Now we come to suffering Asia.

Poor Korea is in the hands of Japanese capitalism. India—so populous and so rich—is enslaved to the English exploiters. Fortunately, the will for emancipation electrifies all these oppressed people, and an intense revolutionary agi-

tation shakes all Hindu and Korean souls. All are slowly but wisely preparing for the supreme and liberating struggle.

And Indochina! Indochina, exploited by French capitalism, is used to enrich a few sharks! The Indochinese are murdered by imperialist butchery to defend a “homeland” of which they are ignorant. They are poisoned with alcohol and opium. They are kept in ignorance (there are 10 schools compared to 1,000 official drug outlets), plots are invented to make them taste the benefits of bourgeois civilization by putting them on the scaffolding, in prison or in exile!

75,000 square kilometers of land, 20 million inhabitants delivered for the cruel exploitation of a handful of colonial forbidding men. Such is Indochina today.

Let’s see now the historical reasons that allow communism to acclimatize easily in Asia, more easily than in Europe.

The Asian—although considered by Westerners as backward—understands better the necessity of a total reform of the present Society. And here is why:

Almost 5000 years ago, the emperor Huangdi (2697 BC),²¹ already applied the *jingtian* system; he divided the cultivable land by drawing two vertical and two horizontal lines. This made nine equal parts. Each farmer received one of the eight parts, the middle one was cultivated by all, and its product was destined for public utility works. The routes were used as irrigation canals.²²

The Xia dynasty (2205 B.C.) inaugurated compulsory work²³.

The great Confucius (551 B.C.), advocated in favor of internationalism and preached the equality of fortune. He said, among other things, that “world peace can only come from a universal republic. One should not fear to have little, but not to have in an equal manner. Equality cancels poverty, etc.”

²¹ Huangdi (2697-2597 BC), known as the Yellow Emperor. While his historicity is unsure, he is attributed with having invented many things such as math calculations, a code of laws, the Chinese calendar, traditional Chinese medicine, etc. and is seen as the father of Chinese civilization.

²² The *jingtian zhidu*, in English well-field system, was actually setup in the 9th century BC during the Zhou dynasty. Its name comes from the character 井, which looks like the way a field is divided. Hồ Chí Minh’s description isn’t the most accurate; the middle part of the plot was not actually cultivated by all for public utility, but for the landowning aristocrat.

²³ Modern calculations show that the Xia dynasty actually ruled between 2070-1600 BC.

His disciple—Mencius—continued his doctrine and drew a detailed plan for the organization of production and consumption. The protection and development of a healthy childhood, the education and obligation to work for adults, the severe condemnation of parasitism, the retirement of the elderly—nothing was neglected in his thesis. The disappearance of inequality of enjoyment, the well-being—not only for the majority but for all. This is the economic policy of the Sage.

Answering a question by the king, he said straightforwardly: the interest of the people comes first, that of the nation comes after, and that of the king is nothing!

As far as private property is concerned, Annamese law prohibits the sale or purchase of all land. Moreover, one quarter of the cultivable land is compulsorily reserved as communal property. Every three years, this land is divided. Each inhabitant of the commune receives a share. This does not prevent some people from becoming rich, because the other three quarters can be bought and sold, but it can save many others from falling into pauperism.

We believe it is our duty to point out here, so that those of our comrades who have at heart the propagation of communism and who sincerely wish to help all the workers to shake off the yoke of the exploiter and to enter into the common home of the international proletariat—so that they can help us effectively, is that the things we lack in order to become communists, are the most elementary conditions of action:

Freedom of the press;

Freedom to travel;

Freedom of teaching and education;

Freedom of assembly (all this is savagely forbidden to us by our colonial civilizers).

The day when the hundreds of millions of martyred and oppressed Asians wake up to get rid of the abject exploitation of a few insatiable colonialists, they will form a colossal force and will be able, by suppressing one of the conditions of existence of capitalism—imperialism—to help their brothers in the West with the task of total emancipation.

The Superior Civilization

September 23, 1921

Source: *Le Libertaire*, September 23, 1921.²⁴

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 61-62.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Our comrade Vigné d'Octon, using the rich documentation from his campaign, teaches the readers of *Le Libertaire* how, under the pretext of *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity* and in the name of “French democracy,” the Indochinese nations are being systematically poisoned.

But alongside this collective and official poisoning, which does great honor to the country of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, many murders are being committed by individual civilizers.

Let us make known some of these exploits which have been recorded and verified, either by witnesses or by the authors themselves, who, by a “superior” sadism characteristic of the colonizing heroes, recount them for the sake of boasting.

We extract the following story from the travel journal of a colonial soldier:

While the “Tonkinese” are entertaining themselves, some junks²⁵ are selling fruits and shells on the starboard side. To get to us, the Annamites pulled out their long poles equipped with baskets containing their goods. Our only problem is choosing what to buy. Those who have the luxury of being able to pay, put in the bottom of these baskets the most diverse objects: pipe stems,

²⁴ *Le Libertaire* was an anarchist newspaper. Hồ Chí Minh wrote three articles for it, published in three consecutive issues. Some historians claim that as proof that Hồ Chí Minh was attracted to anarchism in those years, regardless of the fact that he was part of the PCF leadership. A declassified letter intercepted by the French intelligence however, shows what Hồ Chí Minh's opinion on anarchists: in it, he advises his friend to read some of the articles they write, “even if these are written by anarchists,” because they discuss the question of Việt Nam.

²⁵ A junk is a type of Chinese sailing ship with fully battened sails. The term “junk” was also used in the colonial period to refer to any large to medium-sized ships of the Austronesian cultures in Island Southeast Asia, with or without the junk rig.

panty buttons, and cigarette butts. (Maybe that's how the native people learn about commercial honesty!) Sometimes, just for fun, a boat driver throws a bucket of boiling water on the backs of these unfortunate people. As a result, there are howls of pain, oars moving around in all directions, making the junks crash into each other.

Just below me, an Annamite *burned from head to toe*, completely mad, tries to jump into the sea. His brother, ignoring all danger, lets go of the oars, grabs him and forcibly lays him on the floor of the sampan. The struggle, lasting not more than two seconds, was hardly over when another bucket of boiling water, thrown with a sure hand, *is poured over the misfortunate brother*. I see him rolling around in his boat, his flesh torn to shreds, screaming in a way that is not human! And this makes us laugh; it all seems excessively funny to us. *We have already gained the colonial spirit!*

And further on we read:

At the time when I was there (in Tonkin), we hardly spent a week without seeing a few heads roll.

From these spectacles, I only retained one thing, and that is that we are far more cruel and barbaric than the native pirates themselves. Why bother with such “refinements” for someone who is about to die? Why all these physical tortures, multiple processions of prisoners through the villages?”

NGUYEN A Q

The Crimes of Colonialism

September 30, 1921

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, September 30, 1921.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 61-62.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

“Under the aegis of France, Indochina is pursuing its destination in peace, and the strongest proof of its happiness is what you have seen of it, gentlemen.” This is what M. Outrey, deputy of Cochinchina, said to his colleagues in the French Parliament.

In its August issue, the League of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen [Ligue des droits de l’homme et du citoyen] has provided us with proof of how happy Indochina is and how well France is represented there.

We will summarize these findings in a few lines:

Like all the provinces, the Tonkinese provinces have their own Residents of France.²⁶ Like all the Residents of France in Tonkin, the Resident of the province we are going to discuss is invested with unchecked power. He is a prefect, a mayor, a judge, a bailiff, a garrison keeper. He holds all kinds of powers: justice, taxes, life and property of the native people, elections of chiefs, rights of civil servants, etc., etc.

This high magistrate studied all the political and administrative sciences in the Latin Quarter [in Paris, “Quartier latin”] where he used to be a... soup merchant. Riddled with debts and out of money, he was fortunate enough to be parachuted in as Resident of a province of several thousand inhabitants by an influential politician.

Native “volunteers” were recruited to serve in the “tirailleurs” military corps and to pass the medical examination. They were illiterate and intimidated men, to whom Mr. Resident addressed himself personally and who were beaten by him with his bare fists and cane because they did not respond quickly enough.

²⁶ This is Mr. Darles. See “French Colonization on Trial,” Chapter IV, p. 277.

He brutally beat three militiamen who had allowed a prisoner to escape, dragging them to the ground by their hair, banging their heads against the wall of his residence.

To interrogate his prisoners, the Resident would stab them in the thigh with his administrator's sword. Some of them collapsed on their return to the prison.

Poorly fed, the prisoners were dressed in squalid rags; were up from dawn to dusk; wore a cangue around their necks and big chains on their feet, tied to each other, pulling the roller—a huge steamroller—that had to be driven over the thick layers of sandstone. Completely exhausted, they painfully moved forward under an implacable sun. Then the Resident arrived, carrying a big stick and, for no reason, with an inconceivable sadism of bestiality, hit these unfortunate people with it, accusing them of being lazy.

One day, our civilizer, after having scolded a European agent and not knowing on who to continue to direct his anger, took an iron ruler from his desk and used it to break two fingers of an unfortunate native writer who was not involved in the matter.

Another day, he spat in the face of a native sergeant in the presence of his men.

On another occasion, he had militiamen who displeased him buried up to their necks, digging them up only when they were half-dead.

When he visits the roadworks where he more or less obliges the native people to work for one or two pennies a day, after having made them buy back their "*corvée*"²⁷ at the price of fifteen pennies a day, it is by the dozen that one counts the legs purposely broken with shovels and pickaxe handles.

Once, at a construction site, he took the rifle of a guard and used it to hit a prisoner. After the latter successfully escaped, the Resident turned on the guard and hit him with the same rifle. His beloved wife, Mrs. La Résidente, also intervened, hitting the prisoners and punishing the militiamen on several occasions. Recently, the Resident has been spotted poking out the eye of a sergeant with his cane.

²⁷ "*Corvée*" is a form of unpaid, forced labor, which is intermittent in nature and which lasts limited periods of time: typically only a certain number of days' work each year. In French West Africa the "*corvée*" was abolished as late as 1946.

Can you see, gentlemen, how happy Indochina is under the protectorate of good old France? And this is merely a small sample of what the superior civilization has in store.

NGUYEN AI QUAC

The Monstrosity of Civilization

September 30, 1921

Source: *Le Liberaire*, September 30–October 10, 1921.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 66-67.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In all their speeches, in all their reports, in all the places where they have the opportunity to open their mouths and where there are people to listen to them, our statesmen continue to assert that only barbarous Germany is a militaristic and imperialist state, while France—peaceful, humanitarian, republican and democratic France—the very France they represented, is neither imperialist nor militaristic. Oh, not at all! If these same statesmen send soldiers—children of workers and workers themselves—to massacre the workers of other countries, it is simply to teach them how to lead good lives.

To understand their acts of civilization, read this excerpt from the travel diary of a colonial soldier.

Upon the arrival of the four soldiers, the entire population had fled, with only two old men and two women remaining; a virgin and a mother nursing her newborn child and holding an eight-year-old girl by the hand. The soldiers asked for money, brandy, and opium. And as we didn't understand, they became furious and hit one of the elderly men with their rifle butts. For the next few hours, two of them, already drunk upon arrival, amused themselves (by) roasting the second old man over a fire of wooden branches. Meanwhile, the other men were raping the two women and the little girl; once they tired, they killed the latter. By then, her mother had been able to flee with the other child and, 200 meters away, while hiding in the bush, had seen her companion being tortured. For what reason, she didn't know; the young girl, lying on her back, gagged, was repeatedly stabbed her in the belly with the bayonet of one of the men, in a slow and continuous movement. Finally, they cut off the dead woman's finger and head to steal both her ring and necklace.

The three corpses were spread out on the flat ground of the old saltworks; the naked girl, the disemboweled woman at the end of whose stiffened left forearm a clenched fist pointed towards the indifferent sky, and the corpse of the old man—the most horrifying of the three—naked like the others, disfigured by being cooked, with his body fat dripping, dissolving and with the skin of his belly blistered, scorched, gilded like the skin of a roasted pig.

As I copy this passage, my hand trembles and my eyes are blinded by the tears that run down and mingle with the faded ink. I cannot go on any longer. Oh, poor France! Poor Indochina!!! Poor humanity!!!

NGUYỄN A. Q.

The Revolutionary Movement in India

September 1921

Source: *La Revue Communiste*, No. 18-19, May 1921, pp. 378-381.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 55-60.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The Greco-Kemalist, or rather Anglo-Turkish, conflict is in full swing. The Malabar revolts seriously occupy public attention. English imperialism is on the breach. It is therefore necessary to recall the history of the revolutionary movement in India.

After the insurrection of 1857, English imperialism thought to have drowned the revolutionary spirit of the Indians through the bloodiest of repressions, and so established on the banks of the Ganges the barbarity of Western exploitation and oppression for eternity. This was a wrong impression.

In 1880, the philosopher Ramakrishna preached revolution by preaching religion. He advised his adored countrymen to worship the goddess Kali, mother of destruction and reconstruction.²⁸

Damodar and Balkrishna succeeded him and courageously and openly taught the revolutionary doctrine. They were of course arrested and deported.²⁹

In 1897 the newspaper *Kesari*, owned by Tilak, was published for the first time. Its opening article was the famous “Siogi’s Lament.”³⁰ The former king, awakened from the depths of his grave, returned to visit his beloved kingdom.

²⁸ Ramakrishna (1836-1886) was an Indian religious leader. He claimed to have seen Goddess Kali, whom he called his mother. While he was not advocating for revolution, the cult he built around himself and Goddess Kali was in opposition with the hegemonic post-Enlightenment colonial culture of the British.

²⁹ Damodar Hari Chapekar (1869-1898) and Balkrishna Hari Chapekar (1873-1899), also known with their third brother Vasudeo Hari Chapekar (1880-1899) as the Chapekar Brothers, were nationalist revolutionaries. They are known for having assassinated the British Plague Commissioner of Pune. All three were hanged.

³⁰ *Kesari* was actually founded in 1881 by Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), an important leader of the Indian independence movement. He wrote *Shivaji’s Utterances*, a poem that crit-

His sadness was great when he saw his people subjected to the worst of slavery. He called upon all Indians to rise up and unite to shake off the foreign yoke and regain the independence they had inherited from him.

The newspaper informed its daily readers using the Russian method.

Until the newspaper was suspended and the editor was deported, it courageously conducted a campaign for emancipation.

It is worth mentioning that journalistic honesty and virtue are differently conceived in Asia and in Europe. Bourgeois journalists in the West would laugh if we told them that most articles published in socialist newspapers, such as *Kesari*, *Vihari*, etc., are written for free, and often the authors only receive months or even years in prison as payment. This was the case of the *Vihari* newspaper, three of whose editors were arrested and sentenced, one after the other. But this did not change their attitude or their way of thinking. How many “employees” can say the same?

There has been a great deal of unrest since the Russo-Japanese War. Two significant facts mark the state of mind of the native people. First of all, the statue of Queen Victoria was disfigured on the eve of her birthday.

The “Vande Mataram”—the Indian Marseillaise—became widespread in a very short time and was sung in all the dialects of India.

“Amsilam Samites”—associations for moral and physical training—were set up everywhere, as if by magic. The boycott of English goods and the recruitment of the native troops are carefully studied.

These tireless efforts produced results. In January 1915, several regiments mutinied and, because of the disruption of Anglo-Indian trade, the colonial banks of the City (of London) estimated the loss of unpaid commercial bills for the year 1920 at one billion francs.

The misfortune of the country made the difference of castes and religion disappear. Rich and poor, aristocrats and peasants, Mohammedans and Buddhists, all united in the same effort.

Prominent, educated people such as Har Dayal³¹ and others sacrificed their wealth, refused the highest offices that the colonial government wanted to

icized the government. He was charged with sedition after reading it aloud during the Shivaji festival of 1897.

³¹ Lala Har Dayal Singh Mathur (1884-1939) was an Indian revolutionary and anarchist. He was a member of the Ghadar Party, who opposed Gandhi's non-violence and attempted a mutiny in 1915. After it failed, Har Dayal exiled himself to the US. A fact that probably wasn't known to Hồ Chí Minh when he wrote this article is that in 1919, Har Dayal actually

give them in order to tame them, and went from village to village preaching the cause of independence. Students and schoolchildren carry out the work of spreading propaganda.

The partisans of direct action do not remain inactive either; they are in charge of liquidating and expelling the corrupt magistrates, the traitors and the overzealous members of the political police. They do not fear viceroys and governors with fancy titles, as have shown the events of 1907, 1908 and 1909. In 1911, a 16-year-old boy dropped bombs in the car of a well-known head of the Department of Investigation, in the middle of the street and in broad daylight. Courage has no age.

The list of martyrs is painfully long. In ten years, not counting collective massacres, no less than 200 people have watered the tree of the revolution and its ideals with their blood. Among these martyrs, there are 70 students, 16 teachers, 20 landlords, 23 or 25 shopkeepers, 7 doctors, and 20 civil servants; 50 of these victims were only 16 to 20 years old!

This is why most teachers are worried, almost panic-stricken. As one gentleman said: “If this continues, our respectable men will be frightened away from this country.”

Then, alongside the machine of ruthless repression, there is the strategy of total obfuscation.

The “Samiti”³² are dissolved, their members arrested, meetings and political associations banned. The “Emergency measures” grow like mushrooms. This wave of repressive measures only made the revolutionary flowers bloom more strongly.

A general uprising was prepared in 1914 and 1915. Unfortunately it failed. Several hundreds of expatriates returned to their country, determined to break the yoke weighing on their homeland with a single blow. They were reported

betrayed the cause he had defended by writing a public letter saying he had been wrong and glorifying the British Empire. Originally an independentist, he became convinced that India should become a part of the British Empire in the same way as Ireland was and wrote books and pamphlets on the topic that were translated and distributed free of charge by the British administration to demoralize the nationalist movement.

³² Anushilan Samiti, or “bodybuilding society,” was a nationalist Indian organization formed in 1902. Its name comes from its cover, as its members gathered in gymnasiums. While in the beginning they advocated for violence, they aligned with Gandhi and his non-violence movement in the 1920s.

and arrested before they could set foot in their motherland, which they promised to liberate or die. Once again, the odds were in favor of the thieves!

But the fire is lit, and nothing can suppress it anymore. Messages are being passed from person to person. The “Samiti” continue to meet clandestinely. Loans to support the independence movement are rapidly taken out, either by voluntary subscriptions, and sometimes by “daïcots.”

We believe it is our duty to clarify the meaning of the word “daïcot,” which has been misinterpreted by Westerners. The English use the word “daïcot” in the same way as the French use the word “pirate.” They make no distinction between acts of banditry and the sometimes mandatory subscription to a common cause, just as they make no distinction between patriots fighting for their country and inner-city scum.

In order to achieve a goal, one obviously needs the funds to do so, and in order to find funds, one has to go and look for them where they can be found.

To demonstrate the honesty of the “Samiti” members in charge of the Revolutionary Committee’s finances, we need only cite the following examples:

One of the articles of the “Samiti” statutes states that all members must bear in mind that they are working for the Revolution, which has as its goal the restoration of the violated rights of the people, and not the personal happiness of a few—that all members must abstain from alcoholic beverages, luxuries, and unnecessary possessions.

After each mandatory subscription or daïcot is paid, a receipt is sent to the subscriber. The following is an excerpt from such a receipt:

You have to understand, dear countryman, that in order to free our beloved country from slavery, it takes sacrifice, trust, and the sympathy of all our compatriots. If everyone like you, who has resources, understood the difficulties of our work and contributed voluntarily to our work, we would not be obliged to bother you in this way.

The independence and prosperity of Japan are due to the sacrifice and self-sacrifice of all her children. May the soul of our homeland strengthen the hearts and enlighten the minds of our brothers! Etc.

Signed: I. B., Financial Secretary of Section B of the Indian Independence Society.

As the movement spreads, it consolidates. As the movement grew stronger, it emerged from the shadows and came back into the light, under the worried eyes of the officials. A Congress was convened, attended by twenty thousand delegates. Some English “socialists” took part in it, but they were rather unpleasantly received because of their “light pink” doctrine.³³

Mahatma Gandhi laid the foundations of the strategy of non-cooperation and non-violence. This policy continued to be successful. Children desert the English school system. Lawyers leave the English court. Employees and workers are no longer active in offices or workshops where the employers are English. There are no more relations, no more trade between the English and the Indians. Emergency funds are required to support the movement. In three months’ time, more than sixty million francs were collected. Wealthy Indians turned their homes into schools. Disagreements are settled before the newly constituted native Courts. Some Indians offered to pay up to thirty million a year, “until complete independence.”

In the face of such an upsurge, the flag that had never seen sunset risked disappearing in the moonlight. English imperialism no longer knows what to do. It had assumed that by handing over a (single) page of a commercial treaty to the Russian Republic, it could prevent the revolutionary spirit from penetrating the Indies, just like a blotter on a drop of ink!

English imperialism makes use of Constantine³⁴ as a damper to suppress the outbreak of pan-Islamism. It takes advantage of King Faisal I³⁵ to sustain the crumbling edifice of its imperialism in the East. What’s next? At least it can console itself by saying that at the time it will have to leave India, it will inevitably drag down French imperialism, which is just as abhorrent, and which is operating in Indochina.

NGUYEN AI QUAC

³³ Reformist, social-democratic doctrine.

³⁴ The “British Constantine” was a flattering concept applied both Elizabeth I and James I of England, implying a comparison with the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great.

³⁵ Faisal I bin Al-Hussein bin Ali Al-Hashemi was King of the Arab Kingdom of Syria or Greater Syria in 1920, and was King of Iraq from 23 August 1921 to 1933.

“Love France, Who Protects You”

October 7, 1921

Source: *Le Liberaire*, October 7, 1921, p. 4.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 68-69.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Such is the lesson in calligraphy that we were made to practice, in *Ronde*, *La Bâtarde* and gothic styles, from ABCs to the primary school level, in the rare schools in Indochina. These schools are so uncommon that there is one for every hundred alcohol and opium shops! Our civilizers collect more than 210,000,000 piasters, that is, more than 1,390,000 francs annually by selling these poisons. Do you know how much they spend on public education in a year? 172,000 piasters!

Written in large white letters on the black background of an immense cardboard placard and hung in all the classrooms, these words: “Aimez la France qui vous protège” [Love France, who protects you] haunt us in a pleasant way. Happy are the little Annamite minds allowed to admire these patriotic words, patriotic for the propagandists, naturally, and inevitably unpatriotic for the “propagandized.”

I remember a cousin of mine who, wanting to enter one of these school havens, took multiple steps, addressed request after request to the Senior Resident, to the Resident of the province, to the director of the national school, and to the principal teacher of the elementary school. Obviously, he received no answer. One day, he had the courage to make a written request to the head teacher, a Frenchman of the school where I had the privilege of being admitted some time before. Our “principal,” furious at seeing such audacity, demanded: “Who allowed you to come here?,” and he ripped the request to pieces in front of the whole, dazed class.

This shows how our rulers intend to spread secular education and the republican principle in the colonies.

Let’s see what men France has sent to Indochina to teach the Annamites to love her, to love her as children love their mother, because, isn’t it so that

France, being the second homeland of everyone, is the “Motherland” of the Annamites?

After the capture of Chợ Mới [says the diary of a colonial officer] in the evening, an officer of the African battalion saw an Asian prisoner, alive, without wound. In the morning, he saw him dead, burned, cooked, his fat dripping down, the skin of his belly blistered, as if it were golden. Soldiers had spent the night roasting this unarmed being, while others were martyring a woman.

A soldier [the newspaper continued] wants to force an Annamese woman to surrender to her dog. She refuses, and he kills her with a blow of his bayonet to her abdomen.

Oh France, if you knew how we are protected, you would be very proud of our protectors.

NGUYEN A. Q.

Draft Report

November 20, 1921

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 40-41.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 475-476.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The French Indochina sub-commission of the Colonial Studies Commission of the Communist Party, called upon to formulate its wishes concerning the necessary action to be carried out in the Far East in order to give birth to and develop a revolutionary communist movement there, states (the following):

- 1° That it must reject any proposal that is economic or political in nature that only constitutes an improvement, a reform or progress of any kind, because in a capitalist regime, they can only serve the present political power by helping its consolidation.
- 2° Considering that the French Colonies are not only considered by the dominant classes as an inexhaustible granary of an abundance of raw materials for the production of which the natives are considered simple beasts of burden, but that these overseas countries are also and above all considered by our class adversaries as being destined to provide the principal contingent of counter-revolutionary troops.

Consequently, the work of anti-militarist and revolutionary propaganda must be undertaken under the instigation and the direction of the Party in all the French Colonies and so-called Protectorate Countries.

This propaganda will be carried out:

- a) Through our newspapers published in France;
- b) At the tribune of our Congresses and, if necessary, at that of the Parliament;
- c) Through conferences;

- d) In the Colonies, by all means appropriate to the environment and the degree of education and civilization of the native masses.

This brief presentation, made as a first suggestion by the Colonial Studies Commission of the S.F.I.C. (French Section of the Communist International), considers that the study of colonial questions will have to be, from now on, an integral part of the theses submitted for examination by the Third International—the communist revolution having not only a European but a global dimension. It is therefore important that no part of the world should be, by negligence or ignorance of this question, left out of actions that have as their goal the Communist Revolution.

Misfortune

SCENE OF AN ANNAMITE WORKER'S LIFE

March 18, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, March 18, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 72-74.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

It was a hot day! A heat that only we, Cochinchinois and proud *protégés* of Mr. Outrey, have the privilege to enjoy. It was a “grainy” sun. Do you know what a grainy sun is? In our dialect, it means that the heat is so intense that you constantly see something like rain falling in front of your eyes—but instead of drops of water, they are drops of fire.

The walls of the Saigon cathedral were burning like the walls of hell. The lightning rod glowed like a bayonet stained with blood, ready to pierce the skin of the sky, which was literally burning.

Not one customer since this morning! I was hungry, and I wobbled painfully in the rectangle that forms the carriage of the human creature known as the rickshaw puller. The arms of my vehicle weighed heavily on mine and the wheels squeaked plaintively as if they were thirsty.

I continued to drag myself and my rickshaw in the direction of the Government Palace. The wide leaves of the banana trees and the palm trees were like reflecting lenses that converged all the sun's power towards the passerby. It was as if the whole universe had been transformed into a vast crematorium.

Two or three whites were standing on the square, which were the only whites who were sympathetic to the native people, because they were made of bronze—but they were also bad customers because they never got on a rickshaw!

I saw a shadow coming out of the Palace. And I thought to myself: “A man coming out of that place must be a fine man; a fine man doesn't travel on foot under such a bright sun; therefore he's going to take a carriage; therefore he is probably my next customer.” When I saw his black suit, my optimism was

reinforced, because I took him for a *thầy-thông*.³⁶ I ran to meet him. He was a father, a reverend father.

I bent down at his feet to make it easier for him to get into the carriage, an elegant way to attract a client. Instead of putting his feet on the step, the saintly man wanted to kick my rear. I immediately understood his gesture, because I am used to these good men, and I ran away with my rickshaw. I am also used to the kind of acrobatics needed to get out of these situations—that's part of the job. While I was moving away, I heard the Lord's son mumble his prayer of circumstance: "in the Name of God," said the apostolic voice, "one cannot make a step without being annoyed by these rickshaw vermin!"

This incident made me forget both my fatigue and hunger, because, after having put a rather sizable distance between "my Father" and myself, I began to laugh, thinking of God, of his image, that is to say of man and his religion. As I turned my head, the Reverend's apostolic staff kept waving at me like an "aspergillum."

I was going, or rather "we" were going, my rickshaw and I, towards the pier. In the tiny inn of mother Thi-Haï reigned an atmosphere of happiness and well-being. The rice was white as ivory, the *nước mắm* diffused an aromatic smell that tickled the nose pleasantly. The tea was boiling on the stove. It was very tempting. I stopped, determined to buy myself a bowl of this good rice, knowing that the maid Thi-Haï would not refuse to sell on credit to an honest worker.

As soon as I got down on the mat, I saw a sailor zigzagging on the "Chargeurs-Réunis" wharf. Dropping the chopsticks from my fingers, I jumped to my rickshaw, and in two quick steps I was in front of my second customer of the morning. He was a nice guy; he didn't bargain the price of the trip. He told me the name of his stopover, got on board and sat comfortably on the starboard side with his package on the port side. I traveled at three knots an hour, not wanting to make Thi-Haï wait.

We arrived at the port, and the little devil fish disembarked and walked away peacefully, without the slightest intention to compensate me. I complained. He did not even turn the bow. I ran after him, shouting, "Money! sir, money!"

He transferred his package to his left hand, plunged his right hand into his pocket and pulled out a... revolver. Bang! Bam! said the weapon of civilization

³⁶ Annamite interpreter.

eloquently. “It’s another dud,” I thought to myself. I returned to the inn; the tea was still smoking.

COOLIE-XE.

(Translated by Nguyễn Ai Quốc.)³⁷

³⁷ Coolie-Xe is another pseudonym of Hồ Chí Minh.

Some Considerations on the Colonial Question

May 25, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, May 25, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 79-82.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 11-14.

Since the French Party has accepted Moscow's "twenty-one conditions"³⁸ and joined the Third International, among the problems which it has set itself is a particularly ticklish one—colonial policy. Unlike the First and Second Internationals, it cannot be satisfied with purely sentimental expressions of position leading to nothing at all, but must have a well-defined working program, an effective and practical policy.

On this point, more than on others, the Party faces many difficulties, the greatest of which are the following:

1. THE GREAT SIZE OF THE COLONIES

Not counting the new "trusteeships" acquired after the war, France possesses:

In Asia, 450,000 square kilometers, in Africa 3,541,000 square kilometers, in America, 108,000 square kilometers and in Oceania 21,600 square kilometers, or a total area of 4,120,000 square kilometers (eight times its own territory), with a population of 48,000,000 souls. These people speak over twenty different languages. This diversity of tongues does not make propaganda easy, for, except in a few old colonies, a French propagandist can make himself understood only through an interpreter. However, translations are of limited value, and in these countries of administrative despotism, it is rather difficult to find an interpreter to translate revolutionary speeches.

³⁸ On August 6, 1920, the Second Congress of the Comintern approved the twenty-one conditions put forward by Lenin for recognition of the affiliation of revolutionary proletarian parties to the Communist International. These conditions forbade non-communist elements, the elements of the center in the first place, from joining the Comintern, and laid down the fundamental political and organizational principles by which a party considering itself a section of the Comintern could become a Marxist party of a new type.

There are other drawbacks: though the natives of all the colonies are equally oppressed and exploited, their intellectual, economic and political development differs greatly from one region to another. Between Annam³⁹ and the Congo, Martinique and New Caledonia, there is absolutely nothing in common, except poverty.

2. THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE PROLETARIAT OF THE MOTHER COUNTRY TOWARDS THE COLONIES

In his theses on the colonial question,⁴⁰ Lenin clearly stated that “the workers of colonizing countries are bound to give the most active assistance to the liberation movements in subject countries.” To this end, the workers of the mother country must know what a colony really is, they must be acquainted with what is going on there, and with the suffering—a thousand times more acute than theirs—endured by their brothers, the proletarians in the colonies. In a word, they must take an interest in this question.

Unfortunately, there are many militants who still think that a colony is nothing but a country with plenty of sand underfoot and of sun overhead; a few green coconut palms and colored folk, that is all. And they take not the slightest interest in the matter.

3. THE IGNORANCE OF THE NATIVES

In colonized countries—in old Indochina as well as in new Dahomey—the class struggle, and proletarian strength, are unknown factors for the simple reason that there are neither big commercial and industrial enterprises, nor workers’ organizations. In the eyes of the natives, Bolshevism—a word which is the more vivid and expressive because frequently used by the bourgeoisie—means either the destruction of everything or emancipation from the foreign yoke. The first sense given to the word drives the ignorant and timorous masses away from us; the second leads them to nationalism. Both senses are equally

³⁹ After their invasion of Việt Nam, the French colonialists divided it into three parts. The South (now Nam Bộ) became a colony under the name of Cochinchina, the Center, Annam (now Trung Bộ), was declared a French “protectorate” by the King; the North, Tonkin (now Bắc Bộ) was conceded outright by the King to the French, who ruled it directly. In 1887 the French colonialists united these three parts of Việt Nam with Cambodia, and founded what they called the “Indochinese Union.” In 1893, Laos joined it.

⁴⁰ Lenin’s theses on the national and colonial questions were discussed at the Second Congress of the Comintern and approved on July 28, 1920.

dangerous. Only a tiny section of the intelligentsia knows what is meant by communism. But these gentry, belonging to the native bourgeoisie and supporting the bourgeois colonialists, have no interest in the communist doctrine being understood and propagated. On the contrary, like the dog in the fable, they prefer to bear the mark of the collar and to have their piece of bone. Generally speaking, the masses are thoroughly rebellious, but completely ignorant. They want to free themselves, but do not know how to go about doing so.

4. PREJUDICES

The mutual ignorance of the two proletariats gives rise to prejudices. The French workers look upon the native as an inferior and negligible human being, incapable of understanding and still less of taking action. The natives regard all the French as wicked exploiters. Imperialism and capitalism do not fail to take advantage of this mutual suspicion and this artificial racial hierarchy to frustrate propaganda and divide forces which ought to unite.

5. FIERCENESS OF REPRESSION

If the French colonialists are unskillful in developing colonial resources, they are masters in the art of savage repression and the manufacture of loyalty made to measure. The Gandhis⁴¹ and the De Valeras⁴² would have long since entered heaven had they been born in one of the French colonies. Surrounded by all the refinements of courts martial and special courts, a native militant cannot educate his oppressed and ignorant brothers without the risk of falling into the clutches of his civilizers.

Faced with these difficulties, what must the Party do?

Intensify propaganda to overcome them.

NGUYEN-AI-QUAC.

⁴¹ Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand (1869-1948), a militant of the national liberation movement of India, and leader of the Indian Congress Party.

⁴² De Valera, Eamonn (born 1882) Irish politician. In 1916, he took part in the uprising of workers and petit-bourgeois in Dublin. During the civil war in Ireland in 1922-23, he led the republican army in its struggle against the government set up by the rightist Sinn Féin. Later, he gave up revolutionary tactics in his fight for the independence of Ireland. In 1926, he setup the Fianna Fáil, a petit-bourgeois party. From 1932 onwards, except for short periods, he continuously headed the Irish government.

In a “High Civilization”

May 26, 1922

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, May 26, 1922, p. 3.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 83-84.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 15-16.

M. Albert Sarraut⁴³ has told the colonial group of the Chamber of Deputies that “it is in the sphere of overseas activity that, faithful to the splendid mission by which she has dazzled the world and history, beneficent France is carrying on a work of progress and justice, of the elevation of races, of lofty civilization, whose nobility every day enhances the centuries-old radiance of her tradition.”

Now, here is how this work of progress and justice etc., is put into practice... On the pretext of acting against vagrancy, the natives of Madagascar are put to forced labor. Thus, on the back of a sheet of paper that is the native’s identity card, there are small squares to be filled in by the employer. In the first of these squares are printed the essential particulars which should be counter-signed by the employer:

Employed by Mr..

At. . . .

from. . . . to. . . .

The employer: (*signed*)

Any native whose identity card is not duly filled in as prescribed above is considered a vagrant and gets from three months to one year’s imprisonment, and is liable, after serving his term, to be prohibited from residing in certain areas for from five to ten years.

⁴³ Sarraut, Albert (1872-1962) French politician, one of the leading champions of the interests of the bourgeoisie and colonialism. He was Governor General in Indochina from 1911 to 1914 and from 1917 to 1919. He was called the “hangman of Saigon” for his repression of the liberation movement in Indochina. In the twenties he was Minister of Colonies and in 1936, Premier in the French Government. From 1951, he was President of the Council of the French Union.

Now let us see how the native workers are treated by these civilizing employers.

One of them wrote to an overseer who had asked for the wages due to one of his workers, “Tell that pig to go and eat dirt, it is the only food fit for him!”

Another, discovering that 5,000 francs had been stolen from his home, submitted his eight native employees to contact with live electric wires in order to obtain a confession. It was discovered later that the thief was the employer’s own son. The civilizing son had a good time. The civilizing father was not worried. The fortunate proteges of France are still in Tananarive hospital.

Paris

May 30, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, May 30, 1922 & *L'Humanité*, May 31, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 85-92.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

(Excerpt from “Letters to my cousin,” translated from Annamese by the author)

In Paris there is a region, my dear cousin, that provides all the physiognomy and all the psychology of the whole of Paris, of the whole of France, of the whole universe. To those who study the social conditions of our time, crossing this region is worth a large Encyclopedia.

It is composed of three main districts: Étoile, Batignolles and Épinettes. With your lively imagination, I am sure that just by reading these names you have already guessed the social hierarchy among these neighborhoods. I can hear you whispering to yourself: Épinettes, Épinettes! Life must be very difficult, very “thorny” down there. And Étoile must be the home of the blessed, the privileged, a kind of Eden. Yes, my dear cousin, you have understood things pretty well, but I still have to describe to you the splendor of the one and the suffering of the other—splendor and suffering whose full extent your sweet brain cannot perceive. The Étoile district starts at the Arc de Triomphe. This is a splendid monument built to commemorate the militaristic genius/grandeur of Napoleon. Today it serves as the tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Great War.

What an irony of things and of life, my cousin. One immortalizes in the same place both the glorious memory of the perpetrator of so many appalling European slaughters as well as the remains of the victims of such a slaughter, which was the worst among them all.

This monument is the moral depository of the causes of all past and future wars, just as this unknown soldier is the moral personification of all those who have been slaughtered to satisfy the ambition and pride of their leaders, for if one were to read the names of all the historical battles from one end to the other, if one were to read these names engraved on a single monument, one

would be horrified to learn how many poor peasants and workers have fallen—unknown—like the one who is resting here at the Arc de Triomphe!

In a future letter, I will recount how this poor soldier—in his lifetime—was forced to face cannon and machine gun fire, and, today, is still obliged to face the verbal tirades of diplomatic speeches and false expressions of friendship from ambassadors and “Fatty.”⁴⁴ For now, let us return to our districts.

I told you that Étoile is a district of spacious hotels, flowery gardens and princely carriages. It is a nest of cosmopolitan luxury, overwhelming abundance, and gilded laziness. It is the paradise of parasites of all kinds and from all countries. That is without mentioning the extraordinary cost (of living) to be a “luxury hen” or a “pleasure horse”⁴⁵ that, if spent otherwise, could have fed the entire population of one of our provinces. A dog from this neighborhood leads a much more comfortable life than a worker.

Leaving Wagram avenue and the Boulevard de Courcelles, we arrive in the Batignolles district. Its inhabitants belong to the middle class. They are neither as rich as the big capitalists, nor as poor as to be forced to toil like the workers. Their wealth fluctuates with the economic situation of the moment; today they can be growing cabbages without a problem, and the next day are forced to sell their garden. They are small businessmen, office managers, retired commissioners. “Madame” goes out with a long sable around her neck and a little dog under her arm. “Monsieur” always uses something rather nonchalant to seal his buttonhole—a Medal of the Order of Agricultural Merit or one from the Order of Academic Palms. Every morning, the housekeeper carefully waters her begonias, resting in their pots near the window, after which she dusts the carpet on the main staircase, a carpet that stubbornly refuses to reach any higher than the third floor. According to the law of gravity, the neighborhood’s inhabitants are more likely to become proletarians than to produce big capitalists.

The Épinettes district forms the bottom of the ladder. It is the poor cousin of the region, the displaced heir of the other neighborhoods. Its population is almost of a different species, looking ashamed, erased, and crushed under the

⁴⁴ “Fatty” most likely refers to the American actor Fatty Roscoe Arbuckle, famous during the 1920s, and promoted United States postmaster general, a ministerial office closely related to the other members of the Executive.

⁴⁵ “Poule de luxe” and “cheval de plaisir” are both French expressions describing ostensibly wealthy people.

weight of misery. Watch that uncle squeezing sugar out of the cane using our thousand-year-old method and you'll get an idea of what the social condition is like around here. While in our country the sweet juice of wealth and luxury flows from one side of the millstone, on the other there is nothing but flattened, dried out straw. Down here, the situation is exactly the same. On one side, there is wealth and idleness, and on the other, hard work and deprivation. Poorly built and as thin as the crooked fingers of an old witch, the chimneys of Les Épinettes are smoking in summer and seem to be extinguished in winter. From afar, its stunted houses look like human figures, haggard creatures whose toothless mouths—its doors—are made of the storefronts of a rag shop or a butcher selling frozen meat, whose dismantled windows form its sad and myopic eyes. This is the neighborhood of people who work, produce, and starve. It is the district of the workers, the poor, the miserable.

In the center of the district there is a small street of about 50 meters long. Around this street you can find an elementary school, a factory, and a soup kitchen. Don't you think, dear cousin, that the whole thing is quite symbolic? As a child, one learns at school to respect the divine right of the bosses. As an adult, the worker leaves school to contribute to the enrichment of the bosses, whose majesty he has been taught to venerate. Grey and worn out, thrown into the street by the same bosses he has made wealthy, the old man lives on alms until the end of his working life!

Every morning, I have to walk past the soup kitchen to get to my studio. No matter if the weather is good or bad, if the sun is shining or if the snow is falling, there are always about thirty old people gathered in front of the door of the institution. They are dressed in a most unusual ways. Some of them carry a blanket on their back, others wear a butler's coat and a yellowed straw hat, and the rest wear patched and multicolored rags. Their shoes, yawning like open mailboxes, smile ironically at anyone who passes by. While waiting for the door to open and in order to kill time, they read part of *Le Matin* or *Le Petit Parisien*, picked up from I don't know where. When it's too cold, they blow in on their fingers or dance the *one-step* to keep warm. One of them says to me, laughing, "Look, that guy is our own central heating!"

Despite their miserable appearance, they are all quite friendly, and over time, they have come to know me. Some kind of friendship has developed between us, and we greet each other every time I pass by.

One of the old men in particular attracts my attention. He is clean, respectable, and his physiognomy denotes a hidden sadness as well as a form of dignity that does not let itself be defeated, even in distress. He is decorated with a Medal of Honor for courage and devotion. He is always standing behind the other men.

One day I approached him to shake his hand and said, “Grandpa, if you would allow me, I would like to invite you to have lunch with me next Sunday.” He replied the following: “You are very kind, sir, and as I know it would hurt your feelings if I would refuse, I accept your invitation.” As such, we went to a small restaurant. After ordering food, we started talking and the old man said to me:

“I did not allow myself to speak to you before you did, first of all because you are a stranger, and second because I was afraid of offending the pride of a young man by addressing you as a poor old man, practically a beggar. But every time you passed by me, a deep pain came upon me and I felt like crying. I understand your astonishment, but here is why: when I saw you, I thought of my youngest son, who I lost in the war. He was about your age. You are perhaps twenty-five or twenty-six years old, is that right?”

“Twenty-six, Grandpa,” I replied.

“That’s right, he was a year younger than you. If you don’t mind, I’ll tell you his story, or rather my story.”

“Please, grandpa, I am very interested.”

“In my youth,” said my revered companion, “I was a seaman. I sailed around the world many times. I have also been in your country, in Saigon, in Haiphong. Then, thanks to my savings, I was able to marry a good peasant woman. We settled in the north of the country. She ran a small grocery store; I worked in a factory. We had two sons and a daughter, three angels, sir! My wife and I had made great sacrifices and we were able to give our children a very good education. Our neighbors envied us because our children were well-behaved, well-mannered, hard-working and educated. Maurice, the eldest, was a designer. Albert was a mechanic. Their sister, Yvonne, a little, eighteen springs old flower—as we used to say so poetically in my family—and who made the hearts of all the boys in the country beat faster, was a typist. Everyone earned a

decent living. My children worked during the day and in the evening they were all absorbed in their studies. Every Sunday they spent time together discussing what they had learned during the week. I can assure you that it was a great pleasure for me and my wife to hear them talking like that. They were the ones who taught their mother and me a lot of things. We were the happiest parents in the world.

Then the war broke out. At the onset of the conflict, Maurice was badly wounded and died soon after. Albert was reported missing after three months of fighting. As a result, my wife and daughter went crazy, crazy with grief. Our village was a target for bombardment, and we received as many French bullets as German ones; having no nationality, both sides' projectiles destroyed furniture and killed people with equal indifference and brutality.

One day, in our half-demolished house, my wife and daughter were cooking, when a pot—not the famous Norwegian pot of Mr. Louis Forest,⁴⁶ but the one that squishes everything—fell on the floor.

There was a powerful explosion, and everything was blown up. I survived because I had gone to the cellar to get something. When I came back and climbed out of the cellar, I found no house, no wife, no daughter at the end of the stairs—nothing but a void, a frightening, horrible void, a void that filled the atmosphere with anguish, with loss, with death and ruin. I was too stunned to panic. But, wait, that's not all. The most terrible moment of my life was when I saw, in the rubble, the bloodstained hand of my unfortunate Yvonne, and a few steps away, the foot of my poor wife. Then, then..."

At that point the old man became very pale. I read in his eyes, which had become blurred, an indefinable expression of pain and revulsion. A convulsion made his whole body tremble. He leaned his clenched hands on the edge of the table. His feet traced a rhythmic and feverish back and forth on the wooden floor—a nervous movement made by any person who wants to tame an emotion ready to explode. I said to him gently: "That's enough, Grandpa, you can tell me about it another day. Please take this fried apple."

He seemed not to hear me, and with a long sigh, he continued: "You see, my dear sir, the war, this damned war has taken everything from me: my happiness, my home, the wife I adored and the children I cherished, and here I am

⁴⁶ Refers to Loui Forest's 1917 book *L'art et la manière de fabriquer la marmite norvégienne et de faire la cuisine sans feu sans frais ou presque*. (The Art and Method of Making a Norwegian pot and Cooking without fire nor anything else or at least almost nothing.)

living on public charity after so many years of hard work and suffering. Who knows, yes, who knows if my poor Albert is not the one who sleeps under the Arc de Triomphe!”

He wiped away a thick tear, took up his glass with trembling hands, and said, “Here’s to you, good sir.”

N’GUYEN AI QUAC.

Equality!

June 1, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, June 1, 1922, p. 5.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 93-94.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 17-18.

To hide the ugliness of its regime of criminal exploitation, colonial capitalism always decorates its evil banner with the idealistic motto: Fraternity, Equality, etc.

Here is how these champions of equality put their slogan into practice.

In the same workshop and for the same work, a white workman is several times better paid than his colored brother.

In administrative offices, despite length of service and recognized ability, a native is paid starvation wages, while a freshly arrived white man receives a higher salary with less work to do.

After receiving higher education in the parent state and obtaining degrees as doctors of medicine or of law, young native people cannot exercise their professions in their own country if they are not naturalized (and how many difficulties and humiliations a native must go through to obtain this naturalization!)

Dragged away from their countries and their homes, and press-ganged into the army as “volunteers,” the militarized natives are quick to savor the exquisite significance of this phantasmal “equality” they are defending.

With the same rank, a white non-commissioned officer is almost always regarded as superior to his native colleague, who must salute and obey him. This “ethno-military” hierarchy is still more striking when white and colored soldiers travel in the same train or ship. Here is the most recent example:

In May the *S. S. Liger* left France for Madagascar with six hundred Malagasy⁴⁷ soldiers on board. The Malagasy non-commissioned officers were

⁴⁷ During World War I, the French colonialists press-ganged the Malagasies into the French army and sent them to fight on the German front and in Morocco and Syria.

crowded into the holds, while their white colleagues were installed in comfortable cabins.

May our colored brothers, warmed by the ship's boilers, if not by an ideal, awakened by the noise of the propellers, or by the voice of their conscience, think over and understand the fact that the good capitalism will always consider them as ordinary *olo maloto*.⁴⁸

N. A. Q.

⁴⁸ “Olo maloto” one who gives off a bad smell. (Literally “unclean people” in Malagasy.)

The Lamentations of Trưng Trắc

June 24, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, June 24, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 95-100.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The sovereign of Annam is going to be the "guest of France." As a small greeting, we would like to dedicate to him this dream of our comrade N'Guyen Ai Quoc, his faithful subject.

The night was painfully battered by a thin and continuous rain. A pale moon glared desperately over the roofs of the thatched cottages. The wet trees shed many tears. The wind blew through the tired leaves, making a mournful noise as they rubbed against each other. The gnarled branches intertwined like diabolical arms, and the waters, tormented by sudden gusts of wind, wept. The Annamite landscape, in the midst of such luxurious vegetation, usually so cheerful and poetic under the moonlight, had become singularly sad. A universal agony loomed over it all. Fate was in the air.

The waning light of scented candles faltered on twisted wicks while casting moving shadows and blinking eyes on the lacquered columns of the palace. The eunuchs were dozing on a carpet spread out in the corner of the room. One could feel silence creeping in.

The drum of the watchman had just struck three times. Tam, tam, tam! You Westerners don't know what that means, do you! Tam, tam, tam! Multiply that by five and you have what's called three o' clock in the West.

This is the time of night when a man's conscience makes its loud voice heard. When the graves/tombs spit out their inhabitants, uncovering themselves from their half-open shrouds, after which they start roaming around, shouting with joy! Where the human brain is populated with images and reveries. Tam, tam, tam! Multiply this by three and you have the number nine, the

last of the indivisible and un-multipliable numbers which, according to the emperor Fuxi,⁴⁹ symbolizes the fall of a supreme being (*đường cừu*).

At that precise moment, the Son of Heaven was having a dream. He could see the dragons carved on his furniture come to life, transforming themselves into hideous snakes with large, bloody eyes. And the “phụng hoàng,” the birds symbolizing royal dignity, stretched their long, furry/bristling necks, sharpened their beaks, and flapped their wings like angry, vicious roosters. All the objects made of jade and precious stones began to fade and take on an earthy hue. Slowly the whole thing started dancing in circles and vanished. A veiled and whitish specter then appeared. The king trembled with fear, for not all monarchs have Hamlet’s courage and even less his intelligence. He tried to pull up a mat to hide his face, but he was unable to do so.

Majestic and outraged, the specter addressed the owner of the palace in these terms: “Do you recognize me, unfortunate child? I am one of the founders of this beautiful country of Annam. I am Trưng Trắc who in the year 39, with the help of my sister Trưng Nhị and my compatriots,⁵⁰ drove out the invaders, avenged my husband and freed our country. Do not tremble like this, my child! But listen carefully to my motherly words. Do you know that, according to the thousand-year-old tradition of our old Annam, the Emperor receives his mandate from heaven with the purpose of governing his people? He is considered the son of the former and the parent to the latter.

In order to be worthy of heaven and to fulfill his supreme duty, the king must be the first to suffer the hardships of his people and be the last one to share in their happiness. He has to obey the orders of heaven, and these orders are transmitted by the voice of the people. If he does not obey, he will be dismissed by heaven, abjured by his ancestors and disowned by his people.

Take a look at the history of your country and you will find your forefathers are examples of virtue and courage, of character and dignity. In 544, Lý Bôn,⁵¹ began an uprising and ended the Chinese domination with a handful of

⁴⁹ Fuxi is the first emperor in the Chinese mythology. Fuxi is considered as the father of humanity.

⁵⁰ Trưng Trắc and Trưng Nhị, the Trưng sisters, were military leaders who between 40-43 AD led a rebellion against the Han. They led an army of 80,000 soldiers, most of them women. Trưng Trắc became the first (and only) ruling queen in the history of Việt Nam.

⁵¹ Lý Bôn (503-548), Emperor Lý Nam Đế, is the founder of the Lý dynasty. He revolted in 541, formed an army, and managed to expel the Chinese and form a kingdom that lasted 60 years before being occupied again by China.

rebels. In 938, Ngô Quyền⁵² defeated the foreign army that was invading our homeland.

Under the Đinh dynasty, the nation was happy and prosperous. Lê Đại Hành, in 980,⁵³ courageously refused to submit to the demands of our neighbors, several times stronger than him, and defeated them by killing their leader. He thus freed his brothers from enslavement.

The Mongols, who had become accustomed to being able to destroy everything in their path, were defeated by our glorious Trần in 1225.⁵⁴ Lê Lợi bravely took the lead of the Annamite revolution and once again overthrew the Chinese overlords, known for their cruelties and exactions.⁵⁵

They had invincible courage and an untarnished virtue, which were like real gold, shining brightly after having undergone the trials of fire. Your grandfather Gia Long,⁵⁶ noble and valiant in many respects, has passed on to you a rich country, an independent people, a nation respected by the strong and loved by the weak, and a future of vitality and progress.

What a terrible shame, what a dreadful disappointment, what a painful bitterness they would feel if, from behind the clouds, your ancestors could see the people they had freed in slavery, the country they had liberated in servitude, and the heir to their throne in a state of weakness!

Although our traditions prevent the rulers of our country to cross our sacred borders, we are saddened by the fact that there have been monarchs in exile.

⁵² Ngô Quyền (897-944), or First King Ngô, defeated the Han in 938 and restored a kingdom that lasted 28 years.

⁵³ Lê Hoàn (941-1005), or Lê Đại Hành, was a general during the reign of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh. When the emperor was assassinated in 979, power was transferred to Đinh Phế Đế, his six-year-old son. Lê Hoàn grabbed the opportunity to seize power. The Song emperor Taizong, under the pretext of helping Đinh Phế Đế, sent an army to invade Annam. Lê Hoàn pretended to surrender to Hou Renbao, the admiral leading the invasion, only to ambush him and his troops. The death of Hou Renbao marked the end of the invasion.

⁵⁴ The Trần dynasty (1225-1400) fought back four attempts by the Mongols to invade Việt Nam.

⁵⁵ Lê Lợi (1385-1433) was a rebel leader who established the Lê dynasty (1428-1789) after defeating the Chinese who were occupying the country.

⁵⁶ Gia Long (1762-1820) was the founder of the Nguyễn dynasty, the last dynasty that ruled over Việt Nam before the monarchy was ended after the victory of the communists.

In 1407, China went to war against us. Backed by the spirit of independence and the love of freedom rather than by numbers and strength, Annam emerged victorious. But hostilities resumed.

The enemy, knowing that he could not defeat us by force, engaged in a war of attrition. Trần Quý Khoáng,⁵⁷ who had led the Annamese people to victory, saw their exhaustion, starvation, and bloodshed. He knew that the enemy was only interested in him personally, and that once he was taken, the Annamese people would be left in peace. He therefore surrendered; he surrendered to spare the blood and life of his people. Once he had been captured, he jumped into a river and drowned. He preferred an honorable death to a humiliated life. Today, at every sunrise and sunset, countless golden reflections appear on the clear, silver waters of the river, forming an eternal monument to the immortality of the soul of this great defeated man.

Then there was the young prince Cảnh,⁵⁸ sent by his father, Gia Long, to the court of the French king, Louis XVI. After that came Hàm Nghi, Thành Thái and Duy Tân—your predecessor.⁵⁹ All three were sent into exile, deported by the very people who claim to respect our customs and institutions and who, tomorrow, will use you as an artefact for colonial exhibitions and imperialist propaganda! You see, my child, never in the history of your country will one find an Annamite sovereign so domesticated, an imperial expedition so pitiful. You have already committed the sin of placing the ugly, paunchy image of a white man who smells like garlic and dead bodies on the sacred altars of your ancestors. Why, oh why did you do that? And now you are about to desert the ancestral pagoda. The incense sticks will no longer be lit by your fingers at the beginning of each spring and autumn. The offering tables will no longer be touched by your hands at the reaping of the first fruits and the harvesting of the first paddy. I know, my child, that all of this is nothing but obsolete rituals, but you are also aware that this is the only duty you can still fulfill towards your ancestors and the only prestige you still have in the eyes of your subjects.

And you are going to do worse. You will praise the virtue of those who exploit and oppress your people. You will boast about the prosperity of your country, a prosperity that only exists in the lively imagination of the exploit-

⁵⁷ Trần Quý Khoáng, (?-1414), the second emperor of the Later Trần dynasty.

⁵⁸ Nguyễn Phúc Cảnh (1780-1801), the eldest son of Gia Long.

⁵⁹ Hàm Nghi (1872-1943); Thành Thái (1889-1907); Duy Tân (1900-1945), were all emperors of the Nguyễn Dynasty who openly opposed colonialism.

ers. You will laud the innumerable and imaginary benefits of a civilization that penetrates your kingdom with its bayonets and its cannons.

Oh, look, unfortunate child, look around you. Can you see China waking up, Japan modernizing, and Siam living independently? Have you noticed that the whole world is moving forward and that only your people are stuck—thanks to you and your ministers—in the wretched depths of ignorance and slavery?

Look at Korea, Egypt, and India; all those countries that are rising up to claim their rights, justice, and freedom.

That's when you... Hush... Listen! Can you hear that? Can you hear these clamoring voices? They are coming—they are coming in great numbers, all those Annamites killed in the European war. They have come to claim what you and your protectors promised to them and their brothers. You must answer them. Oh! They become indignant, and walk away.

They turn their backs to you and are heading towards the other side. Do you see them? There, where the sun rises in great splendor and where the flag of Humanity and Work proudly floats. Well, there lies the spirit of the dead and the future of the people you have served so poorly!

The rooster is about to crow. The polar star is traveling through the sky. The enchanting music is calling for me. Farewell!"

A clammy sweat flows down the forehead of the royal sleeper. He wants to shout, but he cannot. Fear paralyzes his voice.

A eunuch entered the room, made three bows, and yelled in a woman's voice:

"Your Lower-Majesty! Here is the order of departure sent by the Upper-Résidence."⁶⁰

NGUYEN-AI-QUAC

⁶⁰ This is a pun in French: the French "Résident" in Indochina is the most important representative of the French State. The puppet emperor, even though possessing an aristocratic title, is subjugated to his rule.

The Civilizers

July 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 4, July 1, 1922.⁶¹

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 101-102.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 19-20.

Under the title “Colonial Bandits” our comrade Victor Méric⁶² has told us of the incredible cruelty of a French administrator in the colonies who poured molten rubber into the genitals of an unfortunate Negress. After which, he made her carry a huge stone on her head in the blazing sun, until she died.

This sadistic official is now continuing his exploits in another district, still with the same rank.

Unfortunately, such odious deeds are not rare in what the good press calls “overseas France.”

In March 1922, a customs-house officer at Bà Rịa (Cochinchina) all but sent an Annamese woman salt carrier to her death because she had disturbed his siesta by making a noise outside the verandah of his house.

The best of it is that this woman was threatened with the sack from the construction yard she was working on if she lodged a complaint.

In April, another customs-house officer who took the place of the above-mentioned official, proved to be worthy of his predecessor for his brutalities.

An old Annamese woman, also a salt carrier, had an argument with a woman overseer regarding the stoppage of part of her wages. On hearing the overseer’s complaint, the officer, without more ado, took it upon himself to give

⁶¹ *Le Paria* is the first newspaper that Hồ Chí Minh founded. From 1922 to 1925, it released 36 issues, all discussing the national and colonial question. Each issue printed 1,000 to 2,000 copies. According to an unclassified report of the French intelligence, half of them were sent to Việt Nam, noting that almost “each courier going from France to Indochina carries with him copies of *Le Paria*.”

⁶² Victor Méric (1876-1933), a French journalist of *L’Humanité*, who joined PCF in 1920. In 1921, he was expelled from the Party because he opposed the bolshevik discipline. He then orientated towards anarchism and published articles in *Le Libertaire* until his death in 1933.

the carrier two stinging slaps in the face. While the poor woman was stooping to pick up her hat, the civilizer, not satisfied with the slaps he had just given her, furiously kicked her in the lower abdomen, immediately provoking a great flow of blood.

When the unfortunate Annamese fell to the ground, M. Sarraut's collaborator, instead of succoring her, called for the village mayor to carry her away. This worthy refused. Then the officer called in the victim's husband, who was blind, and ordered him to take his wife away. The poor old woman is now in hospital.

It's odds on that, like their colleague the administrator in Africa, our two customs-house officers were not worried. They might even have received promotion.

Racial Hatred

July 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 4, July 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 103-104.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 21-22.

For having spoken of the class struggle and of equality among men, and on the charge of having preached racial hatred, our comrade Louzon⁶³ has been sentenced.

Let us see how the love between peoples has been understood and applied in Indochina of late. We will not speak for the time being of the poisoning and degradation of the masses by alcohol and opium of which the colonial government is guilty; our comrades in the parliamentary group will have to deal with this matter one day.

Everybody knows the deeds of derring-do of the assassin-administrator Darles.⁶⁴ However, he is far from having the monopoly of savagery against the natives.

A certain Pourcignon furiously rushed upon an Annamese who was so curious and bold as to look at this European's house for a few seconds. He beat him and finally shot him down with a bullet in the head.

A railway official beat a Tonkinese village mayor with a cane.

M. Beck broke his car driver's skull with a blow from his fist.

M. Bres, building contractor, kicked an Annamese to death after binding his arms and letting him be bitten by his dog.

M. Deffis, receiver, killed his Annamese servant with a powerful kick in the kidneys.

⁶³ Robert Louzon (1882-1976), a native of a French colony, and a French anti-colonialist activist.

⁶⁴ Darles, French Resident in Indochina, well known for his cruelty. In August 1917 the inhabitants of Thái Nguyên uprising revolted against his persecution (See footnote 13, p. 14). For his cruelty, he was fined 200 piastres, a derisory sum, but Albert Sarraut, then Governor General, considered the punishment adequate and sent him to a more lucrative post.

M. Henry, a mechanic at Haiphong, heard a noise in the street; the door of his house opened, an Annamese woman came in, pursued by a man. Henry, thinking that it was a native chasing after a “*con gái*”⁶⁵ snatched up his hunting rifle and shot him. The man fell, stone dead: it was a European. Questioned, Henry replied, “I thought it was a native.”

A Frenchman lodged his horse in a stable in which there was a mare belonging to a native. The horse pranced, throwing the Frenchman into a furious rage. He beat the native, who began to bleed from the mouth and ears; after which he bound his hands and hung him from them under his staircase.

A missionary (oh yes, a gentle apostle!), suspecting a native seminarist of having stolen 1,000 piastres from him, suspended him from a beam and beat him. The poor fellow lost consciousness. He was taken down. When he came to, it began again. He was dying, and is perhaps dead already... etc.

Has justice punished these individuals, these civilizers? Some have been acquitted and others were not troubled by the law at all. That's that. And now.

Accused Louzon, it's your turn to speak!

⁶⁵ *Con gái*: Vietnamese for “young girl,” used by the French colonialists with a bad connotation.

Murderous Civilization!

August 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 5, August 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 112-113.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 23-24.

We have of late pointed out from this platform a series of assassinations perpetrated by our “civilizers” which remain unpunished. Alas! The gloomy black list lengthens every day.

Quite recently, a fifty-year-old Annamese employed for 25 years in the Railways Department of Cochinchina was murdered by a white official. Here are the facts.

Lê Văn Tài had in his charge four other Annamese employed in preventing trains from crossing a bridge while it was opened to let navigation pass. The order was to close the bridge to navigation ten minutes before the trains were due to cross the bridge.

On April 2, at 4.30 p.m., one of these Annamese came to close the bridge and lower the signal. Just then a government launch appeared with a naval dockyard official on board returning from a hunt. The launch whistled. The native employee went to the middle of the bridge and waved a red flag as a sign to the boat that a train was going to pass and that navigation was accordingly suspended. Here is what happened: The launch came alongside a pillar of the bridge. The official jumped out and made furiously for the Annamese employee. Prudently, the latter fled in the direction of Tài’s house. The Frenchman pursued him, throwing stones at him. When he heard the noise, Tài came out to meet the representative of civilization who addressed him thus, “You stupid brute, why don’t you raise the bridge?” In reply, Tài, who could not speak French, pointed to the red signal. This simple gesture exasperated M. Long’s⁶⁶ collaborator who, without more ado, fell upon Tài and, after giving him a thorough drubbing, pushed him into a brazier nearby.

⁶⁶ Long, Maurice (1866-1923) Governor General of Indochina from 1920 to 1922.

Horribly burnt, the Annamese crossing-keeper was carried to the hospital where he died after six days of atrocious suffering. The French official was not charged.

In Marseille, the official prosperity of Indochina is on display; in Annam, people are dying of starvation. Here loyalism is praised, there assassination is perpetrated! What do you say to this, oh thousands of times over Majesty Khải Định⁶⁷ and Excellentissimo Sarraut?

NGUYEN A. Q.

P.S.—While the life of an Annamese is not worth a cent, for a scratch on the arm, M. Inspector General Reinhardt receives 120,000 francs compensation. Equality! Beloved equality!

⁶⁷ Khải Định (1885-1925) Emperor of Annam from 1916 to 1925. Protect of the French colonialists, he was enthroned in place of Duy Tân who, in 1916, engineered a plot against the French. After his failure, Duy Tân was exiled by the French colonial administration to Reunion Island.

Annamese Women and French Domination

August 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 5, August 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 114-115.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 25-26.

Colonization is in itself an act of violence of the stronger against the weaker. This violence becomes still more odious when it is exercised upon women and children.

It is bitterly ironic to find that civilization—symbolized in its various forms, viz. liberty, justice, etc., by the gentle image of woman, and run by a category of men well known to be champions of gallantry—inflicts on its living emblem the most ignoble treatment and afflicts her shamefully in her manners, her modesty and even her life.

Colonial sadism is unbelievably widespread and cruel, but we shall confine ourselves here to recalling a few instances seen and described by witnesses unsuspected of partiality. These facts will allow our Western sisters to realize both the nature of the “civilizing mission” of capitalism, and the sufferings of their sisters in the colonies.

On the arrival of the soldiers, [relates a colonial,] the population fled; there only remained two old men and two women: one maiden, and a mother suckling her baby and holding an eight-year-old girl by the hand. The soldiers asked for money, spirits, and opium.

As they could not make themselves understood, they became furious and knocked down one of the old men with their rifle butts. Later, two of them, already drunk when they arrived, amused themselves for many hours by roasting the other old man at a wood fire. Meanwhile, the others raped the two women and the eight-year-old girl. Then, weary, they murdered the girl. The mother was then able to escape with her infant and, from a hundred yards off, hidden in a bush, she saw her companion tortured.

She did not know why the murder was perpetrated, but she saw the young girl lying on her back, bound and gagged, and one of the men, many times, slowly thrust his bayonet into her stomach and, very slowly, draw it out again. Then he cut off the dead girl's finger to take a ring, and her head to steal a necklace.

The three corpses lay on the flat ground of a former salt-marsh: the eight-year-old girl naked, the young woman disemboweled, her stiffened left forearm raising a clenched fist to the indifferent sky, and the old man, horrible, naked like the others, disfigured by the roasting with his fat which had run, melted and congealed with the skin of his belly, which was bloated, grilled and golden, like the skin of a roast pig.

An Open Letter to M. Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies

August 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 5, August 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 114-115.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 27-29.

Your Excellency,

We know very well that your affection for the natives of the colonies in general, and the Annamese in particular, is great.

Under your pro-consulate the Annamese people have known true prosperity and real happiness, the happiness of seeing their country dotted all over with an increasing number of spirit and opium shops which, together with firing squads, prisons, “democracy” and all the improved apparatus of modern civilization, are combining to make the Annamese the most advanced of the Asians and the happiest of mortals.

These acts of benevolence save us the trouble of recalling all the others, such as enforced recruitment and loans, bloody repressions, the dethronement and exile of kings, profanation of sacred places, etc.

As a Chinese poem says, “The wind of kindness follows the movement of your fan, and the rain of virtue precedes the tracks of your carriage.” As you are now the supreme head of all the colonies, your special care for the Indochinese has but increased with your elevation. You have created in Paris itself a service having the special task—with special regard to Indochina, according to a colonial publication—of keeping watch on the natives, especially the Annamese, living in France.

But “keeping watch” alone seemed to Your Excellency’s fatherly solicitude insufficient, and you wanted to do better. That is why for some time now, you have granted each Annamese—dear Annamese, as Your Excellency says—private *aides-de-camp*. Though still novices in the art of Sherlock Holmes, these good people are very devoted and particularly sympathetic. We have only praise to bestow on them and compliments to pay to their boss, Your Excellency.

We are sincerely moved by the honor that Your Excellency has the extreme kindness to grant us and we would have accepted it with all gratitude if it did not seem a little superfluous and if it did not excite envy and jealousy.

At a time when Parliament is trying to save money, and cut down administrative personnel; when there is a large budget deficit; when agriculture and industry lack labor; when attempts are being made to levy taxes on workers' wages; and at a time when repopulation demands the use of all productive energies: it would seem to us anti-patriotic at such a time to accept personal favors which necessarily cause loss of the powers of the citizens condemned—as *aides-de-camp*—to idleness and the spending of money that the proletariat has sweated hard for.

In consequence, while remaining obliged to you, we respectfully decline this distinction, flattering to us but too expensive to the country.

If Your Excellency insists on knowing what we do every day, nothing is easier: we shall publish every morning a bulletin of our movements, and Your Excellency will have but the trouble of reading.

Besides, our time-table is quite simple and almost unchanging.

Morning: from 8 to 12 at the workshop.

Afternoon: in newspaper offices (leftist of course) or at the library.

Evening: at home or attending educational talks.

Sundays and holidays: visiting museums or other places of interest.

There you are!

Hoping that this convenient and rational method will give satisfaction to Your Excellency, we beg to remain...

NGUYEN AI QUOC

Under the Guidance of...

August 17, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, August 17, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 121-122.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

When he was administrator of the province of Thái Nguyên (Tonkin), Mr. Darles had the Annamites arrested, imprisoned, and arbitrarily condemned so as to pressure them to “volunteer.” He struck the native people, taken as “volunteers” to join the riflemen, with his fists and his cane. He bullied some of the militiamen, dragging them down by their hair, banging their heads against the wall of his residence.

He stabbed the thighs of his prisoners with the administrator’s sword, causing several of them to faint.

He hit one Annamite employee with an iron ruler and broke two of his fingers. He whipped a native sergeant in the face. Militiamen who displeased him got buried up to their necks and were only dug up when half-dead. With his cane he stabbed out the eye of a sergeant.

His cruelty provoked the revolt of Thái Nguyên, where French and native blood was spilled—a lot of it—and where houses were destroyed and innocent people were beheaded.

As a reward for his outstanding deeds, he was made chief examiner of Hanoi’s high schools and head of the Tonkin resident’s cabinet.

L'Humanité and the League of Human Rights protested.

If the German officer von Scheven, for having whipped the people of Roncq, got twenty years of forced labor, Mr. Darles, being French, would deserve, for having done what he did, at least three times twenty years of the same punishment.

But do you want to know what happened to him?

He became a member of the Saigon City Council, that is to say, both a direct colleague of Mr. Sarraut and Mr. Outrey, as well as the master of the Saigonese “nhà quê!”⁶⁸

Lucky Cochinchina!!

NGUYÊN ẨM QUỐC

A QUESTION

Is it true that a Frenchman named C. is employed at the Indochina General Government’s Security Department? That C., sent on a “mission” to Phú Xuyên, is forcing the local Annamites to call him “quan lớn”⁶⁹ and violently beats up those who don’t do it quickly enough? Is it true that the same C. raped a “linh lễ”?⁷⁰ Everything seems permissible, everything seems possible in this Indochinese paradise, doesn’t it Mr. Long?

N. A. Q.

⁶⁸ *Nhà quê*: country people. In the language of the colonialists, this word had a derogatory sense and referred, in a wider sense, to uncultured people unacquainted with European life.

⁶⁹ Great mandarin.

⁷⁰ Annamite militiaman.

Communism and the Chinese Youth

August 19, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, August 19, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 123-124.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The Chinese socialist youth movement was born in 1920.⁷¹ At that time, the same association included young Marxists, anarchists, guild members and trade unionists. It was only in November 1921 that the young communists were able to form a separate group. Under the emblem of the hammer and the sickle gathered 5000 young men and women. Last May, they held a national congress attended by 1500 members. 16 speakers took the floor. A committee was elected, consisting of 25 delegates representing 15 federations, as well as 2 foreign delegates. The conference voted on some 35 articles of the association's statutes/charter.

The Congress issued a resounding call to workers all over China, to students, to young men and women, to free thinkers, to soldiers, as well as to the police.

The work of the movement's different federations is divided into three parts:

- a) Politics: 1. class struggle; 2. right to vote; 3. freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and the right to strike.
- b) Economy: 1. working time (6 hours for young people over 18, 8 hours for adults); 2. weekly rest; 3. abolition of individual contracts between employers and workers; 4. hygiene for workers; 5. equal wages for workers of both sexes.
- c) Education: 1. social education through schools, conferences, magazines and newspapers, in order to spread communist ideas; 2. political edu-

⁷¹ The Socialist Youth League of China was founded in May 1920, one year before the founding of the Communist Party of China (July 1921). In 1925, following its 3rd National Congress, it changed its name into the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC).

cation through conferences, pamphlets and discussion on class struggle.

d) School education: reform of the curriculum, education for all, etc.

The congressmen and women left while singing the *Internationale*.

NGUYEN-AI-QUAC

The Smoked Man

August 20, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, August 20, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 105-108.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

To Nahon, murdered by the colonial militarists, I dedicate this story.

It is the conquest of the colonial empire that has tempered most of our great military leaders who have led us to victory, and whose glory and exploits the French public already celebrated when they held high our colors under the skies of Africa and Asia.

Albert Sarraut,⁷²

Minister of Colonies

Haoussas, January 1998.

The city of Haoussas was decked with bunting. It seemed as though a spring fairy had touched the dry woodwork of the balconies and windows with her magic stick, thus making them burst into innumerable red leaves, which were now flapping gracefully in the wind. It was the 50th founding anniversary of the Federal Republic of Africa. Never before had its inhabitants attended such a grand event so enthusiastically. Since early that morning the streets and squares were flooded with people. Streams of students, the front ranks holding banners, marched through the city, singing the *Internationale* amid the applause of the population. In the Soviet Square an old man was addressing the crowd. It was Daddy Kimengo, pseudonymd the Smoked Man.

Nonagenarian Kimengo was a veteran of the revolutionary army and one of the founders of the black Republic. A man with a very keen intelligence and a thorough knowledge of the social and political events of his time, Kimengo had not only done his best to awaken his colored brothers from the heavy slumber of slavery, but also tried to get rid of all prejudices of nationality and race and unite all the exploited people of various colors in a common struggle.

⁷² See footnote 43, p. 51.

He had succeeded in his endeavor. He was one of the few men who had taken great pains to sow the seeds and enjoyed the happiness of bringing in a bumper crop. His ebony face was crowned by snow white hair. His eyes were gentle and penetrating. There was always a pleasant smile on his face even when he found himself facing the greatest danger or the most critical moment. His whole countenance reflected kindness and nobility of mind. He was venerable and venerated.

We came while he was halfway through his speech, and this was what we heard:

The words that we old men used to hear and say no longer exist in your vocabulary. That is all for the better. Now when we say such words as court of law, police, army, prison and tax, I think that few of you understand what they mean.

In my time, our Republic was a French colony. There were the haves and the have-nots. The former were those who owned everything but did nothing. The poor got killed for the sake of the rich whenever the latter quarreled among themselves: that was what we called the blood-tax. The poor had to bring all the fruits of their labor to the rich: that was what we called the money-tax.

And so, the white capitalists who had colonized our country wanted us to pay those taxes even though we had nothing.

Unable to pay and wishing to escape ill-treatment, we took to the forest. They pursued us with hounds and guns, and we were forced to hide in a cave, which is now called the Cave of Martyrs.

We were over two hundred in all in that cave—men, women and children. We believe ourselves to be fairly safe there and so, although we suffered a great deal from humidity, darkness and hunger, we made up our mind to stay there as long as possible, knowing that they were waiting for us outside with their weapons. It was eternal night there, and we really did not know how long we had been staying in that cave. We could see nothing and we heard nothing but the distant furious barks of the dogs which reminded us of the danger still hanging over us.

One day, or to be more precise one night, an acrid odor invaded our underground hiding place. The stench soon became unbearable. What was the matter? Nobody knew... The children began to

cry, then the women, while the men started to swear. Panic came. Should we run away? But where? How atrocious! The wailing and gnashing teeth, the piercing cries and hiccoughs, the sound of bodies falling and people weeping in rage – all that turned this dark and smoke-invaded place into real hell.

I was then at the bottom of the cave. Instinctively I closed my eyes and mouth, and I put my face against the cave wall. I felt that I could breathe more easily and soon dozed off. Later when I woke up I saw a slanting beam of light falling on my face. It was a crevice on the wall through which I had been breathing and which had thus saved me from death. I thought of digging my way out, but all my efforts came to nothing. Finally I decided to go out through the opening of the cave in spite of the risks. After groping and stumbling over the corpses of two hundred smoke-choked people, I was able again to breathe fresh air.

I subsisted on grass and roots. I wandered from village to village. At last I was given paternal hospitality by the father of this white friend. It was he who brought me up with the principles of fraternity and communism. It was he who gave me the name of the white man who, in order to collect the taxes, had suffocated us so savagely. That man's name was Bruère, and he was the representative of France and the administrator of Haoussas.

NGUYEN AI QUAC.

“Vidartism” Goes On

September 7, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, Septembre 7, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 125-126.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In order to defend the safe deposit boxes of their exploiters, thousands of native people are being forced into military service.

It should be noted that in order to make the Africans do “their duty,” their huts were burnt down, their goods were stolen and the victims were forced to join the military forefront of the *civilized world*.

It is common practice among our glorious leaders to “educate” the native people by beating them with a club.

Poor Nahon—murdered twice: first by Captain Vidart, and then by the mortician in charge of the autopsy, who, in order to protect his friends did not hesitate to steal and hide the dead man’s brains—is not, alas, the only victim of colonial militarism. One of our colonial brothers has just reported on another one:

This time, [he says] it happened in Maison-Carrée⁷³ at the 5th Rifle Regiment. The victim, called Terrier, was a young soldier of class 21, a native of Ténès.

The circumstances of his death are particularly painful. On August 5, the young Terrier went to the military infirmary to ask for a purgative. He was given the medicine, or more precisely what he thought was the medicine, ingested it, and a few hours later was squirming in pain and died.

Mr. Terrier’s father then received a telegram announcing to him, in a callously indifferent manner and with no explanation, that his son, his only son, had died and that he would be buried next Sunday.

⁷³ Today, El-Harrach in the Algiers province in Algeria.

Driven mad by grief, the poor father rushed to Algiers, to the 5th Rifle Regiment in Maison-Carrée, where he was told that his son's body had been taken to the Maillot Hospital. (How was it taken there? Is it true that in order to avoid being suspected of having breached infirmary regulations, Terrier's *dead* body was transported to the hospital, so the authorities could simulate his death taking place during the journey?)

At the hospital, the ill-fated father asked to see the body but *was told to wait*.

Later, a Major came to inform him that the autopsy that had just been performed *had not revealed any findings*, leaving him there *without giving him permission to see his son's body*.

According to the latest news, it seems that Mr. Terrier Sr., who had asked the Colonel of the 5th Rifle Regiment for an explanation, received the following answer: *his son had died of intoxication!*

NG. AI QUAC.

The “Cabinet Noir”⁷⁴ in Indochina

September 28, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, Septembre 28, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 127.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

L'Humanité of September 13 reported how, four years after the “war of the Right,”⁷⁵ postal censorship is still rigorously enforced in Madagascar.

Under Mr. Long, Indochina has no reason to envy Madagascar—presided over by Mr. Garbit—the same injustices, the same abuses, the same scandals are rampant in both colonies.

We have just learned that the administration of the Cochinchina post office along with the State Security Service have received orders to block the delivery of mail, letters, etc., sent to or arriving from the newspaper *Le Paria*, published in Paris.

This new abuse of power coincided, as if by chance, with the arrival in Saigon of the corrupt administrator Baudouin and his most brilliant assistant, the son-in-law of Mr. Albert Sarraut, Minister of the Colonies.

In addition, the censors violated the privacy of personal correspondence, as the administration continued to intercept and dig through personal letters.

Native people are being killed and robbed in total impunity and are being denied even the most elementary of rights: the right to correspondence! This attack on individual freedom adds another jewel to the crown of the despicable policy of spying and abuse that reigns in our colonies.

NGUYỄN AI QUAC.

⁷⁴ In France, the “cabinet noir” was a government intelligence gathering office, usually within a postal service, where correspondence between persons or entities were opened and read by government officials before being forwarded to their destination.

⁷⁵ “War of the Right” is an expression used to designate the First World War from the point of view of the Allied powers, self-proclaimed defenders of “Justice” against German militarism.

“Modern-Style” Slavery⁷⁶

October 26, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, October 26, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 134-135.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Six individuals belonging to the native population were arrested on the estate of a French settler for not paying their taxes. In court, the defendants declared that the settler who employed them, Mr. de la Roche, had promised them: 1° to pay their taxes; 2° to exempt them from contributing to the public services' fund, and 3° to pay them 10 francs for every 30 days of work. It should be noted that this colonist only employs these workers once a week, meaning that in order to get their 10 francs of pay, they have to work *for 30 weeks, that is for seven and a half months!* To support themselves, these native workers are thus obliged to look for a job among the Malagasy people who live in the surroundings of the colonist's estate. In addition, Mr. de la Roche not only refused to pay their taxes as he promised, but also apparently kept the money that these native workers had given him for the payment of said taxes.

The Administration, for once, opened an investigation. But you will see how it turned out...

When informed of the affair, the Agricultural Union of Mahanoro, of which Mr. de la Roche is probably a member, sent a telegraph to the Governor General, protesting against the unjust police inspection of Mr. de la Roche's property and asking for a sanction to be imposed on the postmaster, whose crime it had been to have discovered the abuses committed by a Frenchman at the expense of the native population.

In order to avoid “trouble,” the governor general simply covered up the scandal.

This is how the native workers are protected and how the policy of collaboration is applied.

NGUYỄN AÏ QUẬT.

⁷⁶ “Modern-Style” was written in English in the original French text.

The Martyrdom of Amdouni and Ben-Belkhir

November 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 8, November 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 136-137.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 30-31.

In the war fought to uphold the rule of law, to safeguard justice, civilization, etc.... 100,000 Tunisian infantrymen were mobilized, 60 percent of whom did not come back. At that time, Tunisians were covered with flowers and showered with affection. Franco-Tunisian brotherhood was chanted with much love and tenderness, “a brotherhood sealed forever in blood and glory.” A censorship was even established to prevent publication in the press of any matter likely to offend native opinion.

To-day, this fraternity has changed its form. It is no longer expressed by caresses and flowers. It is expressed more eloquently by revolver shots or riding-whips. The following facts are proof of this:

Seeing three natives grazing their sheep in his olive groves, a French settler sent his wife for his rifle and cartridges. When they were brought to him, our civilizer laid in wait behind a bush, and, bang! bang! bang! three shots went off and the three natives fell gravely wounded.

Another French settler had working for him two natives, Amdouni and Ben-Belkhir. It seemed that these had taken a few bunches of grapes. The settler sent for them and beat them mercilessly with a bull’s pizzle until they fainted. When they recovered their senses, our protector had their arms bound behind their backs and had them strung up by their hands. Though the two unfortunates lost consciousness, the odious punishment lasted for four hours and ended only when a neighbor protested.

Taken to hospital, the unfortunates each had to have one hand amputated, and it is not known whether the other hand can be saved.

There it is, fra-ter-ni-ty!

The honorable M. Lucien Saint is too busy expelling communists and journalists to think of the lives of his native proteges.

Touching Solicitude

November 2, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, November 2, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 138-139.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

This is an old story, but not older than the war. Having promised mandarin positions to the Indochinese volunteers who survived, as well as posthumous titles to those who died “for the fatherland,” the general government of Indochina released this touching statement:

You have enlisted *in large numbers*; you have left your homeland to which you are so attached *without hesitation*; you, riflemen, have given your blood; you, workers, have offered your arms (C.G.T.C. 1919).

This is how history is written. If the Annamites were so delighted to be soldiers, why, then, were some of them taken to the county seat in chains, while others were locked up in a Saigon high school with French guards, their bayonets fixed, their rifles loaded? Were the bloody demonstrations in Cambodia, the riots in Saigon, in Biên Hòa and elsewhere, mere expressions of this eagerness to enlist in “large numbers” and “without hesitation?”

The evasions and desertions (about 50 percent among the reservists) provoked ruthless repression, which in turn provoked revolts that were bloodily repressed. There were also Annamites who were killed during the war, but who would receive neither posthumous decorations nor honorific awards from the general government.

The general government felt obliged to add that in order to be worthy of the “visible benevolence” and “great kindness” of the Administration, “you (Indochinese soldiers) must behave well and give no reason for discontent.”

Now that they can consume alcohol and opium provided by the government itself, how can you expect them not to behave well?

NGUYỄN ẨM QUAC

About Siki⁷⁷

December 1, 1922

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 9, December 1, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 140-142.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 32-34.

Ever since colonialism has existed, the Whites have been paid to bash in the faces of the Blacks. For once, a Black has been paid to do the same thing to a White. Being an opponent of all acts of violence, we disapprove of either procedure.

With a punch—if not scientifically aimed, at least amazingly well placed—Siki definitely removed Carpentier from his pedestal to climb on to it himself.

The boxing championship has changed hands, but national sporting glory has not suffered, because Siki, a child of Senegal, is in consequence a son of France, and hence a Frenchman.

In spite of this, it so happens that every time Carpentier wins, it is naturally due to his skill and science. But every time he is beaten, it is always because of the brute strength of a Dempsey,⁷⁸ or the dirty legwork of a Siki. This is the reason why at the Buffalo match⁷⁹ they wished to say—they had even made the statement—that Siki, though having won the match, lost it “just the same.” But the public, the good public, did not wish to see it in that light. And popular justice was triumphant: Siki was proclaimed champion of the world and of France.

⁷⁷ Louis Mbarick Fall (1897-1925), known as Battling Siki, a boxer of Senegalese origin who had just defeated in a much talked-of bout, the French boxer Carpentier, winner of the world middle-weight championship in 1920.

⁷⁸ William Harrison “Jack” Dempsey (1895-1983), American boxer, world heavyweight champion from 1919 to 1926. In 1921 he defeated Carpentier in the bout for the world championship.

⁷⁹ Buffalo, the largest sports hall in Paris.

After being knocked out by a Black, Carpentier calmly went to visit Russia, the land of the Reds. We congratulate Siki on his victory. We also congratulate Carpentier on his open-mindedness.

Fortune smiles only upon the rich, says the S. D. N. (read *sagesse des nations* and not *Société des Nations*).⁸⁰ René Maran⁸¹ and Siki have caused much black ink to flow. Siki, furthermore, caused red blood to flow. People are behaving as if both our African brothers need as much ink again. Following Maran's ironic pen, Siki's gloves have stirred everything, including even the political sphere. And M. Luquet, Councilor of the Seine Department, immediately tabled a motion attempting to ban boxing matches. M. Luquet must allow us to tell him respectfully that what he did was an anti-patriotic act. Here is our explanation: from the point of view of international policy, a featherweight champion makes as much propaganda for our moral influence abroad as an immortal, a glorious man, a song-writer or ten army corps (see the newspapers). From the national viewpoint, boxers are indispensable as an example of and stimulation to the physical excellence of the young generation. From the colonial viewpoint, a Carpentier—Siki match is worth more than one hundred gubernatorial speeches to prove to our subjects and *protégés* that we want to apply to the letter the principle of equality between races. Will this threefold advantage be sacrificed to a vague humanitarianism? No! Isn't that so M. Sarraut?

We learn from the newspapers that Siki has just been suspended for nine months from all boxing rings in France. Reason: For having railed at M. Cuny.

What happened? Before, Siki was glorified because he made Carpentier's nose swell; today, he has not touched a hair on M. Cuny's head and yet he is disgraced. We are surely not going to be made to believe that M. Cuny's face is any more fragile or any more peculiar than Carpentier's and that... but no. That is no way to understand it at all. We are rather inclined to think this way: Siki, a Black, will never be forgiven for having defeated Carpentier, a White,

⁸⁰ S. D. N.: a pun: Société des Nations, Sagesse des Nations. (League of Nations, Wisdom of Nations).

⁸¹ Maran, René (1887-1960), a Negro writer with French citizenship, author of *Batonala*, *Djouma*, *chien de Brousse* and other works. The French press spoke much of him when his book *Batonala* won the *Prix Goncourt*, the most prestigious price for French literature, in December 1921.

and if Carpentier bears no grudge, the chauvinism of others does. And this charge is only a pretext... motivated by...

We learn from the same newspapers that the British Home Ministry has banned the expected match between Joe Beckett and Siki in London. This does not surprise us. As His British Excellency could digest neither Kemal's⁸² croissant⁸³ nor Gandhi's chocolate, he wants to have Battling Siki swallow his purge even though the latter is a Frenchman. Understand?

⁸² Kemal, Mustafa (1881-1938) commonly referred to as Atatürk. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, Atatürk had the support of French, Italian and British imperialists and comprador bourgeoisie to lead a so-called "revolution," leading to the founding of the modern Turkish State. His ideology, Kemalism, has been described as a "Turkish blueprint" for Mussolini's fascism.

⁸³ A "croissant" is a crescent-shaped breakfast roll eaten in France.

Our Esteemed Colonial Judges

December 4, 1922

Source: *L'Humanité*, December 4, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 143-144.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

By decree of October 10, 1922, the government has just carried out an important change in the colonial judiciary. We note, among other names, those of Mr. Lucas and Wabrand.

It seems appropriate to recall in a few words the background of these two magistrates.

Mr. Lucas, formerly a deputy public prosecutor in French West Africa, is involved in the recent scandals in Togo. In a press conference, the Minister of Colonies was forced to declare that “the investigation also shows that the participation of Mr. Lucas would make this magistrate bear the heaviest responsibilities.”

Perhaps as a reward for his heavy responsibilities in the scandal, he is now being parachuted in as president of the A.E.F. [Afrique-Équatoriale Française, French Equatorial Africa] Court of Appeals.

As for Wabrand, his story is more straightforward and less well known. In 1920, a Frenchman named Durgrie, representative of the Peyrissac trading house in Kankan (Guinea), went out hunting. He shot a bird that fell into a river. A young native boy passed by. Durgrie grabbed him and threw him into the river, ordering him to go and fetch the bird. The water was deep, the waves were high. The child, not knowing how to swim, drowned. The victim's parents filed a complaint. Durgrie, summoned by the commander of the district, agreed to give one hundred francs to the grieving family, so that no further action would be taken regarding the case.

The ill-fated parents refused this shameful deal. Angered, the commander sided with his compatriot, the murderer, and threatened the parents with imprisonment if they persisted in pursuing the murderer, after which he closed the case.

However, an anonymous letter reported the case to the public prosecutor in Dakar. This high magistrate sent the public prosecutor Wabrand to investigate. Mr. Wabrand traveled to Kankan, spent the evening with the stationmaster and stayed the next day at the house of Mr. de Cousin de Lavalère, deputy commander of the district. The following day he left without even having begun his investigation. This did not prevent Mr. Wabrand from concluding that the accusations reported in the letter were slanderous. The Intercolonial Union reported the matter to the League of Human Rights (December 22, 1921), but the latter, perhaps considering that the affair was not sensational enough, made no attempt to deal with it.

Since his visit to Kankan, Mr. Wabrand has peacefully remained at his post, receiving chickens and bags of potatoes sent by his friend de Cousin de Lavalère, while awaiting his promotion. As you can see, Mr. Wabrand has well deserved the... “just” reward that the government has given him by appointing him as public prosecutor in Dakar.

Under the leadership of the Darles and the Beaudouins, the Wabrands and the Lucases, higher civilization is in good hands and so too is the fate of the native people of the colonies.

NGUYÊN AÏ QUAC

Indochinese Prosperity Under the Rule of M. Long

December 22, 1922

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, December 22, 1922.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 145-146.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 35-36.

M. Albert Sarraut, our great Minister of Colonies, never misses an opportunity to go into raptures over the prosperity of Indochina, of “his” Indochina, and over the grandiose tasks that he and his have performed or are performing there. To prove that he is telling the truth and nothing but the truth, we will put before him and our friends the following passages, extracted from a letter addressed to the newspaper *République Française* of December 6, 1922, by Colonel Bernard⁸⁴ who, set your mind at rest, Mr. Minister, is not a communist.

Indochinese exports, [says the letter] are stationary or even in regression. In 1914 Indochina exported 45,000 kilos of silk, 99,000 tons of maize, 480 tons of tea. Last year, it exported only 15,000 kilos of silk, 32,000 tons of maize, and 156 tons of tea.

It is also believed that the Indochinese government is at this moment actively carrying out the big projects which are indispensable for the improvement of the colony. But, since 1914 not a kilometer of railway has been built nor a hectare of rice field reclaimed. Ten years ago M. Sarraut had a program of works

⁸⁴ Fernand-Abraham Bernard (1866-1961), lieutenant-colonel of the French army deployed in Indochina. In 1901, he published *Indochina, Errors and Dangers*, a book that analyzed the negative impact of French colonial taxes on the country’s economy. After quitting the army, he held different positions in the management of French companies in Indochina. In the 20s, he regularly wrote letters and articles in the press criticizing the colonial administration of Indochina that was preventing the economical grow of the country, advocating instead to give more rights to Annamites (such as the universal suffrage and the right to hold positions in the administration) and warning on the risk of an insurrection. Colonel Bernard was a staunch colonialist, but he saw the independence of Indochina as a necessary step to reinforce French interests.

approved which included the construction of a railway from Vinh to Đông Hà and the building of four big irrigation systems; all these works have been suspended for over five years on the pretext of lack of credits. But, during the same period, Indochina devoted 65 million piastres, 450 million francs, to the construction of roads and civil buildings. Let M. Faget meditate on such figures! Nearly half a billion spent for the construction of motor-roads along which not even a ton of goods travels, for the building of houses and offices for the countless officials who swarm in Indochina with all the luxuriance of tropical vegetation, and, meanwhile, works acknowledged as indispensable and already approved by a vote of Parliament have been abandoned.

And don't think that there is any intention of changing the methods in Indochina. In order to complete the 1912 program, M. Long has already asked Parliament for authority to raise a loan. Today, he is still asking for permission to contract an agreement on it. Those who now have charge of the development of Indochina seem determined to do nothing really useful if they are not first allowed to contract debts. As for budgetary resources, and reserves accumulated during the war and post-war period, they have grandly decided to play ducks and drakes with them, if Parliament does not take a hand.

Open Letter to M. Leon Archimbaud

January 15, 1923

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 10, January 15, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 154-156.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 40-42.

Deputy for Drôme

Reporter on the Budget for the Colonies

Member of the Colonial High Council

Sir,

In your speech to the Chamber of Deputies you said that if you had wished to do so you could have denounced colonial scandals, but you prefer to pass over in silence the crimes and offenses committed by your civilizers in the colonies. This is your right and it concerns only you, your conscience, and your electors. As for us who have suffered and will continue to suffer every day from these “blessings” of colonialism, we do not need you to tell us about them.

But when, writing in *Le Rappel*⁸⁵ you say that the facts pointed out by citizen Bourneton⁸⁶ are false or exaggerated, you yourself “exaggerate!” First the Minister of Colonies himself was obliged to recognize that a “contemptuous state of mind towards native life” exists. And that he “denied no act of brutality” denounced by Deputy Boisneuf. And then can you deny, M. Archimbaud, that during the last few years, that is to say, following the war for “the rule of law” for which 800,000 natives came to work “voluntarily” or to be killed in France, that your civilizers—with impunity—have robbed, swindled, murdered or burnt alive Annamese, Tunisians and Senegalese?

You write next that acts of injustice are more numerous in France than in the colonies. Then allow me to tell you, M. Archimbaud, that one should not

⁸⁵ *Le Rappel* (The Recall), a newspaper founded in 1869 in Paris on the initiative of Victor Hugo and his two sons.

⁸⁶ Charles Bourneton (1897-1944), a member of Parliament, representative of the French Communist Party. Bourneton ended up betraying communism and became a collaborator during the Occupation. He was executed in 1944, few months before the Liberation.

pretend to give lessons in equality or justice to others when one is unable to apply them at home. This is the most elementary logic, isn't it?

According to you, the doings of your colonial administrators are known, commented upon and controlled by the Governments General and the Ministry of Colonies. Hence it must be one of two things. Either you are hare-brained and have forgotten the Baudoins, the Darles, the Lucases and so many others making up the galaxy which is the honor and pride of your Colonial Administration, and who, after having committed heinous crimes, receive as punishment, only promotions and decorations. Or else you are treating your readers as complete fools.

You state that if France has sinned in colonial matters it is rather from an excess of generous sentiment than anything else. Will you tell us, M. Archimbaud, whether it is out of these generous sentiments that the natives are deprived of all rights to write, speak and travel, etc.? Is it out of these same sentiments that the ignoble condition of "native" is imposed on them, that they are robbed of their land only to see it given to the conquerors, and forced thereafter to work as slaves? You yourselves have said that the Tahitian race has been decimated by alcoholism and is disappearing. Is it also from an excess of generosity that you are doing all you can to intoxicate the Annamese with your alcohol and stupefy them with your opium?

You speak finally of "duty," "humanity" and "civilization!" What is this duty? You showed what it is throughout your speech. It is markets, competition, interests, privileges. Trade and finance are things which express your "humanity." Taxes, forced labor, excessive exploitation, that is the summing up of your civilization!

While you are waiting to receive "one of the finest claims to glory that can be dreamt of" allow me to tell you, M. Archimbaud, that if Victor Hugo had known that you would write such... stuff today in his newspaper, he would never have founded it.

Respectfully yours,

NGUYEN AI QUOC

Colonial Honesty

January 19, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, January 19, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 157-158.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

From the *Journal Officiel*, 1st issue of December 22, 1922, we note the following fact:

During the war, African riflemen sent their families money orders that often formed considerable payments. These money orders never reached the addressees.

A colleague has just recently reported on a similar “phenomenon.” This time it concerns Réunion (Island). For several months, the inhabitants of the island have not been able to receive any package addressed to them.

Such a phenomenon [says the newspaper] surprised both those who sent the packages and those who did not receive them.

A complaint was filed. There was an investigation, and as soon as it began, along with the explanation of the mysterious phenomenon, it led to the discovery of a series of thefts committed with remarkable diligence and consistency.

One employee was arrested, then another, then a department head, and finally, when all the employees were locked up, the director went to join his staff in jail.

The investigation uncovered new facts every day. There were more than 125,000 francs worth of stolen packages; the accounting was falsified to such a degree that it would take more than six months to straighten out the accounting.

While there can be, sometimes, a dishonest employee in an administration, it is rare that a whole service, from the hierarchy’s top to bottom, is involved in theft—but what is more unusual

is that this whole band of thieves was able to operate for several years without ever being bothered.

NGUYÊN ẨM QUAC

Menagerie⁸⁷

February 1, 1923

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 11, February 1, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 159-162.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 45-47.

We have racked our yellow brains in vain, yet we cannot succeed in discovering the reason which led the men and women of France to found the remarkable institution called the “Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.” First, the reason escapes us because we see that there are still so many unfortunate human beings who appeal without result for a little care. Then, because all these animals do not deserve so much benevolence and are not as unhappy as all that. Except for the black lion who is useful to people accustomed to wrapping their feet in animal pelts, most of these creatures are wicked, very wicked indeed.

Does not the bulldog—with his ugly teeth—come to tear away the entire structure of the Paris Conference?⁸⁸ Which obliges the Flemish monkey and the Gallic cock to confront the German eagle in the Ruhr alone.⁸⁹ Did not the

⁸⁷ In order to avoid prosecution by the censorship, Hồ Chí Minh used Aesopian language (substituting certain words to prevent censorship) to lay bare the imperialist policy of the French Government and the customs of French bourgeois society.

⁸⁸ The Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)—This conference was convened by the victor countries after the First World War to sign a peace treaty with the defeated countries. It was aimed at sharing the world among the imperialist powers on the basis of the new relation of forces which had come into being after the First World War, and at producing a scheme for the destruction of the Soviet Government. This Conference was held in Paris from January 18, 1918 to January 21, 1920 and was concluded by the signing of a treaty with the defeated countries: Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Sultan’s Turkey. The basic document of this Conference was the peace treaty signed with Germany on June 28, 1919 in the Palace of Versailles. Hence it is called the Versailles Treaty. See also footnote 4, p. 2.

In sharing their booty, the member countries of the Paris Conference contended fiercely with each other. When speaking of the bulldog, Hồ Chí Minh of course, meant Britain.

⁸⁹ After Germany’s defeat in the First World War the question of the Ruhr, a coal-mining and metallurgical center, was one of the main bones of contention in Europe. Hoping to restore

Tiger,⁹⁰ while he was still chained, devour several ministries of the Republic? Were not millions and billions uselessly expended through the agency of our glorious friends Kolchak and Wrangel to buy the skin of the Muscovite bear who, today more than ever, has no mind to let people have it all their own way? (Ah! What an animal!)

Which of our friends in France has not cause to complain of the vultures' misdeeds?⁹¹ Are not crows⁹² disastrously destructive in the moral field? And what do the "*chats-fourrés*"⁹³ do if not profit by dissensions and discords in society? Is there not one animal which impudently permits that all disrespectful sons-in-law call their mothers-in-law by its name? Are there not expensive lovebirds which darken the conjugal bliss of many a family? And are not cat-burglars the age-old enemies of those who move from home?

Without taking account of the fact that the stronger wolf is always right and that black sheep are a plague to honest society, we... but let us speak a little, before concluding, of colonial beasts.

Just at the moment when M. Guinal is ready to present to the Academy of Sciences, through the medium of M. Mangin, a note relating to the utilization of shark skin, M. Albert Sarraut goes to the Isle of Dogs to deliver some of his ministerial speeches to the frozen cod of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, and M. Citroën,⁹⁴ for his part, launches his civilizing "caterpillar" across the Sahara.

its hegemony in Europe, France cut the Ruhr off from Germany. In January 1923, France and Belgium between them occupied the Ruhr. This occupation lasted until August 1925. Hồ Chí Minh's "Flemish monkey" and "Gallic cock" are Belgium and France.

⁹⁰ Tiger—Here Hồ Chí Minh wishes to speak of Clemenceau (see footnote 109, p. 133). Clemenceau issued the magazine *L'Homme Libre* (The Free Man) in which he criticized the government. After this magazine was banned he issued the newspaper *L'Homme Enchaîné* (The Chained Man).

⁹¹ Vultures were the usurers, and proprietors of firms who made exorbitant profits.

⁹² Crows—the exploiters.

⁹³ *Chats-fourrés*—literally furry cats, a French expression for judges.

⁹⁴ Citroën—the biggest automobile trust in France. This trust was founded by André Citroën, owner of a small cog-wheel workshop in Paris. During the First World War thanks to his production and supply of munitions for the Army, he became enormously rich. Citroën had many factories in France; he was besides the owner of many car assembly workshops and factories in Italy, Holland and in many other countries in Europe and French Africa. In the twenties, Citroën organized an expedition to the Sahara for the purpose of advertising his company. Caterpillar cars were used for the first time in this expedition. Today, Citroën has merged with Peugeot to form the PSA Group, the 5th largest French company.

Both these missions—official and semi-official—will very probably obtain the happy result that people have a right to expect from them, to wit, to know how to make a mouse bring forth a mountain and consolidate the position of the colonial sharks.

It is generally believed that our protectors always carry out an ostrich policy. What a mistake, my friends! Here is proof to the contrary: on the mere invitation of the sardine at the “old port,”⁹⁵ the Colonial Government has not hesitated a moment to cause to be spent by:

1	Indochina	13,190,846	francs
2	French West Africa	5,150,000	—
3	French Equatorial Africa	348,750	—
4	The Cameroons	390,000	—
5	Madagascar	1,837,600	—
6	Martinique	108,300	—
7	Guadeloupe	55,000	—
8	Guiana	62,500	—
9	New Caledonia	75,000	—
10	New Hebrides	60,000	—
11	Oceania	65,000	—
12	French Settlements in India	135,000	—
13	Somaliland	97,000	—
14	Reunion	85,000	—
15	Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon	14,000	—

to bring a few camels, cows and crocodiles⁹⁶ from the colonies to Marseille. No effort, it must be admitted, was spared by our civilizers to deck out a hand-

⁹⁵ Marseille is famous for its tales. One of these stories tells of a sardine that blocked the old port at Marseille. In telling this story, Hồ Chí Minh wished to say figuratively that for any trifle the French government asked its colonies to contribute enormous sums of money.

⁹⁶ In 1922, the French colonialists organized an exhibition in Marseille, which cost a great deal of money and for which the French colonies were forced to contribute enormous sums. They hoped that this exhibition would provide proof of the prosperity of the French colonies. More than 3,000,000 people attended the exposition. See also “Civilization that Kills” and “The Colonial Abyss” pp. 210 and 109-111 of this volume.

ful of native sparrows—very obedient and very docile ones—in peacock feathers to turn them into parrots or watch-dogs. And if the African and Asian peoples are aware of this “peace” and this “prosperity,” who then are the busy beavers but those untiring “disseminators of democracy?”

In short, the lot of all these animals is relatively easy. If the members of the lofty S. P. C. A.⁹⁷ had time to spare, they would perhaps do more useful work in taking care of the monkeys martyred by Doctor Voronoff⁹⁸ and the poor native sheep which are forever being shorn.

⁹⁷ SPCA—Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

⁹⁸ Serge Abrahamovitch Voronoff (1866-1951) a French “scientist” that became popular in the 20s and 30s for his “revolutionary” “rejuvenation therapy” that consisted in transplanting monkey testicles tissues to men’s testicles in order to increase memory, strengthen eye muscles so that glasses are no longer needed, prolong life and increase sex drive. Voronoff also advanced that his “treatment” could heal schizophrenia.

Just as in the Mother Country

February 1, 1923

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 11, February 1, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 163-164.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 43-44.

Tulle is so far the only town in the world which can lay claim to the honor of possessing sensational anonymous letters. Today, Cochinchina, out of a spirit of filial piety and in the hope of proving its indefectible loyalty to the civilizing country, has also just had “its” affair of anonymous letters. But the colony has “aped” badly, because instead of a charming Mademoiselle Laval, it is an old Annamese notable⁹⁹ who has just been put in jail; not for having abused anonymity but for having been accused by anonymous letters. Here is the substance of the affair:

One night in December 1922, while the Annamese notable concerned was lost in his dreams, he suddenly heard the sound of a rattle warning the inhabitants that pirates (well, well! where, then, was the security so much boasted of by the officials?) were operating on the big river, opposite Chợ Lách. Our notable jumped out of his bed, took hold of his rifle—this notable was also rural constable of a large domain—and immediately boarded his sampan together with two of his servants.

Arriving on the spot, this brave notable and his men were received with rifle fire from the pirates and one of the men received the bandits’ volley right in his chest, and died a few seconds later. Our notable replied with a shot which missed its mark, but, in return, his enemies hit him in the right hand.

On the mere accusation of an anonymous letter, the notable in question was arrested on the charge of having killed his servant.

Though the victim’s father and the other servant gave evidence in favor of the accused, the latter is still in “the shadow” waiting for the light of justice.

⁹⁹ Notables—Upper elements in the Vietnamese countryside, such as usually formed the village administrative councils. Their election by the population was a mere matter of form; in fact they were appointed by the French colonial administration.

From One Scandal to Another

February 5, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, February 5, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 170-171.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In spite of the grand exhibitions, the pompous speeches, the royal excursions and the grandiloquent articles, nothing is going well in Indochina.

The bench of the accused, where until now the honest administrator Lano has been sitting, has barely cooled down and other scandals are already being announced.

First, there is the Boudineau affair. Mr. Boudineau is a typical civilizer and a corrupt administrator. Among the charges brought against him, we note the following:

The village of Tânan, capital of the canton, had built a power plant using communal resources or loans: The project was successful, since the income of the village greatly exceeded its expenses. In addition, its buildings and streets were lit free of charge.

An ingenious administrator (Boudineau) was able to get the village to agree to an arrangement whereby the village would concede its business to a contractor for free so that they could enjoy paying to light the town's buildings and streets. Today, the townspeople realize that it is in their interest to buy back this privilege granted for free, which amounts to several tens of thousands of piastres that the commune will have to pay. This whole affair has turned into a cynical novel in which the imagination of a former provincial chief has been given free rein.

The second scandal in sight is the Théard affair. Here is what an Indochinese colleague has to say about it:

We are living in a really... unusual situation: the Boudineau affair, the Luno affair and now the Théard affair.

For Mr. Théard, an engineer of great merit, director of a large French firm in Haiphong, having offered Mr. Scala, director of the Customs and Excise Department, the sum of ten thousand dollars as an advance and undue remuneration in order to conclude an opium deal with the administration, must be led by very “special” considerations to think that such a deal is not abnormal. In the world of Indochinese business, “short squeeze” situations¹⁰⁰ are a common thing. All those who hold such authority speculate on the greater good of their own pockets and the greater harm of the community.

Since Mr. Darles, “Resident” and torturer of Thái-Nguyên, was appointed member of the Saigon municipal commission and Mr. Baudoin, (for whom Judge Waren is impatiently waiting), was made acting governor general of Indochina, the very least one could do for Mr. Théard and Mr. Boudineau was to reward them.

¹⁰⁰ In the stock market, a “short squeeze” is a rapid increase in the price of a stock owing primarily to an excess of short selling of a stock rather than underlying fundamentals.

Lack of Schools

February 5, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, February 5, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 172-173.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The population is asking for schools, which are shamefully lacking. At the beginning of each school year, parents may knock on every door, beg for support, and offer to pay even double the cost of boarding school, yet they are unable to find a place for their children. Thus, thousands of children are condemned to ignorance due to the lack of sufficient school facilities to accommodate them.

One might say that it is the budget that does not allow the government to build new schools. Not exactly. Of the 12 million piasters that make up the budget of Cochinchina, 10 million gets swallowed up in the pockets of civil servants.

On the other hand, fearing that they might be contaminated by Bolshevism, the colonial government does everything it can to prevent young Annamites from coming to study in the Metropole. Article 506 (b) of the June 20, 1921 decree on public education in Indochina says the following:

Any native, French subject or *protégé*, who wants to go to the Metropole to continue his studies, *must obtain the authorization of the Governor General*. His decision will be made after having consulted the head of the local administration and the director of public education.

Before his departure, the student must provide the director of public education with a university booklet bearing his photograph and indicating his marital status, the address of his parents, the schools he has previously attended, the scholarships or assistance he has received, the diplomas he has obtained, and the address of his correspondent in France. This booklet must be stamped by the Governor General.

The files of the native students who continue their studies in France are deposited at the Department of Public Education.”

“Dumb down and rule” is the method dear to the governing bodies of our colonies.

NGUYEN AI QUAC

The Colonial Abyss

February 13, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, February 13, 1923, p. 4.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 147-149.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 37-39.

France possesses a colonial empire of ten million square kilometers, inhabited by 56 million people of yellow and black races. To turn all this to advantage, M. Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies, wants to find three or four thousand million francs. To this end, he has “organized” a big press campaign and made countless speeches. The worthy Minister has also written a book of 656 pages (price 20 francs per volume). Pending the arrival of these thousands of millions, we beg His Excellency to allow us to fill out his arguments a little.

The budget for Cochinchina, for example, which amounted to 5,561,680 piastres (or 12,791,000 francs) for 1911, rose to 7,321,817 piastres (or 16,840,000 francs) for 1912. In 1922, it went up to 12,821,325 piastres (or 96,169,000 francs). A simple subtraction shows us that between 1911 and 1922 there was a difference of 83,369,000 francs (the rates for the piastre being 2.25 and 7.50 francs) in the budget of this colony. Where did that money go? Simply on expenses for personnel which in effect swallowed 100 percent of total receipts.

Other examples of mad extravagance combine to throw away money that the poor Annamese have sweated for. We do not yet know the exact figure in piastres spent for the Emperor of Annam’s trip to France, but we do know that to await the day of good augury, the only one on which the *Bamboo Dragon*¹⁰¹ could embark, the vessel Porthos was paid compensation for four days at the rate of 100,000 francs per day (400,000 francs). So: Travelling expenses 400,000 francs. Reception expenses 240,000 francs (not including the pay of policemen charged with the extraordinary supervision of the Annamese in France); cost of lodging in Marseille, the Annamese militiamen for “presenting arms” to His Excellency and His Majesty: 77,600 francs.

¹⁰¹ A play written by Hồ Chí Minh to ridicule Khải Định when this monarch visited France.

As we are in Marseilles, let us avail ourselves of the opportunity to see what its Colonial Exhibition has cost us. First of all, in addition to catering for highly-placed metropolitan personnel, they sent for about thirty high functionaries from the colonies who, while taking their aperitifs somewhere along the Canebière, were paid expenses both at the Exhibition and in the colonies. Indochina alone had to pay 12 million for this Exhibition. And do you know how this money was spent? Here is an example: the famous reproduction of the Angkor Wat palaces required 8,000 cubic meters of timber at 400 or 500 francs a meter. Total: 1,200,000 to 1,500,000 francs!

Other examples of waste. To carry M. *le Gouverneur Général*, luxury automobiles and cars were not enough—there had to be a special railway carriage for him. The fitting-up of this carriage cost the Treasury 145,250 francs.

In eleven months of activity, the Economic Agency burdened the economy of Indochina with a sum of 464,000 francs.

At the Colonial School, where future civiliziers are turned out, 41 professors of all types are maintained to teach 30 or 35 students. Again several thousand francs.

The permanent survey of defense works for the colonies costs the budget 758,168 francs annually.

Now, Messrs the Inspectors have never left Paris and do not know the colonies any better than they know the age-old moon.

If we go to other colonies, we everywhere find the same corruption. For the reception of a semi-official “economic” mission, the budget of Martinique was relieved of 40,000 francs. Within a period of ten years the budget of Morocco has gone up from 17 to 200 million francs, although they have cut down by 33 percent expenditures of local interest, that is to say, expenses likely to benefit the natives.

There are millions and even thousands of millions that could be found easily if they knew how to look for them. But the Minister prefers to try to get them out of the natives!

A QUESTION

Is it true that, through excess of the humanitarian feelings so many times proclaimed by M. Albert Sarraut, in the jail at Nha Trang (central Việt Nam) detainees have been put on dry rations, that is to say that they are deprived of

water at their meals? Is it true that the detainees have had their noses coated with tincture of iodine to be more easily recognized in case of escape?

“Incognito”

February 19, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, February 19, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 174-178.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Extract from “Letters to my cousin,” translated from Annamese by the author.

- It's him!

- No, it's not.

- Yes, I'm telling you it's him.

- Are you sure? I saw him at the racetrack; he looked more shy, more embarrassed, with his rice hat, his turban and his fingers covered with rings.

- He must have sold all that stuff to the pawnshop. But look at him carefully, don't you see the same flattened nose, the same slanted eyes and the same lemon-colored face?

- Yes, I do. Maybe you're right. But what is he doing here, in the subway, and where are all his mandarins and tangerines?

- He probably left them at the luggage depository to travel incognito.

Such, my dear cousin, is the dialogue, faithfully reported, between a young couple who were traveling in the same compartment as me and who, while devouring me with their malignant and curious eyes, pretended not to look at me.

The conversation continued in these terms:

- What do you think of our host? [said the young man, taking me for a Majesty and believing that I did not understand them.]

- He was funnier with all his silks and glassware [replied his company].

- His jewels! I bet you'd like to have them, those gems.

- If I had them, I'd lose them on purpose to be mentioned in the newspapers so I could be a star. And you, what do you think of our “protégé?”

- He is very useful to us. Gambais' furnace is sold, Hera Myrtel's briefcase is liquidated, the trial of the man cut into pieces does not attract public attention, because it is not mundane enough, and our supply of entertainments was

going to run out like the depleting ink in a pen; newspapers no longer have anything to cover their sheets with. So...

- Do we change here, darling?

- No, at the next stop. So, we got ourselves a king.

- I'd prefer "Charlot." [Charlie Chaplin] Besides, a king is too expensive.

- Not at all. Do you remember the colonial ball at the Opera? One had to pay 1,500 francs to see the concubines of the king of Cambodia and the acrobats of the Marabout of Congo; today we pay nothing to see the king who is next to us. It is said that the manager of the "Guignol" theater intends to make a contract with him...

The train stopped, the couple got off, glancing at me furtively, and, very amused, I began to think—to think of you. I remember the day when, like two birds, you and I were sitting on our beloved uncle's lap with him telling us ancient stories. I remember the one about the emperor Thuân who, wishing to see and know for himself if his people were pleased with him, disguised himself as a peasant and went to investigate throughout the country. I remember the story about Peter of Russia, who disguised himself as a laborer and worked in the English shipyards. Alongside these disguised great men who wanted to penetrate the life of the people, nowadays there are princes and kings who, for their personal convenience and for less noble reasons, also travel "incognito."

I do not know the intention of our current "incognito" king. Does he want to know if the French people are as happy, drink as much alcohol and smoke as much opium than they did under the reign of his friend Alexander I? Is he willing to learn how to handle the peasant's sickle (the way they do it in France) and the worker's hammer in order to bring, after his trip, a little bit of well-being that his poor "dân" [subjects] totally lack? Or, tired of being a great king, is he trying to get a taste of the life of the small dukes?

In any case, for some time now, I have become a Majesty in spite of myself. Everywhere I go people look at me, envy me, smile at me, flatter me, follow me.

You will tell me, dear cousin, that the imponderable wheel is turning. Until now, all the white-skinned people in Indochina have been civilizers. Now it is time for all those with yellow skin to be emperors in France.

You can't imagine the warm welcome we are given here. Popular enthusiasm spontaneously manifests itself as soon as one of our compatriots is spot-

ted. “It’s him” or “look at him” are the discreet and respectful greetings that we meet on our way.

The most amusing thing is that the government itself can no longer recognize its true, official guests, and so, in order to be sure not to fail in its duty of hospitality, it treats all the Annamites royally and has them all accompanied by “aides-de-camp!”¹⁰² They are discreet, shy, unselfish and absolutely devoted servants. They work hard to defend us and if you could see them accompanying me with the solicitude of a mother who watches her baby’s first step, you would be jealous of their tenderness towards me. They seem to be glued to my soles and to merge with my shadow. It’s a real panic if they lose sight of me for five minutes! How can you not be deeply touched by such kindness?

NGUYEN-AI-QUAC.

¹⁰² An “aide-de-camp” is a personal assistant or secretary to a person of high rank, usually a senior military, police or government officer, or to a member of a royal family or a head of state.

Workers Organize Against Capitalist Exploitation

March 16, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, March 16, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 185-186.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Although large-scale industries and mechanization have not yet reached their full development in China and patriarchal mores have not yet entirely disappeared, about a million Chinese workers, doubly oppressed by foreign capitalism and native militarism, have already been affected, directly or indirectly, by trade unionist and revolutionary propaganda.

The *Hong Kong Maritime Workers' Union* counts 20,000 members. It carried out a strike for four months (December 1921 to March 1922). In solidarity with the maritime workers, a general strike was declared by the non-unionized masses. The laundry workers and domestic workers also joined the movement. The result of the strike was a 20-40% wage increase.

The *Shanghai Maritime Workers' Union* has a membership of 18,000. A three-week strike was called in July 1922. Result: a 20% wage increase. The cotton industry employs 72,500 workers, most of them women, and children under the age of 8. The working day was set at 12 hours. Strikes were held to push for improvements in their conditions.

93 silk factories employed 130,000 women and girls between the ages of 8 and 14. They worked 11 hours a day. Because of the heat produced by the continuously boiling water and the bad smell of the silk cocoons, the working conditions of these women workers were particularly difficult. In June 1922, a woman worker fell victim to the bad working conditions and ill treatment and a protest strike was spontaneously declared. This strike was supported by all the factories in Shanghai. The result: a reduction of two hours of work per day.

A strike of weavers in Nanjing was able to prevent the city's silk monopoly from being handed over to a Japanese consortium.

At the end of 1921, the employees of foreign rickshaw owners, including 3,000 union members went on strike. Since the cutbacks on their salaries had

been brought about by the French owners (concerning around 900 rickshaws), the starving strikers formed a procession of “beggars” who demonstrated in the French concession. The French police dispersed the demonstrators and arrested and imprisoned their leaders. It should be noted that the French landlords have their own court and prison to prosecute and imprison rickshaw drivers who cannot pay their taxes. The prisoners are treated cruelly and many have died.

In recent years, about 200 rickshaw drivers have been killed by these owners.

Of the 20 newspapers published in Hankou, the workers own two daily newspapers and one weekly. In spite of the efforts of the foreign and native capitalists to stifle and delay any emancipatory movement, the Chinese workers, powerfully aided by many committed intellectuals, are organizing themselves with great insight and activity.

N’GUYEN AI QUAC.

The Revolt of Dahomey

March 18, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, March 18, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 187-188.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The slaves of Béhanzin¹⁰³ who, some thirty years ago, submitted to other masters following the glorious exploits of Dodds and the Lebel, have just been introduced once again to the French civilizers. We owe it to the truth to say that our colonial administrators have raised, on this occasion, the Dahomean to the dignity of French citizens.

Here are a few details on the events that led to the Porto Novo strikers being treated by the colonial capitalists in the same way as the workers of Le Havre and the Sarre region.

On February 12, the day after the departure of Mr. Henri Michel, delegate to the Superior Council of the Colonies, a sudden upheaval occurred in Porto Novo: demonstrations in the street, followed by a strike by the native workers of certain construction sites in the city.

On the 18th the strikers held a public meeting. The police dispersed the participants and arrested a dozen workers.

Then the battle began: bands of strikers, joined by many native people, invaded the colonial posts around Porto Novo and expelled the officials. A first armed encounter took place between the rioters and the riflemen that Mr. Chasseriaud, the administrator, had urgently sent for. The troop fired. But the strikers were armed as well and fired back. Five people, killed, were laying on the ground: 1 infantry corporal and 4 native people.

The agitation grew. On the orders of Mr. Merlin, Governor General of French West Africa, a state of siege was declared in the entire Porto Novo area. Three companies of riflemen, machine gunners and *field artillery* were trans-

¹⁰³ Béhanzin (1845-1906) was the 11th King of Dahomey. In 1894, he was defeated by the French colonialists, led by the French General Alfred Dodds. Lebel refers to the new Lebel Model 1886 rifles that were used during the war, seen as one important factor in the French victory, despite having four times fewer troops than Dahomey.

ported to Dakar on the “Tchad” frigate.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, the “Cassiopée” frigate immediately set sail for Porto Novo.

While the military forces were being moved, more people were being arrested. Ten leaders, including Ouibellou and Étienne Tété, were thrown into prison. Across the country, the most merciless repression prevailed.

Under the threat of bayonets and the use of clubs, the workers were forced to return to work in Porto Novo. But in the countryside, agitation increased.

The colonial newspapers, the *Dépêche Coloniale* among others, demanded energetic sanctions and required “*that the fate of Dahomey be entrusted to firmer hands.*”

We have a precious lesson to learn from these incidents: in the colonies too, the notion of class struggle is beginning to emerge in the minds of the workers.

Black and yellow workers also understand that their only enemy is the system that condemns them to a form of slavery that is, in a certain way, more refined than in the past, but just as harsh and inhuman.

And with the support of their oppressed brothers in the countries of Europe, they will work towards their own emancipation.

¹⁰⁴ French military vessel, famous for being sunk in the Atlantic near Bordeaux, France. The majority of the French colonial subjects working on board died during the accident.

Uprising at Dahomey

March 30, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, March 30, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 189-190.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 48-49.

French capitalism, anxious at the awakening of the working class in France, has tried to transplant its threatened domination to the colonies. It draws from them both raw materials for its workshops and human materials for its counter-revolution. Bourgeois newspapers in Paris and in the provinces regularly devote entire pages to articles on the colonies. Generals and members of Parliament are delivering speeches on the colonies all over the country. These virtuous hacks and braggarts cannot find words enough in their vocabulary to extol the loyalty of the natives and the benefits of their civilization. Sometimes these gentlemen push their impudence so far as to compare British colonial brigandage with their own: they qualify British policy as a “cruel method” or “high-handed” and maintain that French practice is of the essence of justice and kindness!

A glance at our colonies is enough to appreciate how “fine and gentle” this civilization is.

Recently, in Indochina, a young French settler, after having tied an Annamese spreadeagled with his face to the ground, gave him *one hundred and sixty strokes with a cudgel*. The victim, black and blue from head to foot, was detained all night. And the next day, the young civilizer *battered his head and put out one of his eyes* with the butt of his revolver. This brute was acquitted by French justice.

In Dahomey, the taxes, already exorbitant for the natives, have been increased. Young people are dragged from their homes and land to become “defenders of civilization.” The natives are forbidden to have weapons to defend themselves against wild beasts which devastate entire villages. Education and hygiene are wanting. On the other hand, no means are spared to submit the “protected” Dahomeans to the abominable native status, which

is an institution placing man on the level of the beasts and dishonoring the so-called civilized world. The natives, at the end of their tether, revolt. Then there is bloody repression. Harsh measures are taken. Troops, machine-guns, mortars and warships are sent to the place and martial law is declared. People are arrested and imprisoned *en masse*. There is the kindness of civilization!

N'GUYEN AI QUAC.

Colonial Militarism

April 13, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, April 13, 1923, p. 1.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 191-192.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

We have said that intensive military recruitment [by the French] is one of the main causes that pushed the Dahomeans to revolt.

Let us first mention this blatant inequality: while a Frenchman undergoes two years of military service, a native man has to serve three years in the armed forces. And, after having spent thirty-six months of his youth defending freedom and justice (!), the demobilized native man is once again placed under the system of the “Indigénat,” where freedom and justice are unknown! This inequality has, however, one positive aspect: it provokes a feeling of anti-militarism among all the native people.

The cruelties committed by the military recruiters in the colonies are “too refined” for the French people in France to even have an idea of what they consist. During the war, commanders, accompanied by their armed forces, went from village to village to compel the native chiefs to supply them *immediately* with the number of men they required for recruitment. Didn’t one of the commanders find it useful, in order to make the young Senegalese runaways return to him and put on the “chechia,”¹⁰⁵ threaten to torture their parents? Didn’t he arrest old men, pregnant women and young girls, strip them of all their clothes and burn them in front of their eyes? Naked and tied up, the unfortunate victims, beaten by sticks, were made to run around the villages under the pouring rain, to “set an example!” A woman carrying her baby on her back needed special permission to have one of her hands released to keep her child in a stable position. Two old men fainted on the way; young girls, terrorized by such cruelties and subjected to them in turn, had their period for the first

¹⁰⁵ The standard headgear of the French colonial troops in the Maghreb countries. Not to be confused with the “fez,” a much more common headdress from the ottoman era, originally from Morocco.

time; a pregnant woman gave birth prematurely to a stillborn child; another gave birth to a blind baby.

NGUYEN AÏ QUAC.

The Jackals are over here...

April 27, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, April 27, 1923, p. 2.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Mr. Albert Sarraut said in the Chamber of Deputies:

Although we only have the flagpole to guard our colonial domains, everything has been calm, nothing has moved. This proves that we are good colonizers and that the natives are happy, very happy with us.

We don't have to recall here the revolts in Indochina, Algeria, Oceania and elsewhere; revolts that were put down with blood and destruction, but which nonetheless leave a sufficient number of painful traces to refute Mr. Sarraut's bluffs; we need only quote a few figures from the *Journal Officiel* to demonstrate that His Excellency has made a royal mockery of his dear colleagues and that in order to keep the proletariat of the colonies in slavery, it has required:

1,617 officers;

12,279 European soldiers;

49,999 native soldiers.

Annual cost: 183,869,000 francs.

To cultivate the laurels of Marshal Lyautey, we have:

2,767 officers;

35,700 European soldiers;

50,000 native soldiers.

Annual cost: 417,121,840 francs.

To guard Constantinople:

312 officers;

4,410 European soldiers;

3,590 native soldiers.

Annual cost: 56,285,700 francs.

For/In Syria:

1,309 officers;

13,125 European soldiers;

21,875 native soldiers.

Annual cost: 860,000,000 francs.

Hence, to support the flagpole, imperialist France arms 196,983 men and spends 1,017,266,540 francs each year! One is vociferous in denying the existence of gunpowder in the army!

NGUYỄN ẨM QUỐC.

Despotism in Indochina—Protected and Protectors

July 16, 1923

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 16, July 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 215-216.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 50-51.

The superintendent of police in Đà Lạt (Annam) has a strange way of understanding his role as a civilizer. One day this worthy collaborator of M. Sarraut wanted wooden planks. He sent out his men to fetch these materials at a native merchant's. The latter did not wish to see his goods taken away without being paid beforehand. Hearing of this, the superintendent fumed and sent out armed men ordering them to bring in the Annamese offender "dead or alive."

To escape the anger of the representative of the protector nation, the merchant, though ill, had to leave his home and native soil and seek refuge in another province.

As a witness of the incident, a European doctor intervened in favor of the native. This "scandalous" interference caused its author automatically to be transferred. It is in Kon Tum—an unhealthy region much feared by Europeans—that the doctor is now expiating his pro-native crime, while the Darlezes and Baudoins bask peacefully in honors and comfort. This criminal guilty of this outrage against prestige is called Doctor Holstarich. Let us record our sympathy for him.

But now let us take a look at what happened to the Annamese merchant.

His name was written down in the register of suspects and filed together with the "anti-French" amongst those on whom a close watch was to be kept. An army of French and Annamese spies followed him closely with the mission of hourly noting his doings and investing all of them with a sinister intent. This surveillance was carried out fairly indiscreetly in order to discourage his friends and relatives from having dealings with him, to the point of making his life impossible. There was not a native who dared to come and see him, whatever the reason might be.

Completely isolated from the rest of his fellow-creatures, the Annamese merchant had to choose between becoming a bandit or a beggar; but the latter trade would have made him even more suspect.

Letter addressed to the Central Committee of the French Communist Party¹⁰⁶

July 1923

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 50-53.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 211-214.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The decisions made by the Second Congress of the International on the question of the colonies produced two simultaneous but diametrically opposed effects. On the one hand, oppressive imperialism—foreseeing the possible consequences of this policy if it were to be carried out seriously—has put itself on guard and is redoubling its efforts of propaganda, obscurantism and repression. On the other hand, the oppressed populations of the colonies, awakened by the revolutionary echo, have instinctively turned their gaze towards our International, the only political party that promises to be concerned with them in a fraternal way and on which they place all their hopes for emancipation. From that point, we could have not only demolished the prestige of exploitative colonialism and shaken its position, but also transformed the purely sentimental and passive sympathy that the colonized peoples had for us into an active sympathy—that is, if the decisions of the International had been applied. Unfortunately, these decisions are, up to now, only used to embellish paper! Do they have a clear, precise and respected colonial policy and program? Do the militants of these sections know what the colonies are and their importance? To all these questions, we can answer negatively.

On the French colonies:

- a) A committee of Colonial Studies has been created
- b) A colonial column was opened in *L'Humanité*
- c) Declarations in favor of the colonial populations were made in the national congresses

¹⁰⁶ Harassed by the police, Hồ Chí Minh left in secret France in June 1923, with the help of the Communist International that provided him a fake Chinese passport. He arrived in July in Moscow, where he was elected in the bureau of the Peasant International (Krestintern).

d) Two propaganda campaigns were undertaken by elected members of the Party.

Some time after its creation and when it had, not without difficulty, obtained hospitality in the columns of *L'Humanité*, the Colonial Studies Commission started functioning quite well. It began to receive interesting documents and news from the colonies. Its campaign in the party newspaper against the abuses and crimes committed by the colonial gang soon interested colonial imperialism and its press. But this tribune was abruptly suppressed by *L'Humanité*. Thus, deprived of the means of work and activity, the Commission was immobilized. This has pleased the big bourgeois press, which regularly devotes entire pages to colonial propaganda, and which has always been afraid of being contradicted and exposed.

This especially produced very painful impressions among the natives. Although abstract, the declarations made in the national congresses in favor of the populations of the colonies contributed to consolidate the sympathy they had for the Party. However, it is not reasonable to repeat the same thing over and over while doing nothing. And the unfortunate oppressed—seeing us always promising but never acting—are beginning to wonder if we are really serious people or bluffers! The campaign of our comrades Vaillant-Couturier and André Berthon in Algeria and Tunisia—a campaign that was carried out at the same time that the bourgeois elected representatives strolled about like princes—was very much appreciated by the African population. (The result was encouraging.) If such visits were continued in all the colonies, the results would certainly be encouraging.

But, instead of intensifying propaganda, we left unfinished what was started and missed the good opportunities offered to us. Thus, we did very little during the bloody strike in Martinique, the famine in North Africa, and the revolt in Dahomey. In the latter case, we looked pitiful. The party newspaper did not publish the news of the revolt until several days after all the bourgeois press and ten days after *L'Œuvre*. While the colonial government declared a state of siege, concentrated its troops, mobilized its warships, arrested and imprisoned activists for 5 to 10 years; while the commercial newspapers pursued a campaign of systematic lying and suppression, we were content with two or three small articles without any follow-up. It is not without irony and sadness that, in the shadow of the civilizing jails, my unfortunate Dahomean brothers read the 8th point of the 21 conditions for rejoining the communist

International which states that “*Each party undertakes to carry out systematic propaganda among its own country’s troops against any oppression of colonial peoples; and to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds.*”

It is however useless to incriminate the past and to regret the time that has been lost. The most important thing is to use it well in the future. We therefore ask the Party:

- (1) To officially recognize the Martinique federation (Jean Jaurès group);
- (2) To resume the colonial column in *L’Humanité*;
- (3) To ask the Colonial Studies Commission to document the Colonial Section and report on its work every two or three months;
- (4) To encourage, where they exist, sections of colonized people to intensify their propaganda and recruitment among the native people;
- (5) To open a colonial column in all Party newspapers in order to introduce readers to colonial affairs;
- (6) To speak about the colonies in all party conventions, meetings or gatherings;
- (7) To send, whenever the party’s finances allow it, parliamentarians campaign in the colonies;
- (8) To organize unions or similar groups in the colonies.

Oppression Hits All Races

August 17, 1923

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 17, August 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 217.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, p. 52.

Vorovsky,¹⁰⁷ delegate of the workers' and peasants' Russia, was murdered in Switzerland by fascism. There was not one of the delegates of the very civilized and very Christian powers gathered at Lausanne who deigned to attend his funeral. Only the Turkish delegation, headed by Ismet Pasha, came to pay tribute to the mortal remains of the murdered man.

Ben Radia, a worker of Tunisian origin, was murdered on May Day by the police. The Parisian workers' organizations gave him a big funeral. Thousands of workers stopped work on that day to follow their native comrade to his last resting place.

All the martyrs of the working class, those in Lausanne like those in Paris, those in Le Havre like those in Martinique, are victims of the same murderer: international capitalism. And it is always in belief in the liberation of their oppressed brothers, without discrimination as to race or country, that the souls of these martyrs will find supreme consolation.

After experiencing these painful lessons, the oppressed people of all countries ought to know on which side their true brothers are, and on which side their enemy.

¹⁰⁷ Vorovsky, Vatslav Vatslavovich (1871-1923)—eminent figure in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, diplomat and literary critic. He was a member of the Soviet Delegation at the Lausanne Conference (1922-1923), where he was murdered on May 10, 1923 by the fascist White Russian Maurice Condari.

The Counter-Revolutionary Army

September 7, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, September 7, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 218-219.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 53-54.

We are aware that colonial rivalry was one of the main causes of the 1914-1918 imperialist war.

What all Frenchmen should realize is that colonial expeditions are largely responsible for aggravating the depopulation from which their country is now suffering. If one looks at the statistics of military losses in killed and wounded sustained in the colonies, one is frightened by the gap they have caused in an ever decreasing population such as that of France. From January to June, 1923, in Morocco alone, 840 soldiers were killed or wounded for the greater glory of Marshal Lyautey!¹⁰⁸

What the French working class must realize is that colonialism relies on the colonies to defeat all attempts at emancipation on the part of the working class. No longer having absolute confidence in the white soldiers, who are more or less contaminated by the idea of classes, French militarism uses African and Asian natives in their stead. Out of 159 regiments in the French Army, 10 are composed of colonial whites, *i.e.*, semi-natives, 30 of Africans and 39 of natives from other colonies. One half of the French army is thus recruited in the colonies.

Now, an Annamese soldier is in service for four years and an Algerian for three years. Thus, according to the reckoning of French militarism, two native soldiers are worth almost five French.

¹⁰⁸ Lyautey, Louis Hubert Gonzalve (1854-1934)—French Marshal. From 1894 to 1896, he participated in the French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina. Later he went to Madagascar to suppress the national movement in that country. From 1912 to 1925 he was High Commissioner and Resident General of France in Morocco where he carried out the policy of “Nationalization and Colonization,” which was a ruthless suppression of the national liberation movement of the Moroccan and Riffian people, and which forced their country into dependence on French capitalism.

Moreover, being ignorant of the language and politics of the country, thinking that all whites belong to the race of his exploiters, and finally spurred on by his white superiors, the native soldier will march forward submissively and blindly, where the French soldier, more conscious, might refuse to go. Therein lies the danger.

One wonders for what reason 31 of the native regiments will be stationed on French territory? For what purpose are they intended? Are the French going to be civilized by these natives? The intention of French capitalism is thus clear. It is up to the French workers to act. They should fraternize with the native soldiers. They should make them understand that the workers of the mother country and the soldiers from the colonies are equally oppressed and exploited by the same masters, that they are all brothers of the same class, and that when the hour of struggle strikes, they will have, one and the other, to struggle against their common masters, and not between brothers.

It Is Not Militarism, But...

September 28, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, September 28, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 223-224.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 55-56.

In brilliant fashion, M. Clemenceau¹⁰⁹ has proved to the world in general and to the Americans in particular that France is neither a militarist country nor an imperialist one; so there! However, M. Archimbaud has recently somewhat destroyed the charm of the “Tiger’s” speeches, in his report on the budget for the colonies, in which he wrote:

In 1914, the occupation army numbered 1,852 officers, 17,290 warrant-officers and European soldiers, and 42,099 natives, to which must be added, for Dahomey, Guinea and the Ivory Coast, 1,979 men of the brigades of native guards, who have at present been replaced by regular troops. The total strength amounted to 63,210 men.

Since the war, garrisons with a strength of 1,712 men have had to be established in the mandated territories of Togoland and the Cameroons.

Besides, special formations have had to be created, especially in French West Africa, for the recruitment, incorporation and instruction of native contingents who serve in France or abroad.

¹⁰⁹ Clemenceau, Georges Eugène Benjamin (1841-1929) a reactionary French politician. One of the founders of the Radical Party and Radical Socialist Party. An active propagandist for the war of revenge against Germany. From 1906 to 1909, when leading the French Government, he carried out a policy of suppression of strikes. From 1917 to 1920 he was French Premier, at the same time holding the office of Defense Minister. At this time, he actually set up a militarist dictatorship in his country. He was one of the most active proponents of the war of intervention against the Soviet Union. Clemenceau’s article in newspapers and speeches delivered in Parliament contributed to the overthrow of many cabinets. Hence the bourgeois press pseudonymd him “the Tiger,” and “destroyer of cabinets.”

These formations have absorbed 2,237 men, including 271 European officers and warrant-officers.

Lastly, the number of natives serving in France or abroad, and supplied by the possessions attached to the Ministry of Colonies, amounts to 45,000 men.

If we add that, for Indochina alone, military expenditure was, in 1921, more than 35,600,000 francs, while the budget for Public Education did not reach 350,000 piastres, and that for health services 65,000 piastres, all the beauty of the colonial regime of the accommodating and peaceful French Republic can be appreciated.

English “Colonization”

November 9, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, Novembre 9, 1923, p. 3.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 233-234.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 57-58.

English capitalism, while coveting the immense wealth of China, has contented itself so far with colonizing Hong Kong and inside China practicing the policy of the open door,¹¹⁰ a policy which has allowed it to exploit the country without arousing the people. To-day it is no longer satisfied with this policy. It wants to go further: it wants to colonize the whole of China.

Taking advantage of the Lingchen incident¹¹¹ and on the pretext of ensuring the security of his compatriots, the British Ambassador in Beijing has just carried out the first stage of this colonization. He has begun with the railways. Here are the proposals he has made to China:

- 1— All lines built with British capital, or with materials bought from England and which are not yet entirely paid for, will be put under British control;
- 2— The land situated along the lines in question will also be put under this control;

¹¹⁰ In 1899, Hume, American Secretary of State proclaimed the “Open Door” policy. In proposing this policy and carrying it out in China the American imperialists aimed at overthrowing the position of rivals who had founded bases in China before the United States. The Americans thus wanted to turn the whole of China into their sphere of influence. Other imperialist countries for their part also wanted to take advantage of this policy to safeguard their positions and enlarge their established influence in China. For example, the British Government, after approving the “Open Door” policy wished not to apply its principles in Hong Kong and Jiulong.

¹¹¹ In May 1923, a group of bandits ransacked a train at Lingchen station on the Tianjin-Poukoushi railway: an Englishman was killed, and more than 100 Chinese passengers and 26 foreigners kidnapped. The diplomatic corps in China availed themselves of this incident to make a series of demands upon the Beijing Government.

- 3— Besides the railways policy, England will have the right to intervene in China's home affairs;
- 4— In case of armed conflicts between Chinese political factions, the British will have the right to grant or refuse the use of these lines to whichever faction it chooses;
- 5— Priority of amortization of the loans advanced by the British in the use of the income derived from the railways.

Moreover, he demanded:

- a) the setting up, within the Ministry of Communications in Beijing, of an office of Railways Control, presided over by a foreign official (read: British official), having full powers over the working of all China's railways;
- b) that the management of the railways also be entrusted to foreign representatives;
- c) the organization of a railway militia under the command of foreign officers;
- d) that the posts of bookkeepers and railway managers be filled by foreigners.

The British have already taken in hand the salt tax and customs in China. Now they want to seize the railways. When one realizes that except for the lines in southern Manchuria, the Beijing-Hankou and Longhai lines, all others are built either with British capital or with materials bought on credit from British firms, it can be seen what this plan, if realized, will cost China.

All the Chinese, without distinction as to political trend, oppose this disguised colonization. The Beijing Students' Union has launched an appeal to the working class of the world, asking it to use its influence to check this attempt against the independence of the Chinese people.

Let us hope that faced with this threat from British capitalism, the sons and daughters of China will unite in victorious resistance.

Revolutionary Action

November 9, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, Novembre 9, 1923, p. 5.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 237-239.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The recent disasters have drawn worldwide attention to Japan. Much has been said about its industrial power and economic development, past and future; occasionally some mention has been made of its social conditions. It is known that Japanese capitalism has taken only twenty to twenty-five years to reach the state of progress that its Western counterparts have taken a century to achieve.

Parallel to its capitalist development, Japan has seen its workers' movement grow at a rapid pace. Alongside the proletarian movement, another revolutionary movement made its appearance: the Eta movement.

Within the Empire of the Rising Sun, there is a category of citizens known as Eta. Their appearance does not differ from that of other Japanese people. But the legend says that they are descendants of slaves exported abroad in ancient times. That's why today they are treated like their ancestors were back in time. They are forced to live in special communes, where no Japanese person sets foot. They are not allowed to mix with the Japanese population; they can only approach the Japanese as servants. They are only allowed to do hard and dirty jobs that no other Japanese would do, hence their name Eta, which means "dirty." No relationships nor marriages between Japanese and Eta are allowed. In short, all social rights are denied to them, and their situation is similar to that of the Shudras of India or the blacks of America. Currently they number around three million.

Under the pressure of the conscious proletariat, the Eta are waking up and organizing themselves. A league has just been formed, which bears the meaningful name of Suiheisha.¹¹² Members are enthusiastically joining and last year

¹¹² The Buraku Liberation League is one of the burakumin's rights groups in Japan. Buraku are ethnic Japanese and descended from outcast communities of the Japanese feudal era. The origin of the Buraku Liberation League is the National Levelers Association, or Zenkoku Suihe-

in its first National Congress the Suiheisha gathered 2500 delegates from all over the country. The rallying cry was “Absolute equality” and the official motto: “The liberation of the Eta will be the work of the Eta ourselves.” Liberal and governmental organizations, worried about this new force, tried to coopt it. They did not succeed.

When all the doors were closed to them, the Eta workers found an equal and brotherly support among the Japanese workers’ groups. That is why, today, declining all interested help from the government liberals, they are joining forces with the working class of Japan. Begun as a caste struggle, the movement is turning into a class struggle.

Before the opening of this year’s Congress, the Eta addressed an appeal to “all nationalities, all workers and victims of international capitalism and imperialism.” After recounting the hardships experienced by their people and the ineffectiveness of the reforms proposed by the Government, the appeal affirms the “will of the organized Eta to walk hand-in-hand with the working class towards the Social Revolution and towards the emancipation of all the exploited peoples.”

In their action program, we see several characteristic points that denote the energy and resolution of the League. Among other things, the program includes:

- a) The refusal to accept any aid having a charitable character, including government aid;
- b) The preparation of their members for direct action;
- c) The formation of farmers’ unions;
- d) The creation of Suihei sections for women and young Eta;
- e) The creation of libraries and the publication of educational, legal, and propaganda literature;
- f) The demand for absolute political and economic freedom.

Below we will discuss another revolutionary force in Japan, the peasant movement.

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isha, founded in 1922. The word “suihei,” meaning horizontal or level, is employed as a call to realize a society that is uniformly even and without discrimination. As an association for such aims, the name Suiheisha (“sha” means association) was used.

The Agricultural Workers

November 9, 1923

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, Novembre 9, 1923, p. 5.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 239-241.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Before talking about the Japanese farm workers, it is perhaps interesting, for the sake of comparison, to briefly describe the organization of their Western counterparts. In Europe there are 1,517,000 organized agricultural workers, 919,000 belonging to the Amsterdam International and 598,000 to the Red international Labor Unions. Russia counts 270,000 organized workers, grouped in 8,000 unions and 87 federations.

The Japanese peasants are divided into four categories:

- (1) The *Jisakuno* or landowners, numbering 172,241 families;
- (2) The second-class *Jisakuno*, or small landowners, 1,507,341 families;
- (3) The *Chanjisakuno*, part landowners, part workers, 2,244,126 families;
- (4) The *Kosakunin*, or workers, 1,557,847 families.

From 1916 to 1922, the number of *Jisakuno* increased by 7,035 families and the *Kosakunin* by 32,858, at the expense of the two intermediate classes. This proves, once again, that Marx's theory on the assimilation and proletarianization of the middle class is true everywhere.

The organization of the Japanese agricultural workers is only three years old, but it is rapidly expanding and consolidating. There used to be two Unions: the Eastern Union and the Western Union. The former was based in Tokyo, the latter in Osaka and Kobe.

They had a total of 85 sub-unions, 196 branches and 120,000 members. In 1922, the Eastern Union had 15,000 members and the Western Union 91,000. This year they count 18,000 and 102,000 members respectively, an increase of 14,000 members in one year. With the exception of Germany and Russia, the general trend among the organizations in the European countries

goes in the opposite direction, with their membership decreasing instead of increasing.

As we have seen above, the Western Union is numerically stronger than the Eastern one, but because of its energy and advanced political orientation, the latter has a greater influence than the former; it is almost always the latter that starts and leads the struggle against the employers. This “psycho-geographical” phenomenon can also be seen among the industrial workers: the larger yet more moderate West is led by the smaller but more advanced East.

The primary demand of the workers has been the socialization of all cultivable land, and the tactic most often used is refusing to work during the harvest. Several strikes were reported in 1920, and in 1922 there were 1398 of them.

In January, it was decided to merge the two unions. The new Union is called *Nihon nōminkumiai*,¹¹³ giving the agricultural proletariat even greater strength, and the owners even greater trouble.

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¹¹³ The General Federation of Japanese Peasant Unions, or *Nihon nōminkumiai sōdōmei*, was a farmers’ organization in Japan. The organization was formed on March 7, 1927. It was an initiative of the Social Democratic Party to gain ground among the peasantry. The organization functioned as the rural counterpart of the *Sodomei* trade union center.

The Situation in China

December 4, 1923

Source: *L'Humanité*, December 4, 1923.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 242-243.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS' PROGRAM

While China's current situation is not very enviable, there are many reasons for this. First, it is weakened by the antagonism between the North and the South. Secondly, it is undermined by the inertia of a parliamentary system that mimics that of the West, and by the insane personal ambition of a militarism that is more or less at the mercy of foreigners. Finally, it is constantly harassed by the capitalist powers, which deliberately fuel internal unrest and seek to impede any reorganization.

Fortunately, the echo of the Russian Revolution seems to have awakened the new generation of Chinese. The newborn generation is full of enthusiasm and vitality. This strength is revealed especially in the activity of the Association of Revolutionary Students. The Association has about 100,000 members throughout China. It publishes several newspapers, one or two in each province. It was the association that encouraged the Chinese delegation to refuse to sign the Treaty of Versailles. It helped to organize the boycott of Japan. In 1919, its Beijing members burned down the luxurious palaces of the two ministers who had sold out to Japanese capitalism and forced them to resign after giving them a hearty beating. In its 4th National Congress, the Association passed a political program, the main points of which are as follows:

Domestic policy: The parliament and the government must faithfully carry out the Will of the People.

Absolute freedom of association, of assembly, of speech, of press.

Right to strike for the workers.

Independence for the judicial power.

International relations: People's right to self-determination;

Fight against all forms of imperialism.

Women's question: equality of political and economic education for both sexes;

Application of the “One School” system, i.e. same schools for girls and boys;

Equal pay for equal work;

In case of illness or maternity, the right to rest and pension.

THE ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS ALL WORKERS' DEMANDS

The Association proposes to support all the claims and all the revolutionary movements of the peasants, the workers, and the small tradesmen.

It invites all the working people and all the students to make a national demonstration in honor of the railroad workers assassinated by General Ou Baifou during the Beijing-Hankou railroad strike. It is the duty of the association to help the workers who have been victims of this struggle and to denounce and condemn in front of the whole country the criminal attitude of the government and its military clique during the strike.

Let us add that the Association of Revolutionary Students has requested that China immediately enter into close relations with Russia.

NGUYEN AÏ QUAC

Interview With Ossip Mendelstam¹¹⁴

December 1923

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 54-57.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

“What was the impact of Gandhi’s movement in Indochina? Did it provoke some waves, some echoes?” I asked Nguyễn Ái Quốc.

“No,” replied my interlocutor. “The Annamite people, the peasants, live in the deepest darkness. There are no newspapers, we have no idea of what is happening in the world. Darkness, nothing but darkness.”

Nguyễn Ái Quốc is the only Annamite, a representative of an ancient Malayan race, present in Moscow. He looks almost like a young boy, lean and lithe, in his woolen coat. He speaks French, the language of his oppressors. But the French words ring out mutely, without relief, like the muffled bell of his native tongue. Quốc pronounces the word “civilization” only with reluctance. He has traveled through most of the colonial world; he has been to North Africa, to Central Africa; he has observed intensely... In his speech, the word “brothers” is often used. His brothers are the Blacks, the Hindus, the Syrians, the Chinese. He wrote a letter to René Maran,¹¹⁵ a French-speaking Black writer, author of the very exotic *Batouala*, asking him bluntly: “Do you agree to contribute to the liberation of your brothers in the colonies?” René Maran, crowned by the French Academy, answered evasively and with reserve.

I come from a privileged Annamite family. At home, these families do not work. Young people study Confucianism. As you know, Confucianism is not a religion, but rather a practice based on moral experience and conventions. At its core is the notion of social peace. When I was a young boy, at the age of thirteen, I heard the French words “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” for the first time. I wanted to learn about French civilization, to find out what was behind these words. But, in the native schools, the French

¹¹⁴ Ossip Mendelstam (1892-1938) was a Russian poet, and later, a counter-revolutionary.

¹¹⁵ See footnote 81, p. 90.

train us to be parrots. They hide books and newspapers from us, they forbid not only contemporary writers, but also Rousseau, Montesquieu... What could I do? I decided to leave. The Annamite is a serf. We are not only forbidden to travel, but even to make the slightest movement within the country. The railroads were built for “strategic” purposes: in the opinion of the French, we were not mature enough to use them. Yet I reached the coast and left. I was nineteen years old. When I arrived in France, there were elections. The bourgeois politicians were covering each other with mud.

A convulsion denoting almost physical repulsion runs across Nguyễn Ái Quốc’s face. Dull and matte, his eyes begin to shine. In his large pupils, there is a dark reflection. He squints and gazes around, like a blind man who has regained his sight.

When the French arrived, all the decent families fled. The scoundrels, seeking their good graces, took over the abandoned houses and properties. Now they have made their fortune. They form the new bourgeoisie who raise their children in the French way. The young people who study with the Catholic missionaries belong to the dregs of society. They are given money for it. It doesn’t matter if they are complete morons, since they can serve later in the police or the *gendarmérie*. One fifth of all our land belongs to the Catholic missionaries. Only the concessionaires can compete with them. What is a French colonizer? Oh, how many of them are untalented and narrow-minded! Their first concern is to settle their families. Then, it is a question of monopolizing, of plundering as much as possible and as quickly as possible, in order to build “their little house” in France. The French are poisoning my people. They have introduced compulsory alcohol consumption. Traditionally, in our country, we take some good rice and make a good alcohol that we serve when friends come to visit us or as offerings to worship the ancestors. The French took cheap, bad rice and distilled alcohol by the barrel. No one wanted to buy it anymore. It was too much. So the governors set mandatory consumption rates and thus forced people to buy alcohol that nobody wanted.

It became clear to me how these charming people, appreciating tact and moderation, hating excess, were being treated. All the features of Nguyễn Ái Quốc express an innate tact and delicacy. European civilization operates with bayonets and alcohol, hidden under the cassock of the Catholic missionary. Nguyễn Ái Quốc is a man of culture. Not European culture, of course. But it could well be the culture of the future.

Currently, in Paris, there is a group of comrades from the French colonies—five or six people from Cochinchina, Sudan, Madagascar, Haiti—who are editing *Le Paria*, a publication dedicated to the struggle against French colonialism. It is a very small magazine! Each contributor pays from his pocket, instead of receiving money for his work. A call made by the *Paria* was even engraved on a bamboo stick, in order to reach all the villages without being noticed. Despite this precaution, it cost the Annamites dearly. There were executions, hundreds of heads were chopped off.

The Annamite people have neither priests nor religion, in the European sense of the term. Ancestor worship is a purely social phenomenon. There are no officiants. Funeral rites are performed by the oldest member of the family or by the village elder.

Of course, it is interesting to know how the French authorities taught our peasants the words “Bolshevik” and “Lenin.” They began persecuting the Annamites because there had never been any Bolsheviks among them before. But in this way they succeeded only in... making propaganda for it.

The Annamites are a simple and polite people. In the nobility of manners, in the dull, monochrome voice of Nguyễn Ái Quốc, resounds the future, the oceanic tranquility of universal brotherhood. On his table, a manuscript; a calm, concrete account. The correspondent’s telegraphic style. He gives free rein to his imagination: the Congress of the International in 1947. He sees and hears the agenda, he attends, writing down the minutes.

We too had a rebellion. The young Annamese emperor Duy Tân started it. Against the sending of our peasants to the French butchery, Duy Tân fled. He is currently living abroad. Talk about him as well.

Leaflet-Poem for *Việt Nam Hôn*¹¹⁶

1923

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 44-45.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In our present world,
Phones and airplanes,
Strange facts and interesting news
Are everyday things.
But to be aware of them,
One has to read the press:
Though living among his family,
One widens his view considerably.
Asia, Europe, Australia...
The American continent;
A few pages—everything is there;
Even children and women
Are able to understand.
Vietnamese brothers and sisters
Living in foreign countries,
The Chinese, unable to read,
The French, almost without any knowledge:
Here you are, indifferent
To what is good and bad,
To what consoles and causes sorrow!
You have eyes, you have ears,
Yet are blind and deaf.
Hence your sad fate!

¹¹⁶ In 1923, Hồ Chí Minh launched a bimonthly newspaper in Paris called *Việt Nam Hôn* (*The Soul of Việt Nam*). The difference between *Việt Nam Hôn* and *Le Paria* was that it was published in *quốc ngữ* (Vietnamese). Only around a hundred copies were printed for each issue, and the newspaper was mostly circulated among the diaspora. Banned, it was renamed *Phục Quốc* (*National Restoration*) in 1926 and disappeared soon after.

And what fate for our Homeland?
 How is it there nowadays?
 Do you know, dear brothers and sisters,
 That moved by these reasons,
 I would like to publish
 A newspaper in our language
 For Vietnamese readers.
 I do not dare to brag about it;
 As I invest so much time and effort
 In trying to bring to you,
 As an infinitely simple hope,
 Some joy and some pride!
 “*The soul of Viêt Nam*,”
 Is the name of our bi-monthly publication;
 Circulation: one hundred copies for each issue.
 So brothers, sisters and friends:
 Let those who wish to read
 Please complete these lines,
 Cut them out and send them to me.
 These brief verses, fraternal verses,
 Are deeply sincere.
 Let us wish a very long life
 To the friendly bi-monthly magazine/review: “*The Soul of Viêt Nam!*”

Please complete the following form, cut it out and send it to Nguyễn Ái Quốc, N°3, Marché des Patriarches, Paris V^c:

Name/surname

Address

Amount paid: 12 francs for a six-month subscription to *The Soul of Viêt Nam*.

The Workers' Movement in Turkey

January 1, 1924

Source: *L'Humanité*, January 1, 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 244-246.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 59-61.

With a courage and spirit of sacrifice worthy of admiration, the Turkish people have torn up the odious Sevres treaty¹¹⁷ and recovered their independence. They have defeated the plotting of imperialism and overthrown the throne of the Sultans. They have turned their exhausted, torn, and trampled nation into a united and strong republic. They have had their revolution. But like all bourgeois revolutions, the Turkish revolution is profitable only to one class: the moneyed class.

The Turkish proletariat, which greatly contributed to the struggle for national independence, is now obliged to embark on another struggle: the class struggle.

In this struggle, the Turkish working class is facing many obstacles. In Turkey, there are no trade unions such as those existing in the West. There are only corporations or friendly societies grouping workers of the same trade living in the same town. Workers of different trades living in the same town or workers

¹¹⁷ The Sevres Peace Treaty, one of the treaties which concluded the First World War. It was signed on August 10, 1920 at Sevres, near Paris. The signatories to this treaty were on the one side Britain, France, Italy, Japan and their allies (Armenia, Belgium, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Hedjaz, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia) and on the other the Sultan's Turkey. The Sevres Peace Treaty contained various clauses aimed at sharing out Turkey's Arab possessions, dividing Turkey itself and putting it under a semi-colonial regime. The predatory conditions of this treaty raised a wave of spontaneous and just indignation among the Turkish people. They rose up to struggle in order to safeguard their national independence. The Sevres Treaty was not ratified by the Turkish Parliament and was entirely abrogated after the Turkish people had defeated the British and Greek interventionists. The imperialist countries were obliged to take part in the Lausanne Conference (from November 22 to July 1923), In this conference, Turkey, with the Soviet Union's support, succeeded in cancelling the enslaving Sevres Treaty and conceded a new peace treaty.

of the same trade living in different towns have no connection between them. This prevents any effective common action.

Notwithstanding this state of affairs, the year that has just ended was disturbed many times by a ferment of the workers. Several strikes were launched in Constantinople, at the Golden Horn, at Aidine, etc. Printers, railwaymen, coastal vessel workers and workmen in petroleum storehouses and breweries waged struggles. Ten thousand workers participated in the movement. Following these experiences, the Turkish workers have realized that organization and discipline are necessary in order to triumph.

THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONGRESS FOUNDS THE *BIRLIK*

Recently, a Workers' Congress was convened in Constantinople. Two hundred and fifty delegates were present. They represented 19,000 Constantinople workers, 15,000 Zongouldak coal miners and 10,000 workers from the lead mines at Balyakaraidin.

It was decided to unite the 34 existing *dernek* into a *birlik*, or federation. This bold decision frightened the Government, which refused to recognize the *birlik*. It is to be noted that the Government's attitude toward workers has changed a great deal since the end of the war. The Government was always in favor of the workers when it was a question of driving out foreigners, but when it is a matter of organizing workers, it shows itself to be as reactionary as all other capitalist governments. Its opposition therefore surprises nobody. Besides, everybody knows that, since the Lausanne event, Turkish capitalism is flirting with foreign capital, which, after having caused the deaths of thousands of poor Greeks and Turks without succeeding in colonizing Turkey, is now penetrating peacefully into the Land of the Crescent. The refusal of the Government to recognize the *birlik* is tantamount to a gracious smile directed to the foreign capital in the country, three-fifths of which is French.

But the Turkish proletariat has made its first step. It will go on.

Annamese Peasant Conditions

January 4, 1924

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, January 4, 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 247-249.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 62-65.

The Annamese in general are crushed by the blessings of French protection. The Annamese peasants especially are still more odiously crushed by this protection: as Annamese they are oppressed; as peasants they are robbed, plundered, expropriated, and ruined. It is they who do all the hard labor, all the *corvées*. It is they who produce for the whole horde of parasites, loungers, civilizers and others. And it is they who live in poverty while their executioners live in plenty; and die of starvation when their crops fail. This is due to the fact that they are robbed on all sides and in all ways by the Administration, by modern feudalism, and by the Church. In former times, under the Annamese regime, lands were classified into several categories according to their capacity for production. Taxes were based on this classification. Under the present colonial regime, all this has changed. When money is wanted, the French Administration simply has the categories modified. With a stroke of their magic pen, they have transformed poor land into fertile land, and the Annamese peasant is obliged to pay more in taxes on his fields than they can yield him.

That is not all. Areas are artificially increased by reducing the unit of measure. As a result, taxes are automatically increased by a third in some localities, by two-thirds in others. Yet this is not sufficient to appease the voracity of the protector State, which increases the taxes year by year. Thus, from 1890 to 1896, taxes doubled. They were further increased by a half from 1896 to 1898, and so on. The Annamese continued to let themselves be fleeced, and our four protectors encouraged by the success of these operations, continued their spoliation.

Often despotism was mixed with plunder. In 1895 for example, the Administrator of a province in Tonkin stripped a village of several hectares to the advantage of another village, the latter a Catholic one. The plundered peasants

lodged a complaint. They were jailed. Don't think that administrative cynicism stopped there. The unfortunates who had been robbed were obliged to pay taxes until 1910 on lands which had been taken from them in 1895!

On the heels of the thieving Administration came the thieving settlers. Europeans who, for all idea of agriculture and farming skill possessed only a big belly and a white skin, were given concessions whose size often surpassed 20,000 hectares.

Most of these concessions were founded on legalized theft. During the course of the conquest, the Annamese peasants, like the Alsatians in 1870, had abandoned their lands to seek refuge in the still free part of the country. When they came back, their lands had been given away. Entire villages were thus plundered, and the natives reduced to tenants of the lords of a modern feudalism, who sometimes appropriated as much as 90 percent of the crops.

On the pretext of encouraging colonization, exemption from land taxes was made in favor of a great number of these big landholders.

After securing the land at no cost whatsoever, the landholders obtained manpower for nothing or next to nothing. The Administration supplied them with numbers of convicts who worked for nothing, or used its machinery to recruit workers for them who were paid starvation wages. If the Annamese did not come in sufficient numbers or if they showed discontent, violence was then resorted to: landholders seized the mayors and notables of villages, cudgelled and tortured them until these unfortunates had signed a contract, pledging themselves to supply the required number of workers.

Besides this temporal power, there are spiritual "saviors" who, while preaching the virtue of poverty to the Annamese, are no less zealous in seeking to enrich themselves through the sweat and blood of the natives. In Cochinchina alone, the "Sainte Mission Apostolique" on its own possesses one fifth of the rice fields in the region. Though not taught in the Bible, the method of obtaining these lands was very simple: usury and corruption. The Mission took advantage of the years when crops failed to lend money to peasants, obliging them to pawn their lands as a guarantee. The rate of interest being usurious, the Annamese could not pay off their debts at the due time; as a result, all pledged lands fell into the possession of the Mission. The more or less generous governors to whom the mother country entrusted the destiny of Indochina were generally dolts or blackguards. It was enough for the Mission to have in its hands certain secret, personal and compromising papers to be able to frighten

them and obtain from them whatever it wanted. In this way, one Governor General conceded to the Mission 7,000 hectares of river land belonging to natives who were thus at one stroke reduced to beggary.

From this brief survey, one can see that behind a mask of democracy, French imperialism has transplanted in Annam the whole cursed medieval regime, including the salt tax; and that the Annamese peasant is crucified on the bayonet of capitalist civilization and on the Cross of prostituted Christianity.

Chinese Peasant Conditions

January 4, 1924

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, January 4, 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 250-252.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 66-69.

China is an essentially agricultural country, 85 percent of its population being peasants. They can be divided into four categories: big landlords, middle landlords, small landlords, and poor peasants and agricultural workers.

In that country there are from 250 to 300 big landlords possessing each more than 10,000 *mu*¹¹⁸ of land. Most of them are big mandarins or nobles. About 30,000 landlords each possess more than 1,000 *mu*, and 300,000 more than 100 *mu*.

The social conditions of small landlords possessing from 10 to 100 *mu* are rather complex and fluid. With the same quantity of land, a peasant can be either an exploiter, exploited, or a neuter

If his family is large enough to till the land on its own, the peasant is “neuter.”

If his family is not large enough the peasant is obliged to lease the portion of land he cannot afford to work: thus he becomes an exploiter.

If his family is too large, in order to meet his needs, the peasant is obliged to rent, besides the land he owns, other landlords' land; thus he is proletarianized and becomes exploited.

According to information given by the Ministry of Agriculture, in 1918, 43,935,478 families were in this unstable situation.

There are two systems of share-cropping: fixed and conditional. With the first system the small landlord or the poor peasant rents lands, paying a sum of money for a fixed period. If it is a bumper crop the tenant-farmer gains no big profit, because the landlord has worked things out well and never leases his land at a loss. On the other hand, if it is a bad crop, the tenant farmer is completely ruined, whereas the landlord loses nothing.

¹¹⁸ A Chinese *mu* equals one-fifteenth of a hectare.

With conditional share-cropping the landlord takes from 35 to 50 percent of each harvest.

The Chinese agrarian system being one of parceling, almost all peasants, however poor they may have been, in former times owned a small patch of land which allowed them “*to procure incense sticks for the ancestral altar.*” However, at present many of them have absolutely nothing, not even “*a piece of ground in which to drive a nail.*” Their hands are their only wealth. To earn their bowl of rice, they hire themselves out as servants or as seasonal workers. Seasonal workers have neither fixed wages, nor regular work. After the harvest is completed, they go into the town or go fishing. Adult servants earn between 25 and 40 dollars a year, besides being clothed and fed. Children employed as cowherds earn from three to five dollars a year.

The invasion of foreign capitalists upsets the balance of prices between manufactured goods and products of the soil. The peasant must always sell his rice or potatoes at a cheap price to pay for his implements which are now much, more expensive than before. With the coming of capitalism, the landlord’s traditional and patriarchal spirit disappears and is replaced by a fierce craving for gain. Spurred by the example of his colleagues in the towns, the landlord tends to grab more and more land. Many land exploitation companies are founded, covering immense domains and driving, out a multitude of small peasants. Companies such as the Fu Li Land Reclamation Co. Ltd., own more than 300,000 *mu* of land.

Floods, typhoons, famine and civil wars are just so many causes of poverty for the peasant.

The corrupted bureaucracy of officialdom is also partly responsible. The government tried to improve agriculture by founding experimental stations. As soon as they were created, these establishments became pickings for the mandarins, instead of being institutions serving the people.

Militarism is another scourge. All the Napoleons, big and small, enrich themselves and enrich their partners and hangers-on with the sweat of the peasants who yearly pay in taxes about 225,000,000 dollars. Taxes weigh more heavily on the small peasants than on the rich ones because the latter are in general officials or friends of officials.

Lastly, the primitive method of working and the backward education contribute further to aggravating the conditions of the toiling masses. In 1918, more than 15,500,000 peasants and workers deserted the countryside, by their

presence swelling the ranks of those exploited in the towns, and the army of unemployed.

To remedy all this, our Chinese comrades must vigorously wage an intensive campaign for the education of the masses, so that they may become fully aware of their strength and their rights, and thus be able to apply the slogan, "Land to the Tiller."

Workers' Movement in the Far East

January 25, 1924

Source: *La Vie Ouvrière*, January 25, 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 253-255.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 72-74.

Osaka is one of the big Japanese industrial centers remaining undamaged in the last earthquake. The misfortune of other Japanese turned out to be the good fortune of the manufacturers of this town who are at present enjoying an unprecedented prosperity. Despite the rapid increase in the cost of living, which weighs heavily on the workers' meager budget, wages have remained the same as before the catastrophe. Placed in this impossible situation and in face of the employers' refusal to bring about the required improvements, the workers in the cotton mills have been on strike since the end of November.

The strike demands are:

A 20 percent increase in wages;

A reduction in the price of food supplied by the mill;

Improvement of the dining-halls and bath-rooms;

Payment of 50 percent of wages to workers absent through sickness;

Reinstatement of workers recently dismissed.

Recently, the workers of the Oriental Hemp and Nagosi companies obtained an increase in wages through a strike. Those of the Senchu Co. obtained the same advantage as soon as the decision to strike was communicated to the managing staff. Other firms resisted, alleging that, in spite of the accumulation of orders, they had not been making big profits because of the increased price of raw materials; and that, on the other hand, having insufficient raw cotton, they are in no way worried by the strike.

In fact, they are seized with panic. They have had the town occupied by the local police, reinforced by others from neighboring towns. They have tried to weaken the movement by having the Secretary General of the Labor Federation and a great number of militants and demonstrators arrested. The result of the bosses' attempts is nil because the strike remains as energetically led as

it was on the first day, and the workers are resolved to go on struggling till the end.

Electricians and mechanics have gone on strike in solidarity. The workers in State factories have promised to use every means to support their comrades in struggle. Thus supported, the strikers are full of enthusiasm and have no doubt of victory.

In the struggle between capital and labor in the Far East, odd things occur which are impossible to understand in Western countries, but which are done most seriously out there. For instance, to hinder its workers from joining their comrades on strike, the Kishiwada Company simply had the exits bolted. The Knawada electrical engineering works, unable to come to an agreement with its personnel on the question of wages, decided on a lock-out. But before dismissing the workers, it paid them four whole days' wages and two days' pay as compensation!

ANTI-MILITARIST STRIKE

With a view to breaking the organization that the workers have just set up, the management of the Shuigaoshun mines (China) sent for General Zhao's soldiers. Immediately on arrival, the latter began to occupy the workers' club. To protest against this action of the soldiery, three thousand miners spontaneously went on strike. They surrounded the soldiers and tried to disarm them. The soldiers shot at them, wounding many strikers. The thing went further than had been desired by the management, who then tried to preach law and order. But the miners answered that they would resume their work only when compensation had been granted to the victims, and their demands—made up of nine clauses—had been accepted.

Lenin and the Colonial Peoples

January 27, 1924

Source: *Pravda*, January 27, 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 256-257.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 70-71.

“Lenin is dead!” This news struck the people like a bolt from the blue. It spread to every corner of the fertile plains of Africa and the green fields of Asia. It is true that the black or yellow people do not yet know clearly who Lenin is or where Russia is. The imperialists have deliberately kept them in ignorance. Ignorance is one of the chief mainstays of capitalism. But all of them, from the Vietnamese peasants to the hunters in the Dahomey forests, have secretly learned that in a faraway corner of the earth there is a nation that has succeeded in overthrowing its exploiters and is managing its own country with no need for masters and Governors General. They have also heard that that country is Russia, that there are courageous people there, and that the most courageous of them all was Lenin. This alone was enough to fill them with deep admiration and warm feelings for that country and its leader.

But this was not all. They also learned that that great leader, after having liberated his own people, wanted to liberate other peoples too. He called upon the white peoples to help the yellow and black peoples to free themselves from the foreign aggressors’ yoke, from all foreign aggressors, Governors General Residents, etc. And to reach that goal, he mapped out a definite program.

At first they did not believe that anywhere on earth could there exist such a man and such a program. But later they heard, although vaguely, of the Communist Parties, of the organization called the Communist International, which is fighting for the exploited peoples, for all the exploited peoples including themselves. And they learned that Lenin was the leader of that organization.

And this alone was enough to make these peoples—though their cultural standard is low, they are grateful folk and of goodwill—whole-heartedly respect Lenin. They look upon Lenin as their liberator. “Lenin is dead, so what

will happen to us? Will there be other courageous and generous people like Lenin who will not spare their time and efforts in concerning themselves with our liberation?" This is what the oppressed colonial peoples are wondering.

As for us, we are deeply moved by this irretrievable loss and share the common mourning of all the peoples with our brothers and sisters. But we believe that the Communist International and its branches, which include branches in colonial countries, will succeed in implementing the lessons and teachings the leader has left behind for us. To do what he advised us, is that not the best way to show our love for him?

In his life-time he was our father, teacher, comrade and adviser. Nowadays, he is the bright star showing us the way to the socialist revolution.

Eternal Lenin will live forever in our work.

Indochina and the Pacific

March 19, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 18, p. 193.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 263-268.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 75-79.

The seat of the next world conflagration—France wants to improve its colonies—How the French colonies are vegetating—The intensified exploitation of the Annamese.

At first sight, it seems that the question of Indochina and the Pacific is of no concern to European workers. But it must be remembered that:

During the revolution, the Allies, not having succeeded in their attack on Russia from the West, tried to attack it from the East. And the Pacific powers, the United States and Japan, landed their troops in Vladivostock, while France sent Indochinese regiments to Siberia to support the Whites.

At present, international capitalism draws all its vital force from the colonial countries. It finds there raw materials for its factories, investments for its capital, markets for its products, cheap replenishments for its labor army, and above all native soldiers for its counter-revolutionary army. One day, revolutionary Russia will have to cope with this capitalism. It is thus necessary for the Russian comrades to realize the full strength and all the immediate and long-term maneuvers of their adversary.

Having become the center of attraction for imperialist ambitions, the Pacific area and the neighboring colonies are likely in the future to become the seat of a new world conflagration, whose proletariat will have to bear the burden.

These statements of fact prove that the Pacific problem will concern all proletarians in general.

Therefore, to reconstruct France ruined by an imperialist war, the Minister of French Colonies has worked out a plan for developing the colonies. This plan aims to exploit the resources of colonized countries for the benefit of the colonizing country. This plan states that Indochina must help the other colo-

nies in the Pacific to intensify their production so that in their turn, they too can be useful to the mother country. If the plan were carried out, it would necessarily lead to the depopulation and impoverishment of Indochina.

Lately, however, the Government Council of Indochina, despite the resistance of Annamese opinion, unanimously voted for the carrying out of the plan. To understand the importance of this unanimity, it is useful to know that this Council is composed of the Governor General of Indochina, the General Commander-in-Chief of the troops in Indochina and about thirty high ranking French civil servants, as well as five native mandarins, tools of the Governor. And all these gentlemen pretend to act for Indochina and in the interests of the Annamese people. Imagine Eskimos or Zulus deciding the fate of a European people.

According to an official avowal, the colonies in the Pacific are afflicted with debility, and are living—if we can call it living—at a slower and slower rate. The truth is that populous islands are being entirely depopulated, in a short time, by alcohol and forced labor. Fifty years ago, the Marquesas had more than 20,000 souls, but now have only 1,500 weak and debilitated inhabitants. Tahiti had its population reduced by 25 percent in ten years. From these declining populations, French imperialism has further taken more than 1,500 men to serve as cannon-fodder during the war. This rapid extinction of a race seems unbelievable. However, it is a fact to be observed in many colonies. (In the regions of the Congo, populations of 40,000 inhabitants fell to 30,000 in the space of twenty years. Saint Pierre-et-Miquelon Island had 6,500 inhabitants in 1902; in 1922 this colony had only 3,900, etc.).

Most islands in the French Pacific have been yielded to concessionary companies which rob the natives of their land and make them work as slaves. Here is an example showing how the native workers are treated. Two hundred mother-of-pearl divers were sent by force by the French Company of Oceania to plantations 800 miles from their native districts. (It is as if tailors were sent to work in mines). They were penned up in a small schooner fitted up for ten passengers and lacking any life-saving equipment, and embarked without being allowed to see their wives and children. For two years, these unfortunate toilers were kept prisoner in the company's jail. Many were harshly treated. Others died.

Add to this inhuman exploitation, the immorality of the rascals to whom French imperialism entrusts the administration of these islands, and you will

see in all its beauty the regime of exploitation and oppression which is leading the colonized countries in the Pacific to death and extinction.

Imperialism has now reached a degree of almost scientific perfection. It uses white proletarians to conquer the proletarians of the colonies. Then it hurls the proletarians of one colony against those of another. Finally it relies on the proletarians of the colonies to rule white proletarians. Senegalese had the sad distinction of having helped French militarism to massacre their brothers of the Congo, the Sudan, Dahomey and Madagascar. Algerians fought in Indochina. Annamese were garrisoned in Africa. And so on. During the great slaughter, more than one million colonial peasants and workers were brought to Europe to massacre white peasants and workers. Only recently, French soldiers in the Ruhr were surrounded by native soldiers, and native light infantry were sent against German strikers. Almost half of the French army is composed of natives, to the number of about 300,000.

Beyond this military usefulness, capitalism uses these colonies for the most skillful economic exploitation. It is often noticed that a decrease in wages in some regions in France and in some trades, is always preceded by an increase in the proportion of colonial labor. The natives are employed as strike-breakers. Capitalism now uses one colony as a tool for exploiting another; this is the case of Indochina and the Pacific area. Indochina, despite the noisy untruths of the officials, is exhausted. During 1914- 1918, almost 100,000 Annamese (official number: 97,903 men) were dragged from their homes to be sent to Europe. Although deprived of so many hands for production, Indochina was obliged to send, for the defense of its oppressors, more than 500,000 tons of edible grains. Hundreds of millions of francs were raked off in “victory loans.” Each year, the Annamese sweat blood to yield up about 450,000 francs, a sum which is almost entirely used to fatten spongers. Moreover, Indochina is responsible for big military expenses, elegantly called a “filial contribution” by the Minister of Colonies.

It is from this oppressed, weakened and emaciated country that millions of piasters and several thousand men (40,000 to begin with) are further going to be wrung to satisfy the insatiable appetites of the *concessionnaires* and the personal ambitions of a gang of unscrupulous politicians.

It is not enough to demoralize the whole Annamese race with alcohol and opium. It is not enough to take 40,000 “volunteers” yearly for the glory of militarism. It is not enough to have turned a people of 20 million souls into one

big sponge to be squeezed by money-grubbers. We are, on top of all this, to be endowed with slavery.

It is not only the fate of the proletariat in Indochina and the Pacific area, but also that of the international proletariat, which is threatened by these imperialist actions. Japan commands the telegraphic stations on Yap Island. The United States is spending millions of dollars on improving the turret-guns of its warships in the Pacific. England will turn Singapore into a naval base. France finds it necessary to build a Pacific Empire.

Since the Washington Conference,¹¹⁹ colonial rivalries have become sharper and sharper, imperialist follies greater and greater, and political conflicts more and more unavoidable. Wars have been launched over India, Africa and Morocco. Other wars may break out over the Pacific area if the proletariat is not watchful.

¹¹⁹ Washington Conference. On the initiative of the United States, this conference was held from November 12, 1921 to February 6, 1922 and was attended by the United States, the United Kingdom (Great Britain, the dominions and India), Japan, France, Italy, China, Belgium, Portugal, and Holland. The Washington Conference completed the partition of colonial possessions and spheres of influence which had been carried out immediately after their First World war. It was held with a view to opposing the interests of the Soviet Union and China, and destroying the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. The main documents signed at the Washington Conference were: the Four-Power Treaty (United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France) concerning the protection of territorial rights in the Pacific Ocean; the Nine-Power Treaty on the principle of "Open Door" in China; the Five Power Treaty (United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy) on cuts in naval forces.

What French Imperialism is Capable of

April 2, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 20, p. 219.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 271-272.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 85-86.

Some Hindus, whose only crime was to have struggled for the independence of their country, were pursued by His Britannic Majesty's police. Some took refuge in the French possessions in India.¹²⁰ They were counting on the right of asylum. The French colonial authorities have just expelled them.

It is not the first time that French imperialism has been the accomplice of other imperialists, and has committed infamies of this kind. During the war, while the Blacks of Africa were being massacred on French soil to defend "Civilization," "Humanity," etc., France was in league with Italy to forbid the Tripolitarians, pursued by Italian bandits, from seeking refuge on Tunisian territory. And here is what happened:

A thousand Tripolitarians, old men, young men, women and children, pushing before them their poor herds of cattle, came one fine day during the war to use their right to seek refuge in Tunisia. At the border, French troops, with the help of machine-guns, barred the way to them. The fugitives were faced with this horrible alternative: either to be massacred by the French or to draw back to the Sahara to die of hunger and thirst. They adopted a third solution. All of them lay down upon the sand and died slowly on the spot, under the eyes of "our" frontier-guards.

Here is what Mme Claire Geniaux wrote about this tragedy in the newspaper *l'Universel*:

Through telescopes, our officers day after day followed the phases of the slow death of these simple souls, to whom the Latin nations had come to bring the blessings of civilization. The babies died

¹²⁰ French Indies: name of a number of small French possessions in India (Mahe, Pondichry, Yanaon and Chandernagore). After the declaration of Indian independence, these possessions were integrated with India.

first at their mothers' exhausted breasts. The women were not much longer in succumbing. In their turn the old men, already reduced to a painful thinness, were covered by the sand, and soon the younger men themselves gave no more sign of life. When all these 'rebels' were believed to be dead, Doctors Natal and Conseil noticed some little girls who seemed still to be moving beside their parents' rigid corpses. In the night, they went up to them and observed that the hearts of these charming brightly clad little creatures who, during the first days had frolicked about like baby goats, were still beating, if very feebly. Having hidden them in their ambulance, they were happy to be able to revive them. Moved by their suffering, their grace and their charm, these doctors kept them as servants, the only survivors of a tribe of a thousand Tripolitarians.

This heart-breaking testimony does not come from a revolutionary woman.

French imperialism does not hesitate to commit the most abominable crimes.

The USSR and the Colonial Peoples

April 18, 1924

Source: *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, Vol. IV, No. 46.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 320-324.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 80-84.

Colonialism is a leech with two suckers, one of which sucks the metropolitan proletariat and the other that of the colonies. If we want to kill this monster, we must cut off both suckers at the same time. If only one is cut off, the other will continue to suck the blood of the proletariat, the animal will continue to live and the cut-off sucker will grow again. The Russian revolution has grasped this truth clearly. That is why it is not satisfied with making fine platonic speeches and drafting “humanitarian” resolutions in favor of oppressed peoples, but it teaches them to struggle; and helps them spiritually, as proclaimed by Lenin in his theses on the colonial question. To the Baku Congress,¹²¹ 21 Eastern nations sent delegates. Representatives of Western workers’ parties also participated in the work of this congress. For the first time the proletariat of the conquering Western States and that of the subject Eastern countries fraternally joined hands and deliberated in common on the best means to defeat their common enemy: imperialism.

Following this historic congress, despite internal anti external difficulties, revolutionary Russia has never hesitated to come to the help of peoples awakened by its heroic and victorious revolution. One of its first important acts was the founding of the University of the East.

Today, this university has 1,022 students, including 151 girls and 895 communists. Their social composition is as follows: 547 peasants, 265 workers and 210 proletarian intellectuals.

¹²¹ The First Congress of Eastern Peoples was held in Baku in September 1920. It was attended by nearly two thousand representatives of Eastern countries. At this Congress was founded the “Four Committees of Action and Propaganda of Eastern Peoples” which prospered for nearly one year.

If account is taken of the fact that Eastern countries are almost exclusively agricultural, the high percentage of students of peasant origin can readily be understood. In India, Japan, and especially in China, it is the intellectuals faithful to the working class who lead the latter in struggle; this explains the relatively large number of intellectuals among the students at the University. The relatively low number of worker students is due to the fact that industry and commerce in Eastern countries—naturally excepting Japan—are still undeveloped. Moreover, the presence of 75 pupils from the age of ten to 16 years must be noted.

One hundred and fifty professors are responsible for giving courses in social science, mathematics, historical materialism, the history of the workers' movement, natural science, the history of revolutions, political economy, etc. Young people of 62 nationalities are fraternally united in the classrooms.

The University has ten large buildings. It also has a cinema which is put at the students' disposal free on Thursdays and Sundays; the other days of the week, it operates on behalf of other organizations. Two libraries containing about 47,000 books help the young revolutionaries to make thorough studies and to train their minds. Each nationality or 4 group has its own library composed of books and publications in the mother tongue. The reading-room, artistically decorated by the students, has a wealth of newspapers and periodicals. The students themselves publish a newspaper, the sole copy of which is posted on a big board by the door of the reading-room. Students who are ill are admitted to the University hospital. There is a sanatorium in the Crimea for the benefit of students who need rest. The Soviets have allotted to the University two camps composed of nine buildings each for holidays. Each camp has a center where the students can learn cattle breeding. "We already have 30 cows and 50 pigs," said the "agrarian secretary" of the University with pride. The 100 hectares of land allotted to these camps are cultivated by the students themselves. During their holidays and outside working hours, they help the peasants in their labor. One of these camps was, by the way, formerly the property of a Grand Duke. It is a memorable sight to see from the top of the tower, adorned with a grand ducal crown, the red flag fluttering, and in "His Excellency's" entertainment room, the young Korean and Armenian peasants thoroughly enjoying their games.

The students of the University are fed, clothed, and lodged free. Each of them receives six gold rubles per month as pocket-money.

To instill into the students a true idea of children's education, the University has a model creche and a day-nursery looking after 60 small children.

The yearly expenses of the University amount to 561,000 gold rubles.

The 62 nationalities represented at the University form a "Commune." Its chairman and functionaries are elected every three months by all the students.

A student delegate takes part in the economic and administrative management of the University. All must regularly and in turn work in the kitchen, the library, the club, etc. All "misdemeanors" and disputes are judged and settled by an elected tribunal in the presence of all comrades. Once a week, the "Commune" holds a meeting to discuss the international political and economic situation. From time to time, meetings and evening parties are organized where the amateur artists introduce the art and culture of their country.

The fact that the communists not only treat the "inferior natives of the colonies" like brothers, but that they get them to participate in the political life of the country, is highly characteristic of the "barbarity" of the Bolsheviks. Treated in their native country as "submissive subjects" or "protégés," having no other right but that to pay taxes, the Eastern students, who are neither electors nor eligible for election in their own country, from whom the right even to express their political opinion is withdrawn, in the Soviet Union take part in the election of the Soviets and have the right to send their representatives to the Soviets. Let our brothers of the colonies who vainly seek a change of nationality make a comparison between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy.

These students have suffered themselves and have witnessed the sufferings of others. All have lived under the yoke of "high civilization," all have been victims of exploitation and oppression by foreign capitalists. Moreover, they passionately long to acquire knowledge and to study. They are serious and full of enthusiasm. They are entirely different from the frequenters of the boulevards of the Latin Quarter,¹²² the Eastern students in Paris, Oxford and Berlin. It can be said without exaggeration that under the roof of this University is the future of the colonial peoples.

¹²² Latin quarter: one of the oldest districts of Paris. In this quarter, there are many schools and universities, especially the Sorbonne University, the College de France, the Ecole Polytechnique and the Ecole Normale Superieure. Poor students and intellectuals live in this quarter, which is gradually being transformed into a bourgeois locality.

The colonial countries of the Near and Far East, stretching from Syria to Korea, cover an extent of more than 15 million square kilometers and have more than 1,200 million inhabitants. All these immense countries are now under the yoke of capitalism and imperialism. Although their considerable numbers should be their strength, these submissive peoples have never yet made any serious attempts to free themselves from this yoke. Not yet having realized the value of international solidarity, they have not known how to unite for the struggle. Relationships between their countries are not yet established as they are among the peoples of Europe and America. They possess gigantic strength and do not yet realize it. The University of the East assembling all the young, active and intelligent leaders of the colonized countries, has fulfilled a great task, namely:

It teaches to the future vanguard militants the principles of class struggle, confused in their minds by race conflicts and patriarchal customs;

It establishes between the proletarian vanguard of the colonies a close contact with the Western proletariat, thus preparing the way for the close and effective co-operation which will alone ensure the final victory of the international working class;

It teaches the colonized people, hitherto separated from one another, to know one another and to unite, by creating the basis of a future union of Eastern countries, one of the wings of the proletarian revolution;

It sets the proletariat of colonialist countries an example of what they can and must do in favor of their oppressed brothers.

The Failure of French Colonization

May 14, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 26, p. 295.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 281-283.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 87-89.

The last reshuffling of Poincaré's¹²³ ministry did not fail to have repercussions in the colonies. France always pretends that it is the first colonial power that has known how to colonize. M. Albert Sarraut too, has always boasted that he is the first Frenchman to know how to develop the colonies. For this development, he demanded 4,000 million francs. To find this sum, he wrote a book of 656 pages. Now, this great minister has just been expelled from his Party for having voted for his boss Poincaré. And the ungrateful Poincaré, in his turn, has just thrown the great minister out. Thus the latter has been ousted from his post, without having his millions or his colonies developed. He has been replaced by a soldier, I beg your pardon, an "unknown colonel."¹²⁴ This expulsion shows us, once again, that colonization has gone bankrupt.

While waiting for something better, the French taxpayer pays, every year, more than 237 million francs (1923 budget) for his Ministry of Colonies, and more than 1,172,186,000 francs for the colonial troops and expenditure in Morocco, that is to say 1,409,186,000 francs.

Each Frenchman—rich or poor, old man or infant, man or woman—is thus obliged to pay into the 4 civilizing mission fund more than 36 francs a year. And for whose benefit? It is not for his own, that is to say, the taxpayer's. And still less for that of France. We shall explain this a little further on.

¹²³ Poincaré, Raymond (1860-1934), a French politician of the early part of the 20th century. He held many posts in the French Government, such as that of Premier in 1912-1913 and President of the Republic from 1913 to 1920. He played an important role in the preparation of the First World War. From 1922 to 1924 and from 1929, Poincaré was again at the head of the government. He pursued a very reactionary, chauvinist and anti-Soviet policy.

¹²⁴ From 1922 to 1924, Albert Sarraut was Minister of Colonies in the Poincaré government. When the government was reshuffled in 1924, he was replaced by Major Fabri.

In 1922, for example, the general trade of the French colonies amounted to 4,358,105,000 francs (2,104,458 for imports and 2,253,647,000 for exports). Out of this sum, the traffic between France and its colonies amounted to only 1,585 million francs, while that between the colonies and foreign countries amounted to 2,773,105,000 francs.

Concerning Indochina, the figure is still more eloquent. Of the 5,484 ships registered in Indochinese ports and which carried 7,152,910 tons of goods, there were only 779 French ships carrying 1,464,852 tons, compared with 789 English vessels carrying 1,575,079 tons.

Out of 807,729,362 francs worth of imports in 1921, France had only 247,602,029 francs.

France and its colonies had only 169,187,125 francs out of an export figure of 1,284,003,885 francs.

Is this to the natives' advantage? You will see.

In 1923, Indochina exported:

1,439,955	tons of rice
622,035	tons of coal
65,413	tons of cement
61,917	tons of maize
312,467	quintals of fish
27,690	tons of zinc
19,565	head of cattle
7,927	tons of sugar
6,860	tons of copra
46,229	tons of rubber
7,158	tons of dyestuffs
3,617	tons of cotton
30,760	quintals of pepper
21,492	quintals of beans
2,600	tons of hides
12,798	quintals of rattan
12,319	quintals of lac
8,499	quintals of coffee

6,084 quintals of tea
480,883 kilos of cinnamon
117,241 kilos of oil of Chinese anise
17,943 kilos of silk.

Well, do you know what is the native's share in this gigantic trade in the product of his land and his labor, going on under his nose? He had all told 542 sailing boats displacing 12,231 tons! According to this outline, we can conclude that French colonization is only practiced in favor of a gang of adventurers, dishonest and ineffectual politicians of the mother country, alcohol and opium racketeers, unscrupulous profiteers, and dubious financiers. The proof? Here it is: the Bank of Indochina had a turnover of only 24 million francs in 1876, but 145 in 1885, 222 in 1895, 906 in 1905, 2,005 in 1917, 6,718 in 1921.

And its profits have increased from 126,000 francs in 1876 to 22,854,000 francs in 1921!

Who gets them?

Letter to Comrade Petrov

June 13, 1924

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 290.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

To Comrade Petrov, Chairman, the Far Eastern Bureau,

Dear Comrade,

Yesterday, the French delegation sent a letter to the Delegate Credentials Committee requesting that a card be issued to me.

I received a card to participate in the enlarge conference of the executive committee.

This morning, Comrade Grossman told me that I must send you the details in writing, that you will forward them to the Delegate Credentials Committee and that Comrade Grossman, the committee and you will come to an agreement that will result in a delegate card being issued to me.

The particulars of my case are:

- (1) Because I arrived here many months before the congress, my party could not issue a delegate card to me.
- (2) The Communist International requested my party to send delegates from the colonies to the congress; knowing that I was already in Moscow, my party thought it unnecessary to include me in the delegation coming from Paris.
- (3) My comrades within the French delegation cannot issue a delegate card to me because they would be out of order. However, with the consent of those cadres and the consent of the Delegate Credentials Committee, you can issue a card to me.

Communist greetings

The Glories of French Civilization

June 17, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 32, pp. 367-368.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 291-294.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 90-93.

When the representation of colonial people in the French Parliament was being mooted, M. Paul Tapponnier said in the Chamber of Deputies, “France is generous and her kindness is felt at all times. There is nothing to compare with French civilization.” We sincerely thank this deputy for having given us the opportunity to cite, apart from her obstinacy in persisting in civilizing the natives with guns and bayonets, some of France’s imperishable virtues.

Politeness: Colonial custom has it that every native, regardless of rank, age and sex, must humbly bow to a European. In Indochina, Madagascar and other colonies, the native people are manhandled, beaten and jailed for having overlooked this mark of respect due to the prestige of the civilizers. Only recently an administrator at Medjana (Algeria) had some local natives arrested who, absorbed in their work, did not notice the august stroller and failed to bow to him.

Liberality: In Indochina, on the occasion of a visit by a Joffre,¹²⁵ or Clemenceau’s birthday, or the inauguration of a monument in honor of “The Dead for the Fatherland,” or the reception of an envoy of the Republic, the administrative service of Indochina raises a “subscription.” Here is what happens: On the basis of the density of population and the tax-rolls in the province, the Administrator determines the amount needed for the festival, multiplies it by three, four or five, fixes the date of payment, summons the notables of the village, and says: “I’m in need of money. Here is the sum I want, and the date of payment assigned. Do what you can. If not...” In order not to be jailed, the notables “do their best.” The multiplicand of the compulsory subscription in

¹²⁵ Joffre, Joseph (1852-1933), French Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army from 1917 to 1916. From 1885 to 1904, Joffre served in the French Expeditionary Corps in Indochina, the Far East Asia, Central Africa and Madagascar.

used to “pay homage to great men,” while the product of the multiplication is pocketed by M. Administrator. The peasants suffer for these additional taxes so often levied on them.

Generosity: The slogan “Germany shall pay” has been succeeded by “The colonies shall pay.” The mother country asks the colonies to devote all their forces, all their abilities, all their will, all their resources to help her restore her economy, while she has just banned the export of Alsatian potash to the colonies, keeping this product strictly for French agriculture.

Equality: French citizens serve eighteen months in the army while colonial people are compelled to serve three or four years with the flag under whose folds spirits, opium, *corvées*, portorage, native status and spoliation are introduced into their countries. While the natives are exiled, deported and jailed on flimsy pretexts, planters and administrators accused of assassination, bribery, dereliction of duty and theft enjoy a brilliant career. I will not speak of Darles, State Councilor of Cochinchina, or Baudoin, Governor General of Indochina; their stories are already two or three years old. I only wish to mention the two officials in Algeria who, publicly accused last April of committing forgery, of embezzlement of public funds and other crimes, were acquitted. I would also like to speak of the European councilors in the same colony who were not unduly worried while notoriously recognized as authors or accomplices in the assassination of a native.

Freedom: “Work is Freedom” says a Gallic proverb. That is why the natives are compelled to do forced labor. Recently, the French Senate highly praised the statement made by the Governor General of A.O.F. (French East Africa) in which it was said that “one must beware of dreams as much as of formulae: cotton production is a government concern, and, to this end, the natives must be compelled to grow cotton. By this means, France can receive from her colonies 100,000 tons of cotton per year. This method was applied in French East Africa for cocoa. It was applied in 1916 on the Ivory Coast for the supply of 600 tons of cotton.”

With all this, France, of course, remains the liberator of mankind and the champion of the abolition of slavery.

Humanitarianism: “France is the protectress of the weak and educator of the backward,” said M. Boisneuf, a Negro deputy. “France is the champion of

civilization and bearer of freedoms,” said Michelet.¹²⁶ “Her colonial policy is based on humanitarianism and altruism,” said Sarraut past and future satrap of Indochina. The *Revue de l’aéronautique militaire* (*Air Force Review*) has just told us once again how humanitarianism is understood in the colonies. Marshal Lyautey, Resident-General in Morocco, Commander-in-Chief of T.O.M. (Overseas troops), ordered the use of poison gas and tear-gas projectiles, because... but let the review speak for itself:

“Because our goal is obviously not to kill as many dissidents as possible, but to bring them quickly to submission.”

It is owing to this great concern that, since 1919, that is following the victory of “law” and “justice” in the world, 800 French soldiers and 5,000 Moors have been killed in Morocco, on the occasion of the annexation to France of 72,700 hectares of land from the Moroccans—to “France ten million square kilometers in area and one hundred million people strong.”

¹²⁶ Michelet, Jules (1798-1874), well-known French historian. His leading works were, *History of France* (17 volumes), *History of the French Revolution* (seven volumes), *History of the 19th Century* (three volumes). These works reflected the author’s petit-bourgeois standpoint.

Talk during the 8th Session of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International

June 23, 1924

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 295-297.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

I come here to direct the attention of the Communist International to the fact that the colonies exist and proclaim that the revolution has the task of resolving the issue of the future of the colonies; at the same time, I am here to bring to your attention the dangers faced by the colonies. Apparently, you have yet to fully accept the thinking that the destiny of the international proletariat, especially the proletariat within those countries that send forces to invade and occupy colonies, is closely linked to the destiny of the oppressed classes in the colonies. Even if the situation were calm, I would avail myself of the opportunity and, if necessary, create every possible opportunity to awaken you to the colonial question.

I agree with what comrade Roy¹²⁷ said here today, but when he speaks of English colonialism, I would like to also add “French,” “Belgian,” “American,” “Japanese”... As I’m from a French colony, I will mostly speak of its colonialism and its despots, just like comrade Roy spoke of England, our fraternal party there, and about English colonies.

Comrades, forgive my boldness, but I must say that as I listen to the contributions to the debate by those of you from mother countries, I get the impression that you are trying to kill the snake by hitting it on the tail, not the head. You all know that the venom and vitality of imperialism are concentrated in the colonies, not the mother country. It is the colonies that supply raw materials to the factories and soldiers to the armies of imperialism. It is the colonies

¹²⁷ M. N. Roy (1887-1954), founder of the Communist Party of India. In 1920, he was invited to Moscow for the 2nd Congress of the Comintern, where he stayed until 1927. From there he wrote many articles for the Comintern’s review *Inprecor* and published books. In 1928, he aligned with the Right Opposition and fled from Moscow. He returned to India in 1930, was jailed for a time, and ended up rejecting communism in favor of what he described as “radical humanism.”

that are the foundation of counterrevolutionary forces. And, when you talk about revolution, you give superficial attention to the colonial question.

Comrades, when you want to break an egg or a stone, you must first find a tool whose strength is adapted to the strength of the object you intend to smash. Why do you not take such measure when you want to overthrow capitalism? Why in all matters of revolution, have you not reorganized your tactics and forces? Why do you organize forces and organize propaganda but give no attention to the forces and propaganda of the opposition against which you want to struggle and topple? Why do you ignore the colonies at a time when the capitalists are using the colonies to defend themselves and oppose you? I would like to add few words to comrade Trein's speech. Comrade Trein mentioned the revolutionary upsurge in France, as well as the birth of a fascist movement there. Regarding the first, I fully endorse his optimism. However, I have a different opinion regarding the second. I think that in Italy, Germany and other countries, reactionaries need fascism to protect themselves; the French bourgeoisie has yet no need for fascism. They have other protectors who are much stronger and more organized and disciplined than the "blacks."¹²⁸ Indeed, they have black and yellow soldiers. You probably know by now that the French army consists now of 458,000 French soldiers and 206,550 colonial soldiers. But do you know that the time a colonial soldier is trained and serves in the military is twice as long as French soldiers? Therefore, in nominal terms, although the number of troops always ready to attack you is 664,550 men, in reality it is 1,000,000 men, or rather 939,950 men because the number of French soldiers is 251,450, outnumbering native regiments, these natives serve 431,100 more months than the French.

While debating capabilities and methods for completing the revolution, while preparing combat plans, the British and French comrades and the comrades of the other parties have completely overlooked this important strategic point. So, this is why I must earnestly appeal to you to pay attention.

¹²⁸ Meaning the Blackshirts in Italy, the paramilitary forces of the National Fascist Party.

Talk during the 22nd Session of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International¹²⁹

July 1, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 53, pp. 558-559.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 298-304.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 142-148.

Comrades, I only wish to put forward some suggestions about Comrade Manuilsky's¹³⁰ criticisms of our policy on the colonial question. But before entering upon the matter, it is desirable to give some statistics in order to help us to see its importance more clearly.

COUNTRIES	MOTHER COUNTRIES		COLONIES	
	Area (sq. km)	Population	Area (sq. km)	Population
Great Britain	151,000	45,500,000	34,910,000	403,600,000
France	536,000	39,000,000	10,250,000	55,600,000
The United States	9,420,000	100,000,000	1,850,000	12,000,000
Spain	504,500	20,700,000	371,600	853,000
Italy	286,600	38,500,000	1,460,000	1,623,000
Japan	418,000	57,070,000	288,000	21,249,000
Belgium	29,500	7,642,000	2,400,000	8,500,000
Portugal	92,000	5,545,000	2,062,000	8,738,000
Holland	32,500	6,700,000	2,046,000	48,030,000

¹²⁹ The Fifth Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 17 to July 8, 1924.

¹³⁰ Manuilski, D.Z. (1883-1959), an outstanding militant of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet State and the international communist and workers' movement. In 1924, he was a member of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. From 1928 to 1943 he was Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International he delivered a report on the national and colonial questions.

Therefore, nine countries with a population of 320,657,000 and an area of 11,470,300 square kilometers, are exploiting colonies embracing dozens of nationalities, with a population of 560,193,000 and covering an area of 55,637,000 square kilometers. The whole area of the colonies is five times greater than that of the mother countries, and the whole population of the mother countries amounts to less than three-fifths of that of the colonies.

These figures are still more striking if the biggest imperialist countries are taken separately. The British colonies taken as a whole are eight and a half times more populous and about 232 times bigger than Great Britain. France occupies an area 19 times bigger than her own. The population of the French colonies exceeds that of France by 16,600,000.

Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that so long as the French and British Communist Parties have not brought out a really progressive policy with regard to the colonies, have not come into contact with the colonial peoples, their program as a whole is and will be ineffective because it goes counter to Leninism. I will explain myself more clearly. In his speech on Lenin and the national question, Comrade Stalin said that the reformists and leaders of the Second International dared not align the white people of the colonies with their colored counterparts. Lenin also refused to recognize this division and pushed aside the obstacle separating the civilized slaves of imperialism from the uncivilized slaves.

According to Lenin, the victory of the revolution in Western Europe depended on its close contact with the liberation movement against imperialism in enslaved colonies and with the national question, both of which form a part of the common problem of the proletarian revolution and dictatorship.

Later, Comrade Stalin spoke of the viewpoint which held that the European proletarians can achieve success without a direct alliance with the liberation movement in the colonies. And he considered this a counter-revolutionary viewpoint. But if we judge from practice to make our theoretical examination, we are entitled to say that our big Parties, excepting the Soviet Communist Party, still hold the above-mentioned viewpoint because they are inactive in this matter.

What have the bourgeois class in the colonialist countries done towards oppressing so many people enslaved by them? They have done everything. Using the means given them by the State administrative machine, they have carried out an intense propaganda. They have crammed the heads of the peo-

ple of the mother countries with speeches, films, newspapers, exhibitions and every other means, so that they have a colonialist outlook; they have displayed before their eyes pictures of the easy, honorable and rich life which seems to await them in the colonies.

As for our Communist Parties in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium and other countries—what have they done to cope with the colonial invasions perpetrated by the bourgeois class of their countries? What have they done from the day they accepted Lenin's political program to educate the working class of their countries in the spirit of just internationalism, and that of close contact with the working masses in the colonies? What our Parties have done in this domain is almost worthless. As for me, I was born in a French colony, and am a member of the French Communist Party, and I am very sorry to say that our Communist Party has done hardly anything for the colonies.

It is the task of the communist newspapers to introduce the colonial question to our militants to awaken the working masses in the colonies, win them over to the cause of Communism, but what have our newspapers done? Nothing at all.

If we compare the number of columns devoted to the colonial question in the bourgeois newspapers such as *The Times*, *Figaro*, *Evre* or in those of different opinions such as *Le Populaire*, or *Liberty*, with those devoted to the same question in *L'Humanité*, the central organ of our Party, we are bound to say that this comparison will not be favorable to us.

When the Ministry of Colonies worked out a plan for transforming many African regions into large private plantations, and turning the people of these regions into veritable slaves attached to the new employers' land, our newspapers still remained silent. In the French West African colonies, forcible measures for enlistment unknown for centuries were carried out, and yet our newspapers maintained a close silence. The colonialist authorities in Indochina turned themselves into slave traders and sold the inhabitants of north Viêt Nam to planters in the Pacific islands; they lengthened the natives' military service from two to four years; they sold the greater part of the colonial land to financier sharks; they increased taxes by a further 30 percent in spite of the natives' inability to pay the old ones. And all this was done while the natives were being driven to bankruptcy and dying of hunger through flood. However, our newspapers still maintained silence. Thus, it is no wonder that the natives are inclined to side with organizations for democracy and freedom such as

the Society for the Rights of Man and the Citizen together with other similar organizations which take care of them or pretend to take care of them.

If we go even further, we shall see incredible things, making everybody think that our Party has a disregard for all that concerns the colonies. For instance: *L'Humanité* did not publish the International Peasants' Appeal¹³¹ to the people of the colonies issued by the Communist International.

Prior to the Lyon conference,¹³² the items listed for debate covered all political programs except that on the colonial question. *L'Humanité* carried many articles on the Senegal boxer Siki's success, but did not raise its voice when the dockers at Dakar port, Siki's brothers, were arrested in the middle of their work, tied hand and foot, hauled on to lorries and taken to jail. Later they were sent to the garrisons to be turned into "defenders of civilization," that is to say, into soldiers. The central organ of our Party daily informed our readers of the feats of the pilot Uadi, who flew from Paris to Indochina. But when the colonial administration pillaged the people of "Đài Nam,"¹³³ robbed them of their fields to give them to the French profiteers, sent out bombers with orders to the pilots to teach reason to the pitiful and despoiled local people, the organ of our Party did not find it necessary to bring this news to the knowledge of its readers.

Comrades, the press of the French bourgeoisie has realized that the national question cannot be separated from the colonial question. In my opinion, our Party has not thoroughly understood this. The lessons of the Ruhr, when the native troops who were sent out "to comfort" the starving German workers, encircled the suspected French regiments; the example of the Eastern troops,¹³⁴ in which the native forces were given machine-guns "to mobilize the spirit" of the French troops worn out by the hard and protracted war; the events which

¹³¹ Peasant International: International Peasant Council, set up in 1923 by the delegates of the revolutionary peasant organizations in many countries.

¹³² The Third Congress of the French Communist Party was held at Lyons in January 1924. The main problem debated at the Congress was the question of ideological struggle in the Party, its strengthening and the elimination of alien elements.

¹³³ Đài Nam: Name used for Việt Nam under feudal rule.

¹³⁴ Eastern troops: troops press-ganged by the imperialists from among the various colonial peoples for the purpose of repressing revolutionary movements in colonies and even in the Metropolitan countries themselves.

occurred in 1917 at places where Russian troops were stationed in France;¹³⁵ the lesson of the strike of agricultural workers in the Pyrenees where native troops were forced to play the shameful part of saboteurs; and finally the presence of 207,000 colonial troops in France itself—all these have not made our Party think, have not made our Party find it necessary to lay down a clear and firm policy on colonial questions. The Party has missed many good opportunities for propaganda. The new leading organs of the Party have acknowledged that the Party is in a corner over this question. This is a good sign, because once the leaders of the Party have realized and recognized this weak point in the Party's policy, there is hope that the Party will do its utmost to rectify its errors. I firmly believe that this Congress will be the turning point and will urge the Party to correct its past shortcomings. Although Comrade Manuilsky is quite right in his remarks on the elections in Algeria, to be objective, I must say that it is true that our Party has committed errors here but has corrected them by nominating colonial representatives as candidates in the elections for the Seine department. Though this is still too little, it is fairly satisfactory as a beginning. I am very happy to see that at present our Party is again filled with the best intentions and enthusiasm, and that it needs only to be strengthened by practical deeds to be brought to a correct policy on the colonial question.

What are these practical deeds? To work out long political programs and pass high-sounding resolutions which are, after the Congress, sent to the museum as has always been done in the past, is not enough. We must adopt concrete measures. I propose the following points:

To publish in *L'Humanité* a new feature of at least two columns weekly devoted to regular coverage of colonial questions.

To increase propaganda and choose Party members among the natives of the colonial countries in which there are already branches of the Communist International.

To send comrades from the colonial countries to study at the Eastern Communist University in Moscow.

¹³⁵ During World War I, the Czarist government sent an expeditionary corps to France. In 1917, its soldiers protested against the war for the defense of the interests of the bourgeoisie. They set up Soviets and demanded their repatriation. Fearing that the Russian soldiers' revolutionary ideas might spread to the French army, the French High Command moved the Russian corps out of their positions and sent them to the Lacourtine concentration camp where they were surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Senegalese and Touareg units. This led to the disarming of the Russian corps.

To come to an agreement with the United General Confederation of Labor¹³⁶ on the organization of working people from colonial countries working in France.

To set Party members the task of paying more attention to colonial questions.

In my opinion, these proposals are national, and if the Communist International and delegates of our Party approve them, I believe that at the Sixth Congress, the French Communist Party will be able to say that the united front of the masses of the metropolitan country and colonies has become a reality.

Comrades, as Lenin's disciples, we must concentrate all our forces and energies on colonial questions as on all other questions in order to implement Lenin's teachings.

¹³⁶ The United General Confederation of Labor existed from 1922 to 1936. In 1921, the reformist leaders of the General Confederation of Labor openly expelled a number of revolutionary trade unions embracing nearly 60 percent of the members of the General Confederation of Labor. These revolutionary trade unions set up the United General Confederation of Labor and ceaselessly struggled for the restoration of the unity of the trade unions for the defense of the vital interests of the proletariat and, together with the French Communist Party, took part in the struggle against fascism and war. The development of the movement for the unity of the working class compelled the reformist leaders of the General Confederation of Labor to accept the proposal for unification of the United General Confederation of Labor, and it was put into effect at the Toulouse Congress in 1936.

Talk during the 25th Session of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International

July 3, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 54, pp. 569-570.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 305-311.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 148-153.

The French colonies occupy an area of 10,241,510 square kilometers with 55,571,000 inhabitants scattered over all four continents. In spite of the differences in races, climates, customs, traditions and economic and social development, there are two common points that make them alike and can later bring about unity in the common struggle.

The economic situation: in all the French colonies, industry and commerce are little developed and the majority of the population is engaged in agriculture. Ninety-five percent of the population are peasants.

In all the colonies, the native peoples are unremittingly exploited by French imperialist capital.

I have not enough time to make a thorough analysis of the situation of the peasants in each colony. Therefore I shall take only a few typical examples to give an idea of the peasants' life in the colonies.

I shall begin with my country, Indochina, which naturally I know better than the other colonies. When France occupied this colony, the war drove the peasants away from their villages. Later, on their return they found their lands occupied by the colonists who had followed in the wake of the victorious army. They had shared among themselves the land the native peasants had cultivated for generations. In consequence the Annamese peasants were turned into serfs and forced to cultivate their own lands for foreign masters.

Numerous unfortunates who could not suffer the extremely hard conditions imposed by the occupiers, left their lands and wandered about the country. They were called "pirates" by the French, who sought every means to prosecute them.

The lands thieved in this way, were allotted to the planters. They needed merely to say a word in order to get tracts of land sometimes covering more than 20,000 or 25,000 hectares.

These planters not only occupied lands without any payment but also obtained all that was necessary to exploit those lands including labor. The administration allowed them to make use of a number of prisoners without any payment, or ordered the communes to supply them with manpower.

Besides these wolves and the administration, the Catholic Mission is to be mentioned. The Catholic Mission alone occupied one quarter of the areas under cultivation in Cochinchina. To secure for itself all those lands it used every imaginable and unimaginable method, including bribery, fraud and coercion. Here are a few examples. Availing itself of crop failures, it gave the peasants loans, with their rice-fields on mortgage. The interest rates being too high, the peasants were unable to get out of debt and had to cede their mortgaged fields outright to the Mission. Using all kinds of underhand methods, the Mission did its utmost to find out secret information that could be harmful to be authorities. It used this information as a threat to force the authorities to comply with its will. Together with the big capitalists the Mission founded companies for the exploitation of the plantations which were occupied without any payment and the lands stolen from the peasants. The henchmen of the Mission held high positions in the government. The Mission exploited believers no less ruthlessly than the planters. Another of its tricks was to get together poor people and force them to reclaim waste land with promises that once the land was cultivated it would be divided among the peasants. But as soon as the land was reclaimed and the crops about to be harvested, the Mission declared that the land belonged to it and drove out those who had toiled to make it productive. Robbed by their “protectors” (Catholic or non-Catholic), the Annamese peasants were not even left in peace to work on their remaining tiny plots of land. The land registry service carried out a fraudulent cadastral survey to make the peasants pay more taxes. These increased every year. Recently, after occupying thousands of hectares of land belonging to the Annamese highlanders to give them to the profiteers, the authorities sent airplanes to the place so that the victims dared not think of rebelling.

The despoiled peasants, ruined and driven away, again found ways and means to reclaim virgin land. But once it was under cultivation, the adminis-

tration would seize it and oblige them to buy it at prices fixed by the administration. Those unable to pay would be driven out pitilessly.

Last year, the country was devastated by floods; however, land taxes increased 30 percent.

In addition to the iniquitous taxes that ruin them, the peasants still have to go on *corvée*, pay poll-tax, salt-tax, buy government-bonds, subscribe to various funds and many other things, and sign unequal contracts, etc.

French capitalists in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco have carried out the same policy of robbery and exploitation. All the good irrigated land was kept for the French. The natives were driven away to areas at the foot of the mountains or to arid spots. The financial companies, profiteers and high functionaries divided the land in the colonies among themselves.

Through direct and indirect operations, the banks in Algeria and Tunisia in 1914 made 12,258,000 francs profit from a capital of 25 million francs.

The Bank of Morocco, with a capital of 15,400,000 francs, made 1,753,000 francs profit in 1921.

The French Algerian Company has occupied 324,000 hectares of the best land.

The Algerian General Company has occupied 100,000 hectares.

A private company has occupied 50,000 hectares of forest without any payment, while the Capziere phosphate and railway company has occupied 50,000 hectares of land rich in ores, and in addition has secured priority rights over 20,000 hectares of land in its neighborhood.

A former French deputy has occupied a plantation covering 1,125 hectares of land, with mines to the value of 10 million francs, producing a yearly income of four million francs. The natives, the real owners of these mines, receive annually only one tenth of a franc per hectare.

French colonial policy has abolished the right of collective ownership and replaced it by private ownership. It has also abolished small ownership to the advantage of big ownership of the plantations. This policy has incurred for the native peasants the loss of 5 million hectares of their best land.

In 15 years, the peasants in Kabylia were robbed of 192,090 hectares.

From 1913, each year the Moroccan peasants were robbed of 12,000 hectares of land under cultivation. Since France was victorious in the war "for Justice," that figure has risen to 14,540 hectares.

At present, there are in Morocco only 1,070 French people, but they occupy 500,000 hectares of land. Like their Annamese peasant brothers and sisters, the peasants in Africa lead an unbearably hard life, going on *corvée* all the time and paying heavy taxes. Their misery and sufferings are indescribable. Due to shortage of food they have to eat wild vegetables and grasses or rotten rice and consequently are affected with typhus and tuberculosis. Even in good harvest years, peasants are seen turning up rubbish heaps, disputing food-remnants with dogs. In lean years, the corpses of peasants dead of starvation are seen everywhere in the fields and on the highways.

The peasants' life in West Africa and French Equatorial Africa is still more frightful. These colonies are in the hands of about 40 companies. They occupy everything: land and fields, natural resources and even the natives' lives; the latter lack even the right to work for themselves. They are compelled to work for the companies, all the time, and only for the companies. To force them to work for nothing, incredible means of coercion are used by the companies. All lands and fields are confiscated. Only those who agree to do the farming required by the companies are allowed to have some tiny plots of land. People are affected with all kinds of diseases through malnutrition, and the death rate especially among the children is very high.

Another method is to make old people, women and children work as servants. They are lodged in small huts, ill-treated, beaten, ill-fed and sometimes murdered. In some localities the number of permanent servants is kept about equal to the number of workers in order to discourage the latter from running away. So that work in the plantations shall not suffer, the natives are forbidden to work their own land in good time. Therefore, famine and epidemics occur very often, wreaking havoc in the colonies.

The few tribes who have fled to the forests and succeeded in escaping the planters' exploitation, live like animals, feeding on roots and leaves, and die from malaria and the unwholesome climate. Meanwhile the white masters are devastating their fields and villages. The following is an excerpt from an officer's diary describing briefly but clearly the repression of the colonial peasants:

Raid on Colover village.

Raid on the Fan tribe at Cuno. Villages and gardens destroyed.

Raid on Becanit village. Village burnt down; 3,000 banana-trees cut down.

Raid on Kwa village. Village destroyed. Gardens and farms razed to the ground.

Raid on Abimaphan village. All houses burnt down, all gardens and farms destroyed.

Raid on Examphami village. Village destroyed. The whole commune along Bom River burnt down.

The same system of pillage, extermination and destruction prevails in the African regions under Italian, Spanish, British or Portuguese rule.

In the Belgian Congo, the population in 1891 was 25 million, but it had fallen to eight and a half million by 1911. The Hereros and Cama tribes in the former German colonies in Africa were completely exterminated. 80,000 were killed under German rule and 15,000 were killed during the "pacification" period in 1914. The population of the French Congo was 20,000 in 1894. It was only 9,700 in 1911. In one province there were 10,000 inhabitants in 1910. Eight years later there remained only 1,080. In another province with 40,000 black inhabitants, in only two years, 20,000 people were killed, and in the following six-months 6,000 more were killed or disabled.

The densely populated regions bordering the rivers were turned into deserts within a matter of 15 years. Bleached bones were scattered throughout the ravaged oases and villages.

The life of the survivors was atrocious in the extreme. The peasants were robbed of the tiny plots of land allowed them by the companies, the artisans lost their crafts, and the breeders their cattle. The Matabeles were cattle-breeders: before the arrival of the British, they had 200,000 cattle. Two years later only 40,900 were left. The Hereros had 90,000 cattle. Within 12 years the German colonists had robbed them of half. Similar cases are numerous in all the black countries which came into contact with the Whites' civilization.

In conclusion, I quote the African writer René Maran,¹³⁷ author of *Batuala* who said:

Equatorial Africa was a densely populated area, rich in rubber. There were here all kinds of gardens and farms with plenty of poultry and goats. After only seven years everything was destroyed. Villages were in ruins, gardens and farms laid waste, poultry and goats killed. The inhabitants grew weak because they had to work

¹³⁷ See footnote 81, p. 90.

beyond their strength and without any payment. They were thus not sufficiently strong and lacked the time to work their fields. Diseases broke out, famine appeared, the death rate increased. We should know that they are the descendants of strong and healthy tribes imbued with an enduring and tempered fighting spirit. Here, there is nothing left that can be called civilization.

To complete this tragic picture, I want to add one point: French capitalism has never hesitated to drive each region in turn to famine if it might be of advantage to them. In many colonial countries, e.g., the Reunion Islands, Algeria, Madagascar, etc.... the inhabitants are no longer allowed to grow cereals but have to grow other crops required by French industry. These crops are more profitable to the planters. And this has caused the cost of living in the colonies to rise and often brings about famine.

In all the French colonies, famine is on the increase and so is the people's hatred. The native peasants are ripe for insurrection. In many colonies, they have risen many times but their uprisings have all been drowned in blood. If at present the peasants still have a passive attitude, the reason is that they still lack organization and leaders. The Communist International must help them to revolution and liberation.

Lenin and the Peoples of the East

July 27, 1924

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 27, July 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 317-319.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 94-96.

If in the eyes of the proletarians of the West, Lenin is a chief, a leader, a master, to the peoples of the East, he is still greater and more noble, if I may venture to say so.

It is not only his genius, but his disdain of luxury, his love of labor, the purity of his private life, his simplicity, in a word, it is the grandeur and beauty of this master which exert an enormous influence upon the Asian peoples and irresistibly draw their hearts towards him.

Accustomed to being treated as backward and inferior people, they consider Lenin as the embodiment of universal brotherhood. Not only are they grateful to him, but they love him tenderly. To him, they show a veneration which is almost filial devotion. One had to see the students of the University of the East, eyes red with weeping, the young folk there who sobbed bitterly at the news of Lenin's death, to understand their love towards him.

His death was a universal mourning. The Kuomintang (the people's party in power in South China) was in session when it heard the news. All delegates stood up spontaneously and the session was closed in sign of mourning. On Sun Yat-sen's suggestion, the Guangdong government ordered the closure of all theatres for three days. The flags of office buildings were at half-mast. Cultural, political and economic bodies in Beijing and in the provinces, especially students' associations and workers' organizations, commemorated the great revolutionary with dignity. On this occasion, they unanimously passed a resolution in favor of the immediate recognition of the Soviet government. The students decided to erect a statue of Lenin in the biggest public park in Beijing.

The Chinese government sent cables of sympathy.

Lenin is also mourned by women. In China as in all Eastern countries, the women are very little informed of world events, to which they are almost indifferent. However, they wore mourning for Lenin's death. Thus, the demonstrations by Chinese women in this sorrowful circumstance have an historic significance. On the one hand, they testify to the fact that the women of the East are awakening; on the other, they show that the great master is understood and loved by everyone, from the commonest to the most advanced people. As proof of this, here is a translation of an appeal made by a girl student, carried by the Shanghai *Women's Magazine*:

Sisters,

Ever since capitalism has existed, the whole social structure has been subject to its disastrous influence. Things which should belong to all, because produced by all, become the privilege of a few. Economic oppression enslaves men; it transforms women into chattels subject to the mercy of men!

For centuries, how many millions of people have been tied down in this way? How many millions of women have been sacrificed? When World War was raging, when millions of innocent people who longed for life were sent to die, Lenin stirred up the Russian proletariat and organized the Soviets in spite of the hardship and difficulties encountered.

Not only has he freed the men and women of his country, but he has shown the way to all disinherited people in the world. Notwithstanding the Whites' attacks from within and the blockade by capitalism from without, with his strong will, Lenin saved his compatriots from utter poverty and suffering, and showed the banner of the "International" to all oppressed people.

Does not all this merit that we should bow down to his great memory?

Must not the twenty-first of January remain forever a day of mourning for all toiling people?

Russia is advancing towards prosperity. However, there is still a long road to travel and much work to do to reach a genuine peace. Mankind is awakening, but it must struggle further to complete

its emancipation. And now, our master has suddenly been taken from us without being able to see the completion of his work.

Can people of good heart refrain from weeping? Must not oppressed men and women take up the burden he has left behind and march forward? Forward!

Dear sisters,

Let us commemorate with dignity the memory of the man who, all his life, fought against the poverty and oppression of mankind, and who until the day of his death struggled for the people of the world!

Lynching

August 26, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 59, pp. 628-629.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 330-336.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 99-105.

A LITTLE-KNOWN ASPECT OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

It is well known that the black race is the most oppressed and most exploited of the human family. It is well known that the spread of capitalism and the discovery of the New World had as an immediate result the rebirth of slavery which was, for centuries, a scourge for the Negroes and a bitter disgrace for mankind. What everyone does not perhaps know is that after 65 years of so-called emancipation, American Negroes still endure atrocious moral and material sufferings, of which the most cruel and horrible is the custom of lynching.

The word lynching comes from Lynch. Lynch was the name of a planter in Virginia, a landlord and judge. Availing himself of the troubles of the War of Independence,¹³⁸ he took the control of the whole district into his hands. He inflicted the most savage punishment, without trial or process of law, on loyalists and Tories. Thanks to the slave-traders, the Ku Klux Klan and other secret societies, the illegal and barbarous practice of lynching is spreading and continuing widely in the States of the American Union. It has become more inhuman since the emancipation of the Blacks and is especially directed at the latter.

Imagine a furious horde. Fists clenched, eyes bloodshot, mouths foaming, yells, insults, curses... This horde is transported with the wild delight of a crime to be committed without risk. They are armed with sticks, torches, revolvers,

¹³⁸ American War of Independence (1775-1783). The liberation war launched by 13 British colonies in North America against Great Britain in order to win their independence; this war brought about the founding of the United States.

ropes, knives, scissors, vitriol, daggers, in a word with all that can be used to kill or wound.

Imagine in this human sea a flotsam of black flesh pushed about, beaten, trampled underfoot, tom, slashed, insulted, tossed hither and thither, blood-stained, dead.

The horde are the lynchers. The human rag is the Black, the victim.

In a wave of hatred and bestiality, the lynchers drag the Black to a wood or a public place. They tie him to a tree, pour kerosene over him, cover him with inflammable material. While waiting for the fire to be kindled, they smash his teeth, one by one. Then they gouge out his eyes. Little tufts of crinkly hair are torn from his head, carrying away with them bits of skin, baring a bloody skull. Little pieces of flesh come off his body, already contused from the blows.

The Black can no longer shout: his tongue has been swollen by a red hot iron. His whole body ripples, trembling, like a half-crushed snake. A slash with a knife: one of his ears falls to the ground... Oh! How black he is! How awful! And the ladies tear at his face...

"Light up," shouts someone—"Just enough to cook him slowly," adds another.

The Black is roasted, browned, burnt. But he deserves to die twice instead of once. He is therefore hanged, or more exactly, what is left of his corpse is hanged. And all those who were not able to help with the cooking applaud now.

Hurrah!

When everybody has had enough, the corpse is brought down. The rope is cut into small pieces which will be sold for three or five dollars each. Souvenirs and lucky charms quarreled over by ladies.

"Popular justice," as they say over there, has been done. Calmed down, the crowd congratulate the "organizers," then stream away slowly and cheerfully, as if after a feast, making appointments with one another for the next time.

While on the ground, stinking of fat and smoke, a black head, mutilated, roasted, deformed, grins horribly and seems to ask the setting sun, "Is this civilization?"

SOME STATISTICS

From 1889 to 1919, 2,600 Blacks were lynched, including 51 women and girls and ten former Great War soldiers.

Among 78 Blacks lynched in 1919, 11 were burnt alive, three burnt after having been killed, 31 shot, three tortured to death, one cut into pieces, one drowned, and 11 put to death by various means.

Georgia heads the list with 22 victims, Mississippi State follows with 12. Both have also three lynched soldiers to their credit. Of 11 burnt alive, the first State has four and the second two. Out of 34 cases of systematic, premeditated and organized lynching, it is still Georgia that holds first place with five. Mississippi comes second with three.

Among the charges brought against the victims of 1919, we note:

One of having been a member of the League of Non-Partisans (independent farmers);

One of having distributed revolutionary publications;

One of expressing his opinion on lynchings too freely;

One of having criticized the clashes between Whites and Blacks in Chicago;

One of having been known as a leader of the cause of the Blacks;

One for not getting out of the way and thus frightening a white child who was in a motor-car.

In 1920, there were 50 lynchings, and in 1923, 28.

These crimes were all motivated by economic jealousy. Either the Negroes in the place were more prosperous than the Whites, or the black workers would not let themselves be exploited thoroughly. In all cases, the principal culprits were never troubled, for the simple reason that they were always incited, encouraged, spurred on, then protected, by the politicians, financiers and authorities, and above all by the reactionary press.

When a lynching was to take place or had taken place, the press seized upon it as a good occasion to increase the number of copies printed. It related the affair with a wealth of detail.

Not the slightest reproach to the criminals. Not a word of pity for the victims. Not a commentary.

The *New Orleans States* of June 26, 1919 published a head-line running right across the front page in letters five inches high: "Today a Negro Will be Burnt by 3,000 Citizens." And immediately underneath, in very small print: "Under a strong escort, the Kaiser has taken flight with the Crown Prince."

The *Jackson Daily News* of the same date, published across the first two columns of its front page in big letters:

Negro J. H. to be Burnt
by the Crowd at Ellistown
This Afternoon at 5 p. m.

The newspaper only neglected to add, "The whole population is earnestly invited to attend." But the spirit is there.

A FEW DETAILS

This evening at 7.40 p. m., J. H. was tortured with a red hot iron bar, then burnt... A crowd of more than 2,000 people... many women and children, were present at the incineration... After the Negro had been bound from behind, a fire was kindled. A little further away, another fire was kindled in which an iron bar was placed. When it was red hot, a man took it and applied it to the Black's body. The latter, terrified, seized the iron with his hands, and the air was immediately filled with the smell of burning flesh... The red hot iron having been applied to several parts of his body, his shouts and groans were heard as far away as in the town. After several minutes of torture, masked men poured petrol on him and set fire to the stake. The flames rose and enveloped the Negro, who implored to be finished off with a shot. His supplications provoked shouts of derision (*Chattanooga Times*, February 13, 1918).

15,000 people, men, women and children, applauded when petrol was poured over the Negro and the fire lit. They struggled, shouted and pushed one another to get nearer the Black... Two of them cut off his ears while the fire began to roast him.

Another tried to cut off his heels... The crowd surged and changed places so that everyone could see the Negro burn. When the flesh was entirely burnt, the bones laid bare and what had been a human being was but a smoking and deformed rag curling up in the flames, everyone was still there to look... (*Memphis Press*, May 22, 1917).

Men of all social classes, women and children, were present at the scene. Many ladies of high society followed the crowd from outside the prison, others joined it from neighboring terraces...

When the Negro's corpse fell, the pieces of rope were hotly contended for (*Vicheburg Evening Post*, May 4, 1919).

Someone cut off his ears, another removed his sexual organ... He tried to cling to the rope, his fingers were cut off. While he was being hoisted to a tree, a giant of a man stabbed his neck; he received at least 25 wounds.

He was several times hoisted up, then pulled down into the brazier. Finally a man caught him in a lasso, the end of which was attached to a horse which dragged the corpse through the streets of Waco. The tree on which the hanging took place, was right under a window of the mayor's house. The latter looked on while the crowd was in action. All along the way, everyone took part in the mutilation of the Negro. Some struck him with shovels, pick-axes, bricks, sticks. The body was covered with wounds from head to foot. A shout of joy escaped from thousands of throats when the fire was kindled. Some time after, the corpse was hoisted up high in the air, so that everyone could look at it, which raised a storm of applause (*Crisis*, July 1916).

WHITE VICTIMS OF LYNCHING

It is not only the Blacks, but also the Whites who dare to defend them, such as Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe—author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—who are ill-treated. Elijah Lovejoy¹³⁹ was killed, John Brown¹⁴⁰ hanged. Thomas Beach

¹³⁹ Elijah Lovejoy, Editor of the newspaper Illinois Observer, one of the participants in the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. On November 7, 1833, the racists lynched him and burnt the printing house of his newspaper. The murderers went unpunished.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, John (1800-1859) was one of the organizers of the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. He founded an abolitionist society, schools for black people, and helped the slaves flee to Canada. In 1855, together with his five sons he struggled against the slave owners in Kansas because the latter terrorized the local population. On October 16, 1839, the head of a group of 18 Whites and Negroes, he occupied the Government's arms depot at Parkersburg in Virginia. But he was not able to arm and lead the Negroes to rise up. The group led by Brown was encircled by the slave owners and government soldiers from Washington. In a fight two of his sons were killed, and he was severely wounded and arrested. Some days later, he appeared in Court on a stretcher. He was executed on December 2, 1859.

and Stephen Foster¹⁴¹ were persecuted, attacked and imprisoned. Here is what Foster wrote from prison,

When I look at my damaged limbs, I think that, to hold me, prison will not be necessary for much longer... These last 15 months, their cells have been opened to me four times, 24 times my compatriots have dragged me out of their churches, twice they have thrown me from the second floor of their houses, they have damaged my kidneys once; another time they tried to put me in irons; twice they have made me pay fines; once 10,000 people tried to lynch me, and dealt me 20 blows on my head, arms and neck.

In 30 years, 708 Whites, including 11 women, have been lynched. Some for having organized strikes, others for having espoused the cause of the Blacks.

Among the collection of the crimes of American "civilization," lynching has a place of honor.

¹⁴¹ Thomas Beach and Stephen Foster: Well-known abolitionists who actively participated in the liberation movement of the Negroes.

Imperialists and China

September 24, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 67, pp. 727-728.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 339-345.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 106-112.

Events in China have two sides: the conflicts between Chinese generals and the intervention of foreign powers. It is the latter which touches us most, because it determines the internal war and can have the most serious consequences.

Let us try to sum up the history of foreign interventions in the past in order to unravel the real cause, the main motive of the present intervention.

A FEW DATES

1635, The King of England sent an envoy to ask for authorization to trade with China.

1830, The British Ambassador asked for authorization to import opium into China. The request was rejected by the Middle Empire.

1836, The British smuggled 20,280 crates of opium into China.

1839, Great Britain declared war upon China to force opium upon her.¹⁴²

1841, Hong Kong was conquered, and paid a war indemnity of 21 million dollars, six million of which represented the value of the destroyed opium.

¹⁴² In 1839 the Manchu government sent the Chinese superintendent Lin Zexu to Guangdong to ban the trade in opium organized by British and American traders. On Lin Zexu's orders, 20,000 chests of opium were destroyed. Availing themselves of this opportunity, the British government declared war on China; but in fact, they had prepared for this war for a long time. The United States also actively participated in this aggression. China was defeated in this so-called first Opium War, and on August 29, 1842, the Chinese Government had to sign the Treaty of Nanjing. The main provisions of the treaty were: the cession of Hong Kong, the payment of 21 million taels of silver (1 tael=37.3 grams), and the opening of Guangdong, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai to foreign trade. Customs duties in these ports were to be fixed by mutual agreement. The Treaty of Nanjing was the first unequal treaty signed by China with a foreign country.

1856, Great Britain launched a new war to enforce the legalization of the sale of opium and the opening of Chinese ports to foreign trade.¹⁴³

1860, The Anglo-French army occupied Beijing. Concession: occupation of Victoria Island. Indemnity: 800 million taels of silver to France and 10 million pounds to Great Britain.¹⁴⁴

1874, Japan attacked China. Concession: renunciation of Chinese suzerainty over the island of Formosa and its colonization by Japan. Indemnity: 50 million taels of silver.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ In October 1856, the Customs authorities of Guangdong searched the lorch, Arrow, a Chinese opium junk flying the British flag which plied between Xiamen and Guangdong. Availing themselves of the opportunity the British government immediately launched the second Opium War against China. The French joined the British in the invasion. In December 1857 the Anglo French fleet captured Guangdong; in 1858 the allied fleet sailed north to occupy the Talca forts and sailed for Tianjin. In June 1858 the Chinese government surrendered and signed the Tianjin Treaties. The treaties included: war indemnities of four million taels of silver to the British and two million to the French; the opening of ten seaports and river ports to foreign merchant ships; the right of foreigners to trade in the interior, and the right to send missionaries to China, etc.

¹⁴⁴ As the conditions in the Tianjin Treaties did not satisfy the British and French interventionists, they declared war on China once more in 1860. They occupied Beijing and obliged the Chinese government to sign the Beijing Treaty, which had many even harsher conditions than before, especially the war indemnity of 800 million taels of silver which was paid to each of the allies; China had to cede Kowloon Point to the British; Britain and France had the right to recruit Chinese workers for their colonies.

In the sixties of the nineteenth century, in Xinjiang, the Dungan and Uighur people rose in revolt against the Manchu government and the feudal yoke. At the beginning the uprising was of a popular nature, but later on the leadership gradually passed over to the feudal Mohammedans, and the clergy in Cachegary (southern Sinkiang) appointed Jakoub-bek as emir of this Khanat. The British government intended to make use of Jakoub-bek, and founded a big state including Khanat Cachegary and the neighboring provinces. This state was to be an opponent to Czarist Russia, thus creating favorable conditions for Great Britain to meddle in the affairs of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. To prevent Jakoubbek from occupying the frontier zone of Kulgjinski (Illiski) the Czarist government occupied it in 1871. According to the St. Petersburg Convention signed in 1881, the Czar restored the greater part of this zone to China, but the Chinese government had to pay 900 million rubles to Russia as a management indemnity for this zone.

¹⁴⁵ At the end of 1873, a Japanese fishing-boat was driven by storm from Ryukyu to Taiwan. A fight between the crew of the vessel and the people of Taiwan broke out, and 40 Japanese were killed. Having had the intention to occupy Ryukyu and Taiwan, the Japanese government seized the opportunity to send 3,000 soldiers to invade Taiwan in 1874. Japan was actively backed by the United States in this aggression: the American Legendre was chief of staff of the

1876, War with Russia. Concession: territorial occupation. Indemnity: 900 million rubles.

1878, New British dispute. Concession: the right to extraterritoriality. Indemnity: 20 million taels of silver.¹⁴⁶

1885, France attacks.¹⁴⁷ Concession of Chinese suzerainty over Annam, colonization of this country by France.

1895, Japan attacks. Concession: renunciation of Chinese suzerainty over Korea, and its colonization by Japan. Indemnity: 20 million taels of silver.

1895, Russia, France and Germany attack. Concession: right of construction of railway lines. Indemnity: 3,000 million taels of silver.¹⁴⁸

expeditionary corps, which sailed to Taiwan in the American ship *New York*. As the aggressors were repulsed, the Americans and British offered to mediate. The Manchus were made to pay two million taels of silver in return for the withdrawal of the Japanese forces. In 1874, the Manchu government together with Japan signed a protocol which included: the acknowledgement of the massacre of Japanese subjects by the Taiwan people and the payment of 50 million of taels of silver to Japan as war indemnity. This allowed the Japanese to gain the upper hand, and they occupied the Ryukyu islands in 1879.

¹⁴⁶ In 1874, the British authorities in India armed an expedition to explore a trade route to Bamow (Burma) and Yunnan (China). The Chinese government dared not refuse the authorization, but informed them of the local people's unfriendly attitude towards the British. The coming of this expedition backed by a fairly strong army alarmed the local population. In February 1873, the interpreter of the expedition, named Margary, was killed in an armed clash. On this pretext, the British forced China to sign the Zhifu convention which included: the opening of four ports to foreign merchant ships, and the free movement of the British in Yunnan.

¹⁴⁷ Due to the outcome of the Sino-French war (1884-1885), a peace treaty was signed in Tianjin in 1885. The treaty provided that China was to recognize Annam, which was a vassal of China, as a French protectorate, and also to recognize French traders' privileges in Yunnan.

¹⁴⁸ In 1894, the Japanese militarists opened hostilities against China over the Korean question; Korea was then under Chinese suzerainty. Not only was the whole of Korea occupied by Japanese troops, but also the Liaodong Peninsula, including Port Arthur and Dairen, and Weihaiwei port in Shandong. Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed on April 17, 1895, China ceded to Japan Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula. Japan obtained the right to set up factories on Chinese soil. China undertook to pay Japan an indemnity of 20 million taels of silver. Korea was to become a Japanese protectorate. This forced Czarist Russia to adopt a stand against Japan. Russia, Germany and France jointly served a warning to Japan, forcing it to return Liaodong Peninsula to China. But China had to pay them an additional indemnity of 3,000 million taels of silver.

Japan intensified expansion of its sphere of influence, thus creating the required conditions for the signing of a treaty of alliance between Russia and China in 1896 to prevent aggression by Japan. Under this treaty Russia had the right to build the Chinese Northern

1897, German aggression. Occupation of Jiaozhou, right to exploit mines.¹⁴⁹

1897, Russian aggression. Occupation of Port Arthur.

1897, British aggression. Occupation of Weihaiwei.

1898, French aggression. Right to install telegraphy in southern China.

1900, Armed intervention of Great Britain, Russia, Germany, France, the United States, Italy, Austria and Japan (Boxer Rebellion).

Installation of foreign troops in Beijing and in important ports. Indemnity: 450 million taels of silver.¹⁵⁰

Railway in Manchuria. Shortly after this, France won the right to invest in the building of the Yunnan Railway, and Germany in the Shandong Railway. During these years the capitalist countries obliged China to sign conventions which allowed them to build 10,000 kilometers of railroads on Chinese soil.

¹⁴⁹ The end of the nineteenth century was marked by a fierce struggle among the imperialist countries for the partition of Chinese soil, and the control of the finances and main economic branches of China.

In November 1897, Germany occupied Jiaozhou Bay and the surrounding area. On March 6, 1898, a Sino-German treaty was signed providing for Jiaozhou to be leased to Germany for 99 years, and Shandong became Germany's sphere of influence.

On March 27, 1898, a Sino Russian treaty was signed, providing for China to cede Port Arthur and Dairen to Russia for a period of 25 years, and giving Russia the right to build a branch of Chinese Northern Railway to Dairen. Thus, Manchuria became Russia's sphere of influence.

In the dismemberment of China, the British imperialists played an important role. In February 1898, they forced the Manchu government to put the Yangtse Valley within the sphere of influence of Britain, and occupied Weihaiwei (May 1898) under the cover of land-lease.

France also obliged China to give up Guangzhouwan (1898) for them to lease, and to give them many privileges in Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan. Thus the south China provinces became a French sphere of influence.

¹⁵⁰ In 1899, the Yihetuan (Society of Righteousness and Harmony) uprising occurred; it had a popular and anti-imperialist character. It was given the name Boxer Rebellion because the Yihequan Societies (Society United in Righteousness) played the principal role in this uprising, many of whose members practiced "Chinese boxing" or martial arts.

In June 1900, the Yihetuan armed rebels occupied Tianjin and penetrated into the capital Beijing. To avoid the people's anger, the Manchu government pretended to support the uprising. The United States, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Austria, and Hungary intervened with the aim of repressing the uprising and making a further step towards the enslavement of China. On June 17, 1900 the armed interventionists occupied Port Tangu near Tianjin. The Manchu government played a treacherous role: on the one hand it pretended to declare war on the imperialist powers, on the other it sought every means to create difficulties for the revolutionary forces, and in fact it protected the foreign invaders.

Since the Great War, the imperialists have replaced open and armed banditry¹⁵¹ by veiled, diplomatic banditry. They are silently pillaging China, divided and unarmed as far as they are concerned, around the green baize table.

1919, The Versailles Treaty handed all German concessions in China over to Japan, though China was an allied country.

1922, The Washington Conference¹⁵² ratified the hold of Great Britain, France, the United States, and Japan over Chinese revenues, excise, salt-taxes, etc.

1923, Diplomatic notes from their ambassadors claiming for France, Great Britain, the United States, Japan and Belgium the right to manage the Chinese railways.¹⁵³

September 1924, naval demonstrations by the said powers off Guangdong.

On August 15, 1900 the allied armed forces penetrated into Beijing, the Manchu government left Beijing, proclaimed its capitulation to the foreign powers, and co-operated with them to repress the revolution. On September 7, 1901, the Manchu government signed the “Final Protocol.” Under its terms, China was to pay a very big indemnity of 450 million taels of silver. The payment was to be met from customs revenues and the salt tax. The imperialists had the right to occupy the 12 most important cities of China. A legation district was established in Beijing.

Juridically, the “Final Protocol” consolidated the transformation of China into a semi-colony of the imperialist countries.

Under the pretext of the murder of two German missionaries, Germany had the town and bay of Jiaozhou leased to it by China in 1897. It made of it a naval station, a trading port and an arsenal. The Japanese seized the place in 1914 and stayed there after the Versailles Treaty, notwithstanding China’s protests. The whole territory was given back to China after the Washington Conference.

¹⁵¹ See footnote 142, p. 200.

¹⁵² At the Washington Conference (1921-1922) owing to pressure from the people struggling against imperialism, the Chinese delegation had to demand the cancellation of the clauses concerning Shandong signed at the Versailles Conference and the abolition of fiscal and customs autonomy, the rights of extra-territoriality, “spheres of influence,” etc. But on February 6, 1922, a Treaty of nine Powers was signed at this Conference, and the above-mentioned claims were rejected. The Chinese delegation only succeeded in gaining the return of Shandong and obtaining the cancellation of some of the clauses relating to the rights of Japan in China. In reality, the resolutions of the Washington Conference were only imperialist schemes aimed at plundering China and repressing the national liberation movement of the Chinese people.

¹⁵³ See footnote 111, p. 135.

THE SITUATION IN CHINA

We have seen that, under different pretexts and by various means, the capitalist nations have intervened in the affairs of China only to achieve one unchanging result: to wrest from her territorial concessions and indemnities.

Now let us look at the economic and financial situation of this great country, possessor of an ancient civilization, which is the object of their desires.

Since 1895, China has contracted 16 loans, the sum totals of which are:

902,000,000 francs

61,500,000 sterling

64,368,000 dollars

115,000,000 yen

1,763,000 Dutch crowns

Customs duties, taxes from its markets; receipts from its railways, income from its industry, liquor and tobacco duties, revenue from the Posts and Treasury, the salt-tax, etc., were used to cover these loans.

The map of China shows that almost all the important ports, strategic points, and modern production centers are occupied by foreigners. And the map does not tell everything. It does not show how far the influence of foreign capital extends, nor how far the artillery of the hirelings of foreign powers can carry.

COLONIZATION OF CHINA

Despite all its weaknesses, and internal divisions, its 11,139,000 square kilometers are still too big a piece for the jaws of colonial imperialism to swallow at one gulp. And the brutal subjection of the 489,500,000 Chinese to the irons of colonial slavery cannot be carried out in one day. That is why China is being parceled out: a slower but more prudent means.

Another factor is slowing down the international colonization of China: the rivalry between the imperialists themselves.

France, in possession of Indochina, longs for control over South China. The expensive construction of the Tonkin-Yunnanfu railway is proof of this.

Great Britain, which possesses Hong Kong, would content itself, for the moment at least, with an economic colonization; it already has control over almost all the sources of production. What would be the use of bothering itself with the military custody of an immense territory? But not for anything in

the world will Great Britain let France become a big colonial power in Asia. And as awakened India begins to shake its economic yoke, British mercantilism must find compensation in China. Over-peopled Japan would be only too willing to take some Chinese provinces, which the United States does not want to allow; this would be dangerous for them. China appears to them as a market and a possible ally in a conflict with Japan.

The meaning of the present intervention

The imperialist aim in the present intervention is a double one. First of all, to get new concessions; then, and I think that this is the main point, to overthrow Sun Yat-sen. We know that the successive governments of Beijing always apply the same policy: within the country: corruption; outside it: passivity before the foreign imperialists.

Sun Yat-sen, “father of the Chinese revolution,” leader of the Guangdong government, has, on the contrary, always been faithful to his principles, even in the most difficult moments. The program of his Party—the Kuomintang—is a reforming one. It contains clearly anti-imperialist and anti-militarist points. This Party declares itself resolutely linked together with the oppressed peoples of the colonies and with the international proletariat. It sympathizes with the Russian revolution: unpardonable crime! French imperialism, oppressor of the Indochinese people, fears this troublesome neighbor whose subversive ideas might cross the frontier and infect her Annamese slaves. China has common frontiers with India and Korea. A united, free and powerful China would be the prologue to an independent Korea and a liberated India. Imperialist Britain and Japan cannot but become anxious. The danger, remote though it may be, conceived in its full breadth, is already real.

That is why today it is sought to liquidate Sun Yat-sen and his party, as yesterday’s efforts were made to strangle revolutionary Russia.

POSSIBILITIES OF AN ARMED INTERVENTION

Imperialist ultimatums come one after another. In Chinese waters, naval forces are being mobilized. Warships are being concentrated in Shanghai and the Yangtze estuary.¹⁵⁴ Will there be a direct intervention? That is only

¹⁵⁴ In order to put pressure on the Guangdong Government led by Sun Yat-sen, and support the anti-revolutionary forces of the comprador capitalists who were preparing revolts against Sun Yat-sen, the American and British governments, in September and October 1924, concentrated a big naval force in Guangdong.

a remote probability. In this new venture against the Chinese people, Great Britain is playing the leading part. Macdonald¹⁵⁵ will not dare to risk an open intervention. He will content himself with doing his best to help Sun Yat-sen's enemies. And the traditional tactics of British policy are continuing: waiting for the chestnuts to be pulled out of the fire.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTERVENTION

International capitalism has a mania for accumulation. The "Experts" Plan¹⁵⁶ is organizing the enslavement of the German workers. Interventionist diplomacy—gunboat diplomacy, says Sun Yat-sen—is paving the way for the slavery of the yellow working people. The definite enslavement of the German proletariat would unavoidably bring about the bondage of the American and European proletariat. The Dawes plan is a direct attack on the working class. The colonization of China would supply capitalism with absurdly cheap labor, lower wages in Europe and America, and consolidate the power of capital. The intervention in China is a direct attack on the international working class.

¹⁵⁵ Macdonald, Ramsay (1866-1937), leader of the Independent Labor Party and Labor Party; these parties advocated collaboration between classes and the so-called "gradual reform of socialism into capitalism."

In 1924 and 1919-1935, Macdonald was British Prime Minister. In 1931, a "national" government was formed by him, but in reality it was a conservative, Baldwin, who led it. He was expelled from the Labor Party. Macdonald was very active in the protection of British imperialism and in the introduction of various reformist illusions into the British working class.

¹⁵⁶ The "Experts Plan" or "Dawes Plan" was a plan which obliged Germany to pay a war indemnity. Its principal aim was to restore the potential of the German war industry (the authorities of the imperialist countries wanted to use it against the Soviet Union), and bring American capitalism into Europe. It was worked out in 1924 by a Committee of Experts created according to the resolution of the War Reparations Commission of the victorious countries. Banker Dawes, director of the biggest bank in Chicago, and closely connected with the Morgan group, was the chairman of the commission.

Bolshevist Barbarity

September 1924

Source: *Le Paria*, No. 29, September 1924.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 337-338.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 97-98.

The Soviets have put into effect the following program:

Free and compulsory education, general and polytechnical, for children of both sexes, up to 17 years of age; specialized and vocational education from this age.

Food, clothes, shoes and standard goods to be at the charge of the State.

Founding of a network of pre-school establishments, creches, kindergartens, homes, etc., aimed at improving social education, and freeing women.

Active participation of the working people in public education, development of “Councils of Public Education,” putting at the State’s disposal all citizens having a primary education, etc.

In higher education, granting of scholarships and various privileges to poor students, and chiefly to workers and peasants, so that they may have material means to go even to higher schools.

FRENCH “CIVILIZATION”

To spread the beneficent light of high civilization over the countries submitted to its motherly protection, France has provided 8,007 schools for 40 million “overseas French.” I am not exaggerating. Here are the official statistics:

<i>Colonies</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>
French West Africa	12,000,000	290	12,000
French Equatorial Africa	5,000,000	100	4,000
Indochina	19,000,000	2,965	148,000

Madagascar	3,000,000	789	78,000
Somaliland	64,000	2	250
Reunion Island	172,000	124	17,000
French India	270,000	52	9,000
West Indies	500,000	194	18,500
Guiana	54,000	23	2,000
New Caledonia	47,000	18	600

In Guadeloupe, 10,000 children have no schools. In “French” Algeria, in 94 years, only 35,000 pupils out of a population of 5,000,000 have been able to receive an education by driblets, whilst 695,000 little natives are condemned to ignorance. In Cambodia: 60 schools for 2,000,000 inhabitants! In Cochinchina (French for more than half a century): 51,000 pupils out of a population of 3,500,000 souls.

Fortunately, though we lack schools, France lavishes upon us brothels, opium dens and bars.

Civilization that Kills

October 1, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 69, pp. 753-754.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 346-352.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 113-119.

How the Whites have been civilizing the blacks—Some deeds not mentioned in history textbooks

If lynching—inflicted upon Negroes by the American rabble—is an inhuman practice, I do not know what to call the collective murders committed in the name of civilization by Europeans on African peoples.

Since the day the Whites landed on its shores, the black continent has constantly been drenched in blood. There, mass-murders are blessed by the Church, lawfully sanctioned by Kings and Parliaments and conscientiously perpetrated by slavers of all calibers, from yesterday's slave-traders to today's colonial administrators.

RELIGION

It was to spread the blessings of Christianity that, towards 1442, the knights of the Most Catholic King of Spain landed on the shores of Africa. Their apostolate began with massacres.

And in the end [said their logbook of the journey] our Lord, who rewards acts of kindness and ventures undertaken to His glory, has obtained for His faithful servant victories over His enemies. He has given us laurels for our work and recompense for our expenditures and we have, thanks to Him, captured 165 men, women and children, *not to mention the great number of killed and wounded.*

These pious conquistadors¹⁵⁷ instituted a tradition. The list of property confiscated from Jesuits in Brazil in 1768 contains, among salvation crosses and other objects of worship, irons for branding slaves.

For a long time, English societies “For the Propagation of Christianity” drew their missionary resources from the slave-traffic.

On February 12, 1835, Independent Church of the Parish of Christ’s Church (South Carolina) advertised in the local newspapers the sale of “a batch of ten slaves accustomed to cotton-growing.” How many of these deeds can be quoted!

The Churches in North America were the most resolute enemies of the abolition of slavery.

THE KINGS

From Charles V down to Leopold II, King of the Belgians, from the virtuous Queen Elizabeth of England down to Napoleon, all the crowned heads of Europe were engaged in the negro-trade. All colonizing Kings signed treaties and granted monopolies for the exploitation of black flesh.

On August 27, 1701, His Most Catholic Majesty of Spain and His Most Christian Majesty of France granted the Royal Company of Guinea a ten-year monopoly for the traffic in negroes in the colonies of America in order to obtain, by this means, laudable and mutual benefits for Their Majesties and their subjects.

His Britannic Majesty undertook to introduce into Spanish America 144,000 Indians of both sexes and of all ages in consideration of a payment of 33 piastre-crowns and 1/3 piastre per head.

THE SLAVE-TRADERS

In 1824, a slave-ship that had just taken on board Negroes from the shore of Africa bound for the West Indies, was given chase by a cruiser. During the chase, several barrels floated past the cruiser. It was believed that the slave-ship had got rid of its casks of water to speed its flight.

¹⁵⁷ Conquistadors: Spanish conquerors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who occupied immense areas in Central and South America. They enslaved and exterminated the natives in a most barbarous way. The word “conquistador” has become a derogatory term to designate aggressors, slave-traders, etc.

But when the ship was boarded, moans were heard from a barrel left on the deck. Two Negresses were found in it almost asphyxiated. The slave-traders had hit upon this means of lightening their ship.

An English ship saved a foundering slave-ship. Negroes as well as the crew were taken on. But when it was noticed that provisions were short, it was decided to sacrifice the Blacks. They were lined up on deck and shot down in cold blood with two cannons.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE SLAVES

The arrested Blacks were chained in pairs, by the neck, the arms and legs. A long chain linked them in groups of twenty or thirty. Bound in this way, they were forced to walk to the port of embarkation where they were bundled into the holds with no room, light, or air.

“For the sake of health” they were made to dance under a rain of whip-lashes once or twice daily. It often happened that, in the hope of making room for themselves, men strangled each other and women drove nails into their neighbors’ skulls. The sick, considered as damaged and unsaleable goods, were thrown into the sea. As a rule, at the end of the journey, a quarter of the living cargo had succumbed to infectious diseases or asphyxiation. The surviving slaves were branded and numbered with white-hot irons like cattle and counted in tons and bales. Thus the Portuguese Company of Guinea signed a contract in 1700 by which it undertook to supply 11,000 “tons” of Negroes.

More than fifteen million Negroes were transported to America under these conditions. About three million died or were drowned on the way. Those who were killed while resisting or during revolts have not been recorded. That infamous trade ended in 1850, giving way to a new form of slavery on a larger scale: colonization.

COLONIZATION

The examples of atrocities that we are going to quote if they were not proved by irrefutable documents or related by Europeans themselves would be hard to believe.

A French trader in Madagascar, noticing that a theft had been made from his cash-box, tortured with electricity many of his native employees suspected of the theft. It was discovered soon after that it was his son who had taken the money.

A colonial administrator forced a Negress to remain in the burning sun for a whole day with a heavy heated stone on her head. Then he had her tied and bound, and molten rubber poured into her private parts.

As he could not make his two native servants work for nothing, a colonist flew into a rage and tied them to poles, poured kerosene on them and burnt them alive.

Other colonists inserted dynamite cartridges into Negroes' mouths or anuses and blew them up.

A functionary boasted that single-handed he had killed 150 natives, cut off 60 hands, crucified many women and children and hung a great number of mutilated corpses on the walls in the villages under his administration. On only one of its plantations, a concessionary company caused the death of 1,500 native laborers.

Exceptional, isolated cases? No. Typical cases. But let us quote a few collective crimes which cannot be attributed to the barbarous instincts of a few individuals, but for which the whole system is accountable to history.

In our Algeria, [related a French writer,] on the confines of the desert I saw this. One day, some troops captured Arabs who had committed no other crime than fleeing from their conquerors' brutalities. The colonel gave orders to put them to death on the spot without investigation or trial. And here is what happened... There were thirty of them. Thirty holes were dug in the sand and they were buried naked therein up to their necks, their shaved heads exposed to the sun at its zenith. So that they should not die too quickly, water was poured on them from time to time as on cabbages... Half an hour later, their eyelids were swollen, their eyes starting from their sockets. Their swollen tongues filled their horribly gaping mouths... their skin cracked and roasted on their heads.

A Bangi tribe was unable to provide the quantity of rubber demanded by the concession. To force the tribesmen to make good the deficit, they had 58 women and 10 children arrested as hostages. They were deprived of air, light, food, and even water. From time to time, they were tortured. Their cries, according to the plantation owners, helped to speed up work. After three weeks of atrocious sufferings, a great number of the hostages were dead.

That year there was a drought. The crops had failed completely. That whole African region was desolated. The inhabitants ate grass and roots. Old people died of starvation. The civilizing government, however, demanded its taxes. The sufferers left their lands, gardens and thatched huts to the latter and took refuge in the mountains. The administrator sent out hunting dogs and troops in pursuit. The fugitives were caught in a cave and were killed by fumigation.

In 1895, the English massacred 3,000 Matabele rebels who had surrendered.

From 1901 to 1906, the Germans massacred no less than 25,000 *Hereros* in West Africa.

In 1911, the Italians turned the suburbs of Machiya into a slaughter-house for three days. Four thousand natives were massacred.

These mass murders were set forward as political principles. It was a policy of extermination. One government at the Cape has declared, “If the natives allow themselves to slip into disobedience or rebellion, they will be mercilessly swept out of the country; other peoples will take their place.”

Today, ten years after the war for “the right of peoples to govern themselves,” Spaniards and French continue their bloodthirsty advance into Morocco under the indulgent eye of the pontiffs of the League of Nations.

The history of the European advance into Africa—and the whole history of colonization—is written from beginning to end in the blood of the natives.

After massacres pure and simple, there are *corvées*, portorage, forced labor, alcohol and syphilis to complete the destructive work of civilization. The inevitable consequence of this monstrous system is the extinction of the black races.

It is of painful interest to juxtapose to these facts some figures. It will be seen that the rapid enrichment of some colonizers corresponds exactly with the no less rapid depopulation of the exploited regions. From 1783 to 1793 the Liverpool Company made about 1,117,700 pounds profit from the slave-trade. During the same period, the population of the regions visited by that company, lost 304,000 inhabitants. In nine years, King Leopold II received 3,179,120 pounds from the exploitation of the Congo. In 1908, the population of the Belgian Congo was 20 million. It was 8,500,000 in 1911. In the French Congo, tribes of 40,000 inhabitants dropped to 20,000 in two years; other tribes disappeared completely.

In 1894, the Hottentot population amounted to 20,000. Seven years of colonization brought it down to 9,700.

NGUYEN-AÏ-QUAC

Marshal Lyautey and the Declaration of the Rights of Man¹⁵⁸

October 17, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 71, p. 783.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 353-355.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 120-122.

The Satrap of Morocco Finds the Great Charter of the French Bourgeoisie Subversive and Dangerous.

The League of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (of 1924) had the naive idea of having the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of 1789 posted up in schools and public establishments in French Morocco. Marshal Lyautey—entrusted with enforcing the Rights of Man and the Citizen in Morocco—expressly forbade the display of this too subversive declaration. Unfortunately for the Moroccans and luckily for the French of 135 years ago, our generous Marshal was born some 75 or 80 years after the great Revolution, otherwise... But let us leave joking aside and come to the point.

In his letter to the Premier, the Marshal explained the ban as follows:

France has at present and for many years to come an initial role to fulfill towards the natives: to teach them their duty. Only when they know their duty can we talk about granting them the rights that their social condition and level of education will eventually allow of.

At present, it is *impossible*¹⁵⁹ to specify to our *protégés* the rights applied to French citizens in France, *especially* that ‘the principle

¹⁵⁸ *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, the political manifesto of the French bourgeoisie, the declaration of the foundations of the new bourgeois regime. This manifesto was drafted and adopted by the Constituent Assembly on August 26, 1789 during the French bourgeois revolution.

¹⁵⁹ The italics are ours—*Hồ Chí Minh*.

of sovereignty resides in the nation,' and that 'the law is the expression of will.'

Thus it is *dangerous* to display these principles in public places.

If need be, we might consider giving satisfaction to the League of the Rights of Man in premises exclusively frequented by French people, but, as a matter of fact, such premises do not exist in Morocco... etc.

That Lyautey considers the Declaration—which is the pride of his Republic and the honor of his forefathers a mere scrap of paper, that he treats with contempt a famous organization of bourgeois democracy and the great principles of 89-93, we don't care a fig about, and neither do the Moroccans. But we have to remind our brothers in Morocco of the following:

During the war for "rights"—for the rights not of Man and the Citizen, but of Vultures and Sharks—of 53,000 Moroccans who did their "duty" (40,000 workmen and 13,000 soldiers), 10,000 did it so well that they left their bones on the battlefronts. Other Moroccans also did their "duty," by supplying the mother-country at war with scores of thousands of tons of goods, by providing hundreds of millions of francs to the enforced "Victory loan" and compulsory subscriptions for the invaded regions, where the "barbarous Huns" did in 1914-18 what the civilized French have been doing in Morocco for twenty years, and are continuing to do there every day. In return for the bombs and good deeds of the Protecting Nation, the Moroccan peasants "made over" in the space of fifteen years hundreds of thousands of hectares of their best lands, going away and dying of starvation in the mountains or on barren *plateaux*. For the "French peace" they paid heavy taxes that grew heavier year by year. From 109,449,000 francs in 1918, these taxes rose to 171,953,000 in 1922. Out of these millions sweated for by the Moroccans, 96,000,000, that is one in three, was used to fatten the Lyauteys, and their like. (The expenses of the General Residence alone amounted to 25,000,000 francs.)

The Moroccans have thus done their "duty" well, their duty as slaves. But to merit the Rights of Man and the Citizen, they still have to do their duty as Men and Citizens, that is to say, to organize themselves and fight for the conquest of these rights, as the French people did in 1789 and as the revolutionary proletariat of our days is doing. This duty has not yet been understood by our brothers in Morocco. So Lyautey was right to think that alcohol, narcotics and prostitutes (public houses and brothels in Morocco grow in number 280

percent every five years) have a greater “civilizing” value and are more useful to colonization than the platonic *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*.

NGUYEN-AÏ-QUAC

Condemned Colonialism

October 28, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 73, pp. 811-812.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 356-360.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 123-126.

The experience of French Equatorial Africa

French colonization has many a failure to its “credit.” We are not the only ones to notice it. *Le Temps* of September 24 wrote about one of these particularly lamentable failures.

Indeed, it is a secret to no one that the situation in our Equatorial Africa does not measure up, far from it, to the expectations that could be formed when... the French flag first fluttered over its immense expanse appropriated rather than conquered by the Republic. Without exaggeration and without straining the meaning of words, it can be said that Equatorial Africa is now in a state of real regression. Its development is rudimentary, its equipment next to nothing. At present, its deficitary budget can be balanced only by the grant of government subsidies. Lastly—and still more serious—its people are wasting away and dying out, the demographic factor whose preservation, improvement and growth is nevertheless at the root of all colonial enterprise, is on the way to extinction.¹⁶⁰

And further on:

Moreover, mistakes have been committed, but it is useless to dwell on them. This is not the time for useless lamentations over the past but for preparing a better future. Our action in Equatorial Africa has, right from the beginning been paralyzed or distorted by errors of principle... that are still having deplorable conse-

¹⁶⁰ The Italics are ours –*Hồ Chí Minh*.

quences; besides, it is burdened by the weight of errors of method which must be urgently rectified.

What are the mistakes and errors whose deplorable consequence *Le Temps* complains of without giving the facts? They are the expropriation, and exploitation of the natives, they are portorage, forced labor, heavy taxes, civil and military recruitment, the seizing of hostages, atrocities inflicted on the people; they are the whole monstrous system of pillage and murder that has brought that colony to the sad situation in which it is today.

As early as twenty years ago, M. Auguste Chevalier—after having described the barbarity of the system of colonization—made this prophecy:

Soon, if this practice is carried on, if the burning and devastation of villages do not come to an end... the banks of the Congo as well as the regions of Oubangui and Sangha will be completely uninhabited... If this practice continues, in a century all the toiling races will have disappeared.

Parliamentary debates in 1906 revealed that in a circular issued by the management of a concessionary company it was stated, “Don’t forget that our agents must play the part of small scale pirates.” And a Governor General wrote to one of his officials, “I can be quite frank with you that in proposing your promotion, I shall especially rely on the collection of native taxes, which must be the object of your constant attention.” The following excerpt from a service register of about this time shows that these orders were obeyed to the letter:

Expedition against Kolowan village.

Against the Fans in Upper Cuno: village burnt down, plantations destroyed.

Against the Bakamis: village burnt down again, 3,000 banana-trees (the only food stocks) destroyed.

Against Kwa village: village burnt down, plantation razed.

Against Aloun: village bombed, then destroyed together with plantations.

Against the Esamfami: villages destroyed.

Carried fire and sword through Borne region.

Legalized pillage, systematic destruction of the people, organized devastation of villages, such was the method.

Sixteen years later, the attention of the French Parliament was again drawn to the same scandals.

In December 1921, the Negro M. P. Boisneuf, in a moving speech, said:

The population has been thinned out by the system to which it has been subjected since the occupation... The natives are killed by portorage and the intensive exploitation in which the concessionary companies have engaged.

On October 22, 1921, the acting Minister of Colonies issued a decree to the effect that a native workman paid for a certain job and not having completed it, may be arrested and prosecuted for swindling.

M. Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies, had to admit that the unfortunate inhabitants of this colony were on the verge of extinction.

He did his best to ascribe the cause of this depopulation to lack of hygiene, writing:

The inexpert and unhygienic handling of women during confinement... leads to sterility and a considerable proportion of poorly cared for children die in early infancy. Influenza has caused ravages amounting to tens of thousands among this native population already decimated by sleeping sickness.

To make good this state of affairs, what have they done? Only one hospital with 79 beds has been built in Brazzaville—capital of the colony! Means were even found to drag off 18,000 men during the war, from this population on the way to extinction—of course the healthiest and the strongest—to serve as cannon-fodder. A sum of 313,000 francs was raised in compulsory subscriptions for the ravaged regions in France, 7,323,000 francs in enforced loans, and 53,000 tons of goods, not including the countless days of *corvée* needed for the transport of requisitioned goods.

Such are the “errors of principle” that are turning this colony—a short time ago populous and prosperous—into a desert. Although our documentation is from official sources, we doubt that we have enlightened the faith of the sanctioning readers of *Le Temps*.

NGUYEN-AÏ-QUAC

The Ku Klux Klan

November 4, 1924

Source: *La Correspondance Internationale*, Vol. IV, No. 74, p. 827.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 361-366.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 127-132.

Its origins—Senator Sherman’s opinion (1871)—“100 percent Americanism”—“Emperor” Simmons—Lynchings in 1919—Why the KKK must disappear

The place of origin of the Ku Klux Klan is the Southern United States.

In May 1866, after the Civil War,¹⁶¹ young people gathered together in a small locality of the State of Tennessee to set up a club. A question of whiling away the time. This organization was given the name *kuklos*, a Greek word meaning club. To Americanize the word, it was changed into Ku Klux. Hence for more originality, Ku Klux Klan.

After big social upheavals, the public mind is naturally unsettled. It becomes avid for new stimuli and inclined to mysticism. The KKK with its strange garb, its bizarre rituals, its mysteries and its secrecy irresistibly attracted the curiosity of the Whites in the Southern States and became very popular.

It consisted at first of only a group of snobs and idlers, without political or social purpose. Cunning elements discovered in it a force able to serve their political ambitions.

The victory of the Federal Government had just freed the Negroes and made them citizens. The agriculture of the South—deprived of its black labor—was short of hands. Former landlords were exposed to ruin. The Klansmen proclaimed the principle of the supremacy of the white race. Anti-Negro was their only policy. The agrarian and slave bourgeoisie saw in the Klan a useful agent,

¹⁶¹ To defend and extend slavery, in 1861, the slave owner planters organized a mutiny aimed at setting up a government supporting slavery. They declared the secession of the southern federations from the United States (February 1861).

In April 1861, the Civil War between the North and the South broke out. The war ended in 1863 in the defeat of the southern slave-owners and the victory of the north.

almost a savior. They gave it all the help in their power. The Klan's methods ranged from intimidation to murder. In the space of three years it committed so many crimes and misdeeds that a number of those who supported it left it in horror.

Towards 1869, under the pressure of public opinion, the Klan was given the sack by its "Emperor." It had an Emperor, who, nevertheless, had only a purely nominal authority. The local Klans carried on their own existence and crimes. Professor Mecklin—to whom we owe these details—said that every page of the thirteen big volumes containing the investigations into the acts of the Klan in 1871-1872, recorded beatings-up of Blacks or Whites. These acts of violence were often done out of pure sadism. They were a favorite entertainment of the Klansmen.

A better knowledge of the Klan can be gained and a better judgment formulated by quoting the speech made by Senator Sherman of Ohio in the Senate in March 1871. "Is there," asked Sherman, "a Senator who can name—in searching through the crimes committed through the ages—an association or gang whose acts and designs are more diabolical or criminal than those of the Ku Klux Klan? The Ku Klux Klan is a secret association, formed on oath, and whose members murder, steal, pillage, bully, insult and threaten. They commit these crimes not against the strong and the rich but against the poor, the weak, the harmless and the defenseless."

Yet the Klan lived and "worked" for forty-odd years without too much sensation.

THE NEW KLAN

It was in October 1915 that William Joseph Simmons, the new "Emperor" of the Klan, together with 34 of his friends, brought the KKK on to the American scene again. Its program was 100 percent Americanism, that is to say, anti-Catholic, anti-Semite, anti-worker and anti-Negro.

It is to be noted that it was following the Civil War and the emancipation of the Blacks that the old Ku Klux Klan saw the light of day, its aim being to bar the freed people's way to a social life. During the World War, America enlisted in its army and navy hundreds of thousands of Blacks who were given promises of social and political reforms and who, having made the same sacrifices as the Whites, timorously claimed the same rights. A situation equivalent to a "second emancipation." Thereupon the new Klan sprang up.

It was again in the Southern United States—region of big planters and anti-abolitionists, the cradle of serfdom and lynching, the motherland of the old Klan—that “Emperor” Simmons founded the new “invisible Empire.” To an interviewer, William Joseph Simmons said regarding its objectives, “We are convinced that to ensure the supremacy of the white race we must wrest from the Blacks the franchises which have been granted them. The Lord’s will is that the white race shall be superior, and it was by a decree of Providence that Negroes were created slaves.”

Soon after the resurrection of the Klan, more than 80 beatings-up were recorded in the state of Texas alone, in one year, and 96 lynchings.

The Klan flourished especially in Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama and Arkansas. It was in those states that the victims of lynching were most numerous.

In 1919, the Ku Klux Klan burnt alive four Negroes in Georgia, two in Mississippi and one in Texas.

It lynched 22 Negroes in Georgia, 12 in Mississippi, ten in Arkansas, eight in Alabama and three in Texas.

It attacked or pulled down jails to lynch the Negroes who were kept in custody there five times in Georgia, three in Alabama, three in Mississippi, three in Texas and twice in Arkansas.

It lynched 12 women in Mississippi, seven in Alabama, six in Texas, five in Arkansas and five in Georgia.

It burned, hanged, drowned or shot down nine Negro former armed service personnel.

The Klan carried out other lynchings in other States, but we want to quote only definite figures.

THE DECLINE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

The Klan is for many reasons doomed to disappear.

The Negroes, having learned during the war that they are a force if united, are no longer allowing their kinsmen to be beaten or murdered with impunity. They are replying to each attempt at violence by the Klan. In July 1919, in Washington, they stood up to the Klan and a wild mob. The battle raged in the capital for four days. In August, they fought for five days against the Klan and the mob in Chicago. Seven regiments were mobilized to restore order. In September, the government was obliged to send federal troops to Omaha to put

down similar strife, In various other States the Negroes defended themselves no less energetically.

Like its predecessor, the new Klan has so shocked public opinion by its excesses that those who had approved of or joined it at the beginning are leaving it. Its internal quarrels, its scandals and financial frauds ended by sickening even the most indifferent and most tolerant people. The Senate has been compelled to prosecute it. Even bourgeois newspapers such as the *New York World*, *The Chicago Defender*, etc., are attacking it.

Its "100 percent Americanism" and its anti-workerism group against it 20 million American Catholics, three million Jews, 20 million foreigners, 12 million Negroes, all decent Americans and the whole working class of America.

At the last congress of Negro Associations, the following motion was carried:

We declare the Ku Klux Klan an enemy of Humanity; we declare that we are determined to fight it to the end and to make common cause with all the foreign workmen in America as well as with all those who are persecuted by it.

On the other hand, the emigration of Negroes from the agricultural South to the industrial North has forced the planters—threatened with ruin through shortage of manpower—to alleviate the lot of the black workmen, and, consequently, to condemn more and more often the methods and acts of violence of their agent: the Klan.

Finally, the Ku Klux Klan has all the defects of clandestine and reactionary organizations without their qualities. It has the mysticism of Freemasonry,¹⁶² the mummeries of Catholicism, the brutality of fascism, the illegality of its 568 various associations, but it has neither doctrine, nor program, nor vitality, nor discipline.

¹⁶² Freemasonry—a mystically religious doctrine which came into existence in Europe in the 18th century. The Freemasons were mainly aristocrats and representatives of the big bourgeoisie. They advocated the moral improvement of man and unity among themselves on the basis of love of one's neighbor. Modern Freemasonry prevails mainly in the United States and is of a most reactionary character.

Report on Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina¹⁶³

1924

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, pp. 69-74.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 1, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 500-520.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The class struggle does not manifest itself the way it does in the West. In terms of the workers, lack of consciousness, organization and resignation are the results. In terms of employers, there are no machines, the rice fields belong to a crowd of medium and small owners and those who pass for big money are pygmies compared to their counterparts in Europe and America; there are no Annamese millionaires. The richest people here are well-to-do rentiers.

Thus, if the peasant owns almost nothing, the landlord has no great fortunes either; if the life of the first is reduced to the bare necessities, that of the second is devoid of luxury; if the worker does not know how much he is being exploited, the employer is unaware of the instrument of his exploitation: the machine; the one has no union, the other no trust. One is resigned to his fate, the other moderate in his appetites. The clash between their interests is dampened. This is undeniable.

But some people say it's because we're in the Middle Ages! Oh! It would be exaggerated to compare the “*nha quê*” to the serf. Annam has never known the clergy and its tithes. The emperor reigned but did not care to govern. No doubt there were mandarins. But are they comparable to the feudal lords? No. First of all, the mandarins were recruited democratically; the selection process was open to all and everyone could prepare for it, free of charge. Secondly,

¹⁶³ The authorship of this document was unknown for very long time, as it was published from Moscow without any signature. Alain Ruscio's research showed that given the author's knowledge, style, and political line at that time, it could only have been written by Hồ Chí Minh. Moreover, during that period, the only Vietnamese living in Moscow was Hồ Chí Minh. In 2011, this document was included in the *Collected Works* with a footnote saying that while in all probability it was his document, it wasn't with 100% certainty. We chose to include it in this collection as well.

the authority of the mandarins was counterbalanced by the autonomy of the communes.

Indochinese society—and I could add: Hindu or Chinese society—from the point of view of economic structure, does not resemble the Western societies of the Middle Ages any more than it does of modern times, and the class struggle seems less fierce there than it is here.¹⁶⁴

Will the class struggle break out tomorrow, when Western capitalism has transformed the East? Probably yes, given the example of Japan.

But because of the increasing and fated Westernization of the East, Marxism will still be true there. There is no reason why the “historical foundation” of Marxism should not be completed by the addition of materials that the master didn’t have at his disposal in his time.

Marx built his doctrine on a certain philosophy of history, but which history? The history of Europe. But what is Europe? It is not the whole of humanity.

Marx tells us that the evolution of societies goes through three phases: slavery, serfdom, capitalism, and that in each of these phases the class struggle is different. Let us beware! Did the peoples of the Far East go through the first two phases? And have they not enjoyed peace for centuries, to the point of arousing the contempt of Europeans (lethargy, millennial torpor, etc.)?

As for its historical bases, revising Marxism to strengthen it by oriental ethnology. This is precisely the task that the Soviets are undertaking (our colonial commission recently received a letter inviting us to participate in this work). And the Soviets will succeed; because being above racial prejudices, they will spare the world the nonsense of Gustave Lebon and Henri Cordier.

(...)

Nationalism is the main force in the country. It is nationalism that caused the revolt of the taxpayers in 1908; it is nationalism that teaches the coolie to grumble; it is nationalism that makes the *nhà què* murmur in the face of the *corvées* and the *gabelles* (French colonial taxes and feudalism-inspired forced labor practices). It is still nationalism that pushes Annamite merchants to compete with the French and the Chinese, that rushes youth to the gates of the schools, that makes the revolutionaries flee to Japan and plot against Emperor Duy Tân in 1917.

The war transformed nationalism.

¹⁶⁴ “Here” refers to the city of Moscow, where Hồ Chí Minh resided at that time.

- 1° It was modernized by passing from one elite to another. It is the young Annam who leads it today.
- 2° It gained the masses thanks to the development of the urban element, and especially to the recruitment and return of “voluntary workers.”
- 3° In its hatred of the conquerors, it includes the Chinese and the Hindus established in the country.
- 4° It tends to legalize its demonstrations and its claims. On the one hand the administration makes concessions. On the other hand, the young people are abandoning the method of sudden rebellions that the old men resorted to, and today they are leaning towards the tactics of European revolutionaries: propaganda, grouping, popular insurrection. While the old people wanted independence right away, the young people demanded institutions that prepare for it (the native *Tribune* is called “the *constitutionalist* organ”).

(...)

Our program.

General guidelines.

Raise the native nationalism in the name of the CI (Communist International). This order from Moscow strikes the bourgeoisie as a bold paradox, but what does it mean? A wonderfully realistic policy. At the present time, nothing can be done for the Annamites without pressing on the great, if not the only, driving force of their social life. When their nationalism will have triumphed, it will still be a long time before most of the world is Sovietized, at which point this nationalism will inevitably turn into internationalism. In the meantime, their nationalism is harassing French imperialism and this is of immediate benefit to the CI.

A) IN INDOCHINA

Legal action will depend on the recognition of the Soviets by the French State. The first thing to do would be to set up Russian consulates in Saigon, Haiphong, Hanoi, Tourane. These consulates will naturally be centers of Bolshevik propaganda and of recruitment of native militants to be sent to Russia. The illegal action will consist in subsidizing a newspaper, distributing leaflets and especially pamphlets in the native language and in Chinese characters, and forming secret societies. As propaganda agents: natives, French and Rus-

sians, knowing the language of the country when possible, and working in a profession that puts them in contact with the native population (midwives, schoolteachers, country doctors, planters. A lawyer for the natives would be immediately popular). Create a Chinese communist section in Cholon.

B) IN JAPAN, CHINA AND SIAM

Enter into contact with the refugee groups. Create a consulate in Yunnan-Fu, a very important city located on the border of Tonkin, a wonderfully placed propaganda center. Obtain the recognition of the Soviets by Siam in countries where England, France, and America are continuously interfering. America has four advisors attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; England and France each have two in the Ministry of Justice. Why not Russia? Wouldn't having a consulate in Bangkok be at the crossroads of English India, Dutch Java, and French Indochina?

C) IN FRANCE

The Communist Group in Parliament will have two urgent tasks:

1) Recognition of the Soviets; 2) The abolition of the *Indigénat*.¹⁶⁵ In the course of the legislature, it will demand the prohibition of opium in Indochina; it will denounce scandals such as that of the Saigon monopoly. Given the enormous distance between France and Indochina, there can be no question of a parliamentary (election) campaign as was possible for Algeria and Tunisia.

The Colonial Commission will deal mainly with union organization. The Intercolonial Union will be able to justify its name. The *Paria* will be biweekly.

The colonial action of the PCF undoubtedly leaves much to be desired, but it must be recognized that the little it does no other party does, and that if it does not concern itself enough with the natives, it is because the natives do not give it enough attention. Its first duty is to train native militants, to train not only propagandists, but European-style revolutionaries.

¹⁶⁵ The "Code de l'indigénat," called "régime de l'indigénat" or simply "indigénat" by modern French historians, were diverse and fluctuating sets of laws and regulations characterized by arbitrariness which created in practice an inferior legal status for natives of French colonies from 1881 until 1944–1947.

D) IN RUSSIA

For this, call on Annamite students in Moscow or other centers (it would be premature to disdain intellectuals). Manual workers should also be sent, because it is necessary to train soldiers and sailors for the native red army and native factory cells capable of replacing the technicians of capitalism.

(...)

Conclusion: The possibility of an armed revolt in Indochina. To have a chance of success, an armed revolt in Indochina:

- 1° Must have the character of a popular insurrection and not of a rebel raid. The revolt must be prepared among the masses and break out in the cities, following the example of the revolutions in Europe, and not be unleashed suddenly at the Chinese border, following the method of the old revolutionaries.
- 2° It must be supported by Russia. The Soviets will provide weapons, money and technicians, soldiers and native sailors trained in Moscow. On the other hand, Russia must have a fleet based in the Pacific, strong enough to prevent an intervention against the natives by any power in agreement with France.
- 3° It must coincide with the proletarian revolution in France.
- 4° The cause of the natives must be in solidarity with that of the world proletariat every time communism wins the slightest victory in any country. As it is so in an imperialist nation (Germany, for example), it is all the more so for the Annamites.

Lenin and the Colonial Peoples

February 1925

Source: *Krasnaja Gazeta*, No. 2, 1925.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 147-148.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Writings*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp. 37-38.

Lenin laid the basis for a new and truly revolutionary era in the colonies.

He was the first to denounce resolutely all the prejudices which still persisted in the minds of many European and American revolutionaries. Everyone knows the theses of the Communist International on the colonial question.

The colonial question has been brought to the fore in all congresses of the Communist International, the Trade Union International and the Communist Youth International.

Lenin was the first to realize and assess the full importance of drawing the colonial peoples into the revolutionary movement. He was the first to point out that, without the participation of the colonial peoples, the socialist revolution could not come about.

He found the necessary methods for effective work in the colonial countries and stressed the need to turn to account the national revolutionary movement in these countries.

The colonial delegates to the various congresses of the Communist International will always remember the concern that Lenin, their leader and comrade, displayed for the colonial countries. He showed deep insight into even the most complex and purely local conditions of work. Everyone of us now has had time to convince himself of the correctness of Lenin's judgments and the value of his teachings. Lenin's skillful methods enabled him to stir up the least enlightened and most backward colonial peoples. Lenin's strategy on this question has been applied by Communist Parties all over the world and has won over the best and most active elements in the colonies to the communist movement.

Lenin's solution of the very complex question of nationalities in Soviet Russia is an excellent propaganda weapon for the colonies.

In the history of the colonial peoples weighed down with sufferings and deprived of their rights, Lenin is the creator of a new life, a beacon which shows oppressed mankind the road to liberation.

Problems of Asia

March 14, 1925

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. V, No. 19, p. 160.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 160-163

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 133-136.

*The internal war in China—Anglo-American.
Arms in the Pacific—Some Japanese Ideas.*

The great interest afforded by events in China is only heightened if they are considered as an integral part of the whole which is the general situation in Asia.

The civil war kindled in China is, in reality, but a duel between Franco-Japanese and Anglo-American imperialism.

Wu Peifu, the man of Anglo-American imperialism, has been beaten. Zhang Zuolin,¹⁶⁶ the man of Franco-Japanese imperialism, has won; but neither Japan nor France has carried the day. Because there is luckily a third force that has not been tamed by either imperialist group: I refer to Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary party.

Hardly had the Chinese generals laid down their arms—for how long?—than France claimed the overdue payments for the so-called Boxer compensation, Japan demanded the concession of radio-telegraphic stations, America demanded the carrying out of a plan on the lines of the Dawes plan and Britain claimed control of the Chinese railway lines. To all these claims, Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary national party, the Kuomintang, answered:

Halt! We claim the abolition of iniquitous treaties, the cancellation of humiliating concessions, in short, we demand that China,

¹⁶⁶ In September 1924, there broke out in China a civil war between the Zhili warlord clique headed by Wu Peifu and backed by Anglo-American imperialism, and the Fengtian clique ruled by Zhang Zuolin and supported by the Franco-Japanese imperialists. The Zhili warlords were defeated and fled from north China and Beijing.

in a word, belong to the Chinese and that the Chinese be free to settle their affairs as they think best. Then, we'll see.

That is why in this country Sun Yat-sen is one of the statesmen most hated and dreaded by the imperialists. But no less hated is Karakhan,¹⁶⁷ the Soviet ambassador to Beijing.

Since the Washington Conference, Japan is no longer allied with Britain. The latter, finding the activities in China and India of its former ally rather dangerous, has sacrificed Japanese friendship to come to a better understanding with Uncle Sam, whose interests in China can easily be reconciled with those of Great Britain. Being dropped in this way is but a beginning: Japanese imperialism will experience much worse! France, on the contrary, has lavished civilities upon her and granted her a preferential customs tariff for imports into Indochina. A poor favor that had no echo in the world, whereas, on the other hand, the explosions of the assassination attempt in Guangdong¹⁶⁸ were heard everywhere.

After this abandonment by the British, a ban on Japanese immigration has now been voted in America. Japanese imperialism cannot swallow this insult without a grimace. Protests and demonstrations of righteous indignation have answered it. Deserted by its ally of yesterday and insulted by its erstwhile enemy, the Nipponese have flown into a rage. The idea of pan-Asianism has occurred to them. Why not a Russo-Sino-Japanese alliance? The new idea is supported by university men and statesmen, among them the President of the Board of Financiers. The well-informed Western press, *La Revue Belge* for example, and especially the British press, views the suggestion with anxiety but pretends not to take it seriously.

Will the start of refitting work on the Singapore naval base, which will cost 11 million pounds put a full stop to Anglo-Japanese “friendship” and be an “effective” answer to the idea of an Asiatic alliance? It is, in any case, a concerted action by Anglo-American imperialism.

¹⁶⁷ Karakhan L.M. (1890-1937), an outstanding Soviet statesman. He was ambassador of the Soviet Union to China from 1923 to 1926.

¹⁶⁸ In June 1924 in Guangdong the Vietnamese patriot Pham Hong Thai hurled a bomb at Merlin, the Governor General of Indochina. He sought to escape by crossing a river but was drowned. Merlin's assassination and Pham Hong Thai's death—he has become a national hero of the Vietnamese people—had a great repercussion in Indochina and other Asian countries.

The United States with a naval budget of 300 million dollars and a fleet of 840 sea-planes, 18 battleships, 81 submarines, 103 destroyers, 113 cruisers and other small vessels carrying 4,785 naval officers and 86,000 ratings, is going to build eight new cruisers in order, it seems, to reach the "5-5-3" (Let us explain to the uninitiated that this is the formula for the proportion of naval forces established for America, Britain and Japan by the Washington "disarmament" conference). And big maneuvers of the American fleet will take place in the Pacific soon.

Japanese opinion notes: An Empire Conference and a Conference for the Defense of the Empire in London, the works in Singapore, big maneuvers in the Pacific, and wonders: Against whom are these preparations being made? Japan is the only armed power in Asia, the only rival of British and American imperialism in the Pacific. She feels directly menaced. Much restlessness has resulted in Japan. After the idea of an Asiatic alliance, that of a federation of yellow races came into being. "1,000 million yellow people," say the promoters, "have to rid themselves of the rule of 160 million Whites."

An unrealizable idea owing to Nippon's selfishness and the example it sets. While protesting against the American law on yellow immigration, and proclaiming itself the champion of the oppressed yellow races, Japan is expelling from its territory more than 6,000 Chinese workers and is going to continue expulsions of "foreign workmen." As for what the Koreans think of her sincerity, it is better not to speak of it.

To the Japanese of ten years ago, the Mikado was divine; it was an honor to carry arms in the divine Emperor's service. The Japanese of today has a completely different cast of mind. During a visit by the imperial family to the outskirts of Tokyo, the police arrested 3,400 young people as a precaution! A significant precaution! The government wanted to introduce military training in the school curricula. Professors and students unanimously opposed it. Chauvinism, even assisted by Anglo-American threats, is no longer as successful as of yore. Will the young Japanese generation realize that salvation lies in an understanding among the proletarians of all countries? What is certain is that it is developing quickly and to the left.

To end these notes here is one detail: The dream of a "federation of the yellow races" had hardly been expressed in Japan, when an American senator, M. Britten, proposed the convening of a "Conference of the Whites of the Pacific."

“Rule Britannia” China, India, the Sudan

April 8, 1925

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. V, No. 33, p. 247.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 167-168.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 137-138.

The Conservatives' return to power¹⁶⁹ has given new strength to British imperialism. It means to carry out an active and “strong” policy in China. It was, to begin with, proposed at the London conference of last November 24, that the Chinese railways be controlled and supervised by military forces belonging to America, Japan, Belgium, France and Britain. Great Britain, having the biggest investments in these railways would play a decisive part in the control and occupation of the railway network. This “fine” project has not yet materialized.

At the beginning of this year the official capital of British India suddenly found the “Defense of India Act” of 1919 applied to it—a special law establishing martial law. Under this regime, all British officials and policemen from the rank of inspector up have the right to proceed to the arrest or imprisonment of suspects, without trial. Colleges, student-houses and a hundred or so buildings were searched in one morning. Hundreds of arrests were made. We shall mention among the detained persons: S. Chundar Bose, leader of the Executive Committee of the Hindu National Congress;¹⁷⁰ Baran Roy, the provincial secretary of the same Congress; S. Mitter, the secretary of the Swara-

¹⁶⁹ In October 1924, the Conservatives headed by Baldwin formed the government, replacing Macdonald's Labor government.

The new government carried out a policy of open reduction of the living standards of the masses and refused to ratify the Anglo-Soviet treaty signed in 1924.

¹⁷⁰ The Indian Congress Party was founded in 1885 with the object of fighting British rule. It united in its ranks representatives of all classes and groups in Indian society: bourgeois, landlords, intellectuals and a section of the toiling people. The Party's official ideology was the program of “non-violence” which was set forth by Gandhi, the leader of the Congress. At present, the Congress Party is a bourgeois party leading the Republic of India.

jist party¹⁷¹ and many other well-known and respected Swarajists. Offices of Hindu societies were occupied by troops and police. The British authorities in Bengal again tried to overcome all their political difficulties by force.

I shall not recall here the events in Japan and Egypt which are still fresh in everyone's mind. What is not so well known is that for a very long time English businessmen have cherished the dream of a "cotton policy" in Africa, to be energetically pursued. It would be a question of turning the Sudan into a vast plantation and diverting the course of the Upper Nile. A plantation irrigated in this way could produce a wonderful yield; but agriculture in the Lower Nile would suffer seriously from the alteration of the course of the fertilizing waters. Hence the Egyptians opposed the implementation of this plan. Sirdar Sir Lee Stack's assassination¹⁷² gave the British the pretext to untie their hands completely in the Sudan; they are henceforward the sole masters there; the bloodshed in the Sudan and in Egypt will perhaps serve them only to fertilize the soil of the Sudanese plantation.

¹⁷¹ Swarajist (from the word "Swaraj" meaning autonomy, independence). This was the party of a section of the Indian bourgeoisie, closely related with the landlords, and was set up in 1923 within the Indian National Congress. Although the struggle for independence of India was mentioned in the Party's program in practice, the Swarajists urged co-operation with the British administration, expecting that India would be granted dominion status. It disintegrated during the upsurge of the revolution in India (1928-1933).

¹⁷² On November 19, 1925 a group of terrorists killed Lee Stack, Governor-General of Sudan. On this pretext, the British government exacted withdrawal of the Egyptian troops and administration from Sudan and abolition of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of January 1899 on the joint administration of Sudan, which was called condominium.

Reply to Mr. H.¹⁷³

April 9, 1925

Source: Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 169-179.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Thank you for sending me both of your notebooks (*Cách Mệnh*).¹⁷⁴

I have read them all. You also asked me to review them. Well, so be it.

In terms of criticism, I owe it to you to be honest about what I think. I cannot believe that all my remarks will be wrong, but I beg you to refute all those that may seem absurd. This discussion will be useful to both of us.

I must begin by saying that I am amazed by the boldness and goodwill you have shown in writing these two texts. Your audacity resides in the fact that you have written in *quốc ngữ* on such a vast subject that no one, until now, has dared to tackle. You have shown good faith, and this can be seen in the pages you have written. Of course, these 32 pages are not enough to make a book, but if they are destined to be published in some newspaper, it would already be quite a success!

Your text is rich in historical allusions and quotations. It proves that you like reading.

Now begins my criticism. I always know that criticism is easy and that making art is difficult. For example, when I look at a drawing, it is easy for me to point out this or that flaw and to point out this or that merit. When someone plays a piece of music for me, I am able to judge him according to the merit of his talent. But if you tell me to take a brush and make this drawing, or to take a stringed instrument and make it produce a sound, I will have to decline...

I said above that your work is rich in allusions; but I fear that there are too many of them. Allusions are good to use; but if one overuses them, it exhausts

¹⁷³ Nguyễn Thượng Huyền, an intellectual working closely with Phan Bội Châu, an important Vietnamese nationalist. It was later discovered that Thượng Huyền was secretly communicating with French intelligence about Phan Bội Châu to avoid facing jail time, which led to Phan's arrest in June 1925. This explains how the original copy of this letter ended up in the files of the French intelligence.

¹⁷⁴ *Cách Mệnh* was written not only by Nguyễn Thượng Huyền, but also by Phan Bội Châu.

the reader's patience, for the magnificence of our expressions very often conceals the confusion of our ideas. There is a French proverb: "To promise more butter than bread."¹⁷⁵ I do not believe that a text must be lengthy to be of any interest. When it contains just what needs to be said, when it is within the reach of everyone's intelligence, when it gives food for thought to all its readers, it is interesting and well written. My opinion is supported by the testimony of the following two quotations:

In the book of the *Analects* we find this sentence: "Zeng¹⁷⁶ replied: 'Yes.'"¹⁷⁷ This sentence consists of only one word. And this word is more than enough to demonstrate Zengzi's energy and knowledge. When we read this word, don't we imagine ourselves contemplating the joy in Confucius' eyes, and the cheerfulness of the master talking with his disciple?

I defy anyone to add or subtract a word to this sentence. It is a truly pure and elevated style.

Once, a general of Napoleon found himself surrounded at Waterloo. He was told by his enemies to surrender, and he shouted out the following expression: "Merde! [Shit!]" It contains only one word. And this word is a rude word. But in the critical situation in which this general found himself, a thousand other sentences would not have been able to express any better his contempt for the enemies than this word of valor. This single word was enough for this general to rally his troops. This single word was enough to make him known all over Europe. It is still mentioned in contemporary history books and it is known by all the French.¹⁷⁸

A sober, concise style thus prevails over an emphatic one.

Our language is a poor one. In order to express ourselves, we are forced to borrow many words from foreign languages, especially from Chinese. I am

¹⁷⁵ Meaning: "To promise more than one can deliver."

¹⁷⁶ Zengzi (505-435 BC), was a disciple of Confucius. He is known for having put forth the idea that the Earth was round.

¹⁷⁷ *Analects*, IV.15, "The Master said, 'Shan, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.' The disciple Tsang replied, 'Yes.'"

¹⁷⁸ Pierre Cambronne (1770-1842) was a general of Napoleon defeated in Waterloo. Propagandist newspapers, to cover the shame of the French defeat, embellished the story, reporting that when surrounded he said "The Guard dies but does not surrender!" and continued fighting. Cambronne denied this, saying it was ridiculous as he wasn't dead and did actually surrender. Asked what he answered to the British calling on him to surrender, he said that he answered, "Merde!" This incident became popularly known as the "word of Cambronne."

of the opinion that the excessive use of Chinese terms, except for the usual words, known to everyone, as well as new ones, such as Bolshevism, finance... makes it difficult to understand a text. You say that we should familiarize our compatriots with the words they don't know yet, for in time they will come to understand them. This is fine if you are only concerned with composing a literary work for them... But if your writing is intended to be propaganda, it must be understood by all. A well-written, but unintelligible piece of writing is of no use. Ask, for example, our compatriots to listen to a French or a Chinese singer: no matter how great a performer our musician may be, he will not be able to attract their attention!

Let me divide my criticism into two parts: the first part is about the form of your writing, and the second part is about the content.

PART ONE

Page 1—If you go and tell the people of my village: “We must educate each other; let he who has any knowledge instruct him who has none...” you will be understood by everyone. But if you tell them about the drum and the bell... few people will understand what you mean.

Page 2—You say “Who, by their strength, resists the effects of the eastern winds...” Why not this straightforward argument: “The French will not allow...”? This long sentence: “Outside, a stranger slows down his pace to look around to see if there is someone behind the door” is certainly not as good as this one: “a thief sneaks in,” which says the same thing in only a few words. If we want to catch the thief, we have to name him so that everyone knows what it's all about. What is the use here of circumlocutions?

Page 3—“The term revolution is also used to describe [these changes]” is not as clear as: “They are also called revolution.”

Let's replace “contesting wealth, power...” by “unconditionally declaring war...” We can thus cut out a lot of words from the sentence, making it clearer.

Page 4—You have written “Nicholas II” and “Washington.”

Why didn't you add “Gandhi?” The Chinese pronounce the two characters Gan Di; and it is true that when pronouncing them in Annamese you will get Kam-dia, which does not reproduce Gandhi's name at all. When it comes to writing down the name of a foreign man or village in Annamese, I think it is

better to write down the exact pronunciation of this name rather than to use its interpretation in Chinese.¹⁷⁹

Since we have understood what is meant by “tẩy chay”—a term whose origin I do not know—why do you add this explanatory circumlocution: “non-cooperation movement?”

If you wish to use new words, you can use the word “boycott,” a short word which is in use in many countries.

Page 5—“How great and humanitarian the Revolution is!”: it is unfortunate that the meaning of this beautiful sentence will inevitably be lost to those who have not studied all the characters! The same observation applies to the following eight sentences.

“...inevitable sacrifices, necessary consequences”; what a pompous style!

You write: “resist in a passive way,” and in brackets: “passive resistance.” By means of a French explanation, you clarify a Chinese expression to the Annamites who know neither Chinese nor French! And then you add: “[it is] the only effective weapon!”

If you intend your book to be read by people who know both Chinese and French, I have no objections to formulate. But if you want to be read by farmers and workers, you should rather use the Annamite language.

By writing: “When one calls for the freedom of one’s masters, one is under a very strange illusion...” you mean: “one is unwise” or even “one is stupid.” But in your attempt to embellish your style, you have put “one is under a very strange illusion!” When one has great illusions, one never asks for the freedom of one’s oppressors... As for the sentences: “only then we agree to separate from you with weapons in our eyes...” and “with no weapon in our hands,” it feels too much like Chinese!¹⁸⁰

By translating, in a literal sense, the two Chinese characters “mu-yu” (母語) and the French expression “langue maternelle” [“mother tongue”] into

¹⁷⁹ Today’s Vietnamese is written in *quốc ngữ*, meaning with a Latin alphabet and diacritics to express different tones, but up to the early 20th century, a system called *chữ Nôm* using Chinese characters was used. Here, Hồ Chí Minh criticize Huyền’s use of this system for Gandhi’s name (while he uses *quốc ngữ* for “Nicholas II” or “Washington”) because it makes impossible to know to whom he refers. Less than 20% of literate Vietnamese people knew *chữ Nôm* in 1925.

¹⁸⁰ The French expression “les larmes aux yeux” (“with tears in our eyes”), rhymes with “aucune arme à la main” (“with no weapon in our hands”).

Annamese, you will not be understood by the peasants and workers... only a few secretaries and interpreters will be able to get the message.

Why didn't you translate these foreign expressions by "our language" or "the language of our country" so that everyone can understand?

Let us end here. I have already said enough on this subject. Please revise your text. If I were to continue, I might become the kind of person who enjoys looking carefully for the mistakes of others.

PART TWO

1—You claim that the phrase "Cách Mệnh" is from the *Book of Changes*.¹⁸¹ This may not be true, but I cannot say for sure. But I do not believe that the Chinese, when using the expression "Cách Mệnh," draw it from the *Book of Changes*.¹⁸² Rather, they have translated it from Western languages. The Chinese expressions for "reform," "economy," "independence," "society"... were all "created" accordingly.

In the French language, we can find the words "réforme," "évolution," and "révolution." An evolution is a series of successive and peaceful transformations. Reforms are more or less numerous changes brought about in a country's institutions, accompanied or not by violence. After the implementation of reforms, there always remains something of the former system. Revolution completely replaces an old regime with a new one.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *Yi Jing*, commonly known as the *Book of Changes*, is one of the Five Chinese classics. It was written sometime during the Western Zhou period (1000-750 BC) and contains a divination system that was used to predict various things ranging from business to health and family.

¹⁸² The Vietnamese term *Cách Mệnh* comes from the Chinese *Gémìng*. Huyền claims that when the Chinese revolutionaries use this word, they refer to the concept from the *Yi Jing*. Hồ Chí Minh disagree here saying that the concept associated with this word at that time actually originated from the Western language.

¹⁸³ In the 49th chapter of the *Yi Jing*, it says: "Heaven and earth undergo their changes, and the four seasons complete their functions. Tang and Wu made revolutions [*Gémìng*] in accordance with the will of Heaven, and in response to the wishes of people. Great indeed is what takes place in the time of change." The concept as it is used here has more to do with reforms.

By today's understanding of the revolution, Cheng Tang¹⁸⁴ and Wu Wang¹⁸⁵ did not fully accomplish the work of the revolution. When they fought against Kings Zhou and Jie, they put the country in a state of revolution, but when Zhou and Jie were defeated, they proclaimed themselves emperors, keeping the monarchy in place. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that they carried out a revolution.

Gandhi is a reformer, not a revolutionary. He asked the English government to bring about reforms in the various institutions of the country and he never incited the Hindus to revolt and regain their independence—nor did he ask the English to carry out radical changes in the government of India. And it was not until the British had rejected all his demands that he called for a boycott. (A boycott is an action, not a party.) In India there is a National Congress; Gandhi is one of its leaders, not its founder.

It is not only governments that are subject to revolutions. Any change in the way things happen in the world can be called a revolution. Darwin is a revolutionary naturalist. Karl Marx is a revolutionary economist.

2—In the section where you criticize the actions of the French government, you have repeated twice the observations you made regarding the education it provides us and the books and newspapers it allows us to publish—first on page 12 and then on page 16. You have completely forgotten to speak of the *corvées* and taxes to which we are subjected; of the opium and alcohol that are sold to us; of the recruitment of coolies to carry out chores; of the ban on selling salt; of the fact that our compatriots are being taken to Tahiti where they serve as slaves... We certainly suffer a great deal from the fact that the French forbid us to form associations and refuse to give us sufficient instruction, but few of us are capable of composing books and writing newspapers...

You say: "Today a few small industries are slightly more developed than in the past." Which industry do you have in mind? Have they developed thanks to the impulses given to them by the French, or thanks to their own efforts? Does this development benefit the French or does it benefit our own people? Are these industries more developed than those of countries not under French

¹⁸⁴ Cheng Tang (1675-1646 BC) rebelled against the emperor Jie, and after defeating him became the first king and founder of the Shang dynasty.

¹⁸⁵ King Wu of Zhou (?-1043 BC), first king of the Zhou dynasty. He defeated King Zhou, the last king of the Shang dynasty.

rule? While mentioning the “crimes” of our enemies, wouldn’t it be appropriate to talk about that too?

On page 13, I noticed this sentence:

Even those who were devoted to the cause of the revolution are inclined to believe that autonomy will be given to Annam when all the reforms will have been made in the institutions of the old regime. The few who remain faithful to the cause of the revolution will be forced to keep quiet. This is due to our foolishness and the unwillingness of our fellow citizens to act. Some do not know which path to take, others do not know how to lead the way. We are being punished for our foolishness, as we are only capable of complaining about the French. They are looters: if they didn’t know how to behave as such, they would merely be fools. We are the victims: if we don’t know how to react, it is we who are the fools. We are stupid, and we complain that others are intelligent; what a waste!

You say that our revolution did not succeed because the French are brutal!

What is it that you want? That they let us have the freedom to do whatever we want, to look for ways to stand up to them? Do you want the French to do nothing to prevent us from harming their interests? Instead of blaming others I think it is much more reasonable to blame ourselves. We must ask ourselves: “Why do the French manage to oppress us? Why are we as a people so foolish? Why have we not been able to carry out the work of the revolution? What is it that we must do?”

You want the Annamite people to engage in revolution like the Egyptians, or in boycotts like the Hindus. Very well! But you forgot to say why the Egyptians were able to carry out a revolution, why the Hindus were able to boycott the English.

Let’s imagine three different cars: the first is the Hindu car; the second, the Egyptian car; and the third, the Annamite car. The first two cars have their wheels well adjusted and are sufficiently supplied with gasoline and oil; their engines are in good shape and are driven by two or three skilled pilots, taking turns at the wheel. The third car consists only of its body; its wheels are badly fixed; it lacks oil and gasoline; it has no driver—and you are expecting the

third car to follow the first two while the former are in perfect condition? But how could it even start driving in the first place!?

In India and Egypt, the various political parties have many members, some of whom are in charge of propaganda, others of the organization of associations. One finds examples of such associations among students, farmers, workers, civil servants... All of them blindly obey the orders of their parties. Propagandists keep the people on the alert. All know how to love their fatherland, all know what revolution is about. The programs of each party are very well studied; they contain detailed instructions for the execution of every project. Each party has a solid foundation and many members, with strict regulations.

I will quote below a few facts that should not be unknown to you:

When Gandhi expresses the need for 1 million piasters in order to be able to declare a boycott, within three days the people contribute more than 2 million piasters. When one of the party members is arrested by the British government, others come forward to suffer the punishment in his place. When a person, for example, is sentenced to one month in prison, 30 others come to be locked up in his place; if he is sentenced to two months, 60 people come forward so that the party's business does not suffer from their absence;

The day the nationalist party of Egypt published a manifesto, eight of those who signed it were arrested and exiled by the British government. The next day, eight other nationalists signed the same manifesto—they were also arrested. Eight others repeated the same gesture. The British would have liked to arrest them, but they did not dare to do so, because they realized that the agitation was spreading among the people.

Are such things possible in our country? Do we already have such political parties in our country?

You say that a peaceful revolution does not lead to death. Well, it does! In 1908, in Annam, complaints against taxation were presented without violence, and yet, how many people were put to death by the French, how many people were exiled?

We have no party yet, we have not been able to make any propaganda, we have not been able to organize anything, and you are asking our people to boycott the French! Yes, I have read your six pages "on the arrangements" to be made. You want to form the league of people's representatives with the students, the shopkeepers?

When I read this I thought of one of La Fontaine's fairy tales, called "Belling the Cat."

The story goes something like this: In a house there lived a cat, who was waging a fierce war against the mice. The mice decided to tie a bell to the cat's neck, so that the sound of the bell would warn them when the cat was on the hunt and allow them to escape in time. But no one was willing to tie the bell to the cat's neck.

None of the mice mentioned by La Fontaine in his fairy tale dared to go and tie the bell to the cat's neck: they all hated their enemy and agreed to take him on. As such, the mice are superior to the "Annamite rats" who are not even capable of despising the "French cats," and who do not know how to get together to plot their downfall, out of fear that one of them will inform the latter!

The so-called descendants of the Dragon¹⁸⁶ are not even as strong as mice! What a shame, isn't it?

To establish a league of people's representatives, you start with mentioning the AFIMA.¹⁸⁷ Do you intend to call Hoàng Trọng Phu¹⁸⁸ and others to the rescue of the Annamite people in their struggle against the French? I don't know if you are joking, or if you are being serious... In the latter case, I propose that you form an "Association for the Salvation of Annam" with the Governor General, the Senior Residents, the Resident Administrators, as well as with the secret agents, if Hoàng Trọng Phu and the others would not be enough. Then we will tell them to go and defend the Annamites against the French. My proposal is as "reasonable" as yours!

This letter is getting very lengthy, and I do not want to abuse your patience; but allow me to summarize myself in these few lines.

The subject you are dealing with is the revolution. I could divide your text into four parts:

¹⁸⁶ In Vietnamese mythology, the Vietnamese are the descendants of Âu Cơ, a mountain fairy, and of Lạc Long Quân, a dragon.

¹⁸⁷ Association pour la Formation intellectuelle et morale des Annamites (Association for Intellectual and Moral Formation for Vietnamese) was an organization formed in 1919 by a decree of the Albert Sarraut. Its bylaws stated that its goal was to "spread... the ideas and sciences of the Great France; encourage the people... to defend French and Vietnamese economic interests" (*Nam Phong*, January 10, 1919). Hồ Chí Minh ordered the dissolution of the organization only three weeks after the founding of the republic.

¹⁸⁸ Hoàng Trọng Phu was the chairman of the AFIMA.

- 1— Explanation of the expression “Cách Mệnh”;
- 2— Criticism of the actions of the French government;
- 3— Arrangement for the boycott;
- 4— Translation of a passage from a French magazine.

You have written 32 pages.

The translation occupies 5 pages.

The provisions for the boycott occupy 6 pages;

The preface takes up 1 page.

You have written 20 pages about the revolution itself. In these 20 pages, you have not said: 1—What to do prior to the revolution; 2—What to do during the revolution; 3—What to do after the revolution.

You did not talk about the strength of the French (at home) and our own strength.

You have confused the boycott with the revolution and vice versa.

You begin by sounding the drum and the bell and end by giving a translation of a French magazine, which, by the way, is not even a revolutionary magazine.

I have told you frankly what I think of your work, and I also want to take this opportunity to provide you with material for discussion, hoping that I might also expand my own knowledge. Frankly speaking, I praise your high intelligence and great merits with all my heart. Any worker, even a very intelligent one, can sometimes make mistakes. Only idle people do not make mistakes. But I would rather make mistakes by practicing than by doing nothing!

Continue working hard!

L. T.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ From November 1924 to May 1927, Hồ Chí Minh was sent to China to organize the Vietnamese community in Southern China. During his stay, he used the pseudonym “Lý Thụy.” Unclassified files from the French Intelligence show their deep confusion regarding the identity of Lý Thụy, as Ho arranged for letters signed “Nguyễn Ái Quốc” with false information regarding his whereabouts, to be sent from Moscow to comrades living in Paris whose mail was known to be intercepted by French intelligence. Only in July 1925 did they formally identify him from a picture.

Manifesto of the General Federation of Oppressed Peoples¹⁹⁰

July 1925

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 5, July 19, 1925.¹⁹¹

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 498-500.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Dear friends, since the capitalists have thrown off their masks and acted openly as imperialists, the weaker nations, especially those of Asia, have found themselves more and more oppressed. They make of our countries their colonies or semi-colonies (like China and Siam). They seize all the wealth of our lands. They force us to buy their poisons (opium, alcohol). They crush us with all kinds of taxes. They make us their coolies and their servants... Not only do they deprive us of our political rights, but they make us miserable. Worse still, they seek to exterminate our race.

Dear friends, in order to overcome these misfortunes, we need to unite the oppressed peoples and all the workers of the world for the sake of revolution. The imperialists of all countries have joined together to oppress us, whereas we, the inhabitants of the colonies and all the workers of the world, must unite in our resistance.

The revolutionaries of the workers' union and those of the General Federation of Oppressed Peoples follow different methods, but they all have the same goal, to bring down the monopolists. We, the oppressed peoples, can, or rather must, join with the workers of all countries to rise up and proclaim freedom wherever we are.

¹⁹⁰ Apart from his militancy among the Vietnamese community, Hồ Chí Minh also led the General Federation of Oppressed Peoples, an international organization composed of leaders from various oppressed nations. Hồ and M. N. Roy (see footnote 127, p. 177) were its main leaders.

¹⁹¹ *Thanh Niên (Youth)* was the newspaper of the Youth Communist League, an organization Hồ Chí Minh founded in Guangzhou (China). From June 1925 to June 1930, 208 issues were released, none of them signed. French intelligence identified at least seven of them as being authored by Hồ Chí Minh. The editors of the *Collected Works* included them in their volumes, and we decided to include them as well.

On the 9th of the 7th month of 1925, the Annamese, Chinese, Hindu, and Korean revolutionaries met to form the General Federation of Oppressed Peoples. This is the awakening of the peoples of Asia. On this solemn occasion, we address you with the following appeal:

To all the oppressed, our brothers! If the imperialists oppress us and treat us like cattle, it is because we are not united! If we were united we would be formidable.

Our cause is that of many thousands of individuals. Our enemies are only a handful of men. We must not fear them. Although they are abundantly equipped with guns and cartridges, they will not succeed in exterminating us!

Dear friends, let us unite as soon as possible! Let us unite our efforts to claim our rights and our freedom! Let us unite our strength to safeguard our race!

Workers, our friends! You all know that those who oppress us and those who mistreat you are the same people. Is it not true that during the 1914-18 war, the capitalists used the Blacks and the Yellows to massacre the Whites, just as they used the workers of the White race to kill those of the Yellow and Black races? Therefore, if you want to escape the clutches of your torturers, join us! We need your help. Our interests are common; by fighting for us, we also fight for you. By helping us you save yourselves.

Dear friends! Let our union be our strength. This strength will be sufficient to destroy the imperialists. To free ourselves from servitude, we can only count on our own efforts. Let all the oppressed peoples, let all the workers of the earth who have been deprived of their wages, unite with us to make the supreme revolution.

Down with imperialism!

Long live the union of the Asian peoples!

Long live the union of the oppressed peoples and the workers of the earth!

Long live the revolution!

Let Us Love One Another, and Let Us Stay United

August 23, 1925

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 9, August 23, 1925.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 503-504.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Let us love one another, and let us stay united.
Hear these mantras coming from my heart.
Those not united with others, is like a wild goose,
waiting soon to be pierced by an arrow.
Those who are alone, is prey to all dangers
when in union is found joy.
How can we find unity?
We should remain united like the body's organs,
Strongly entwined, like the five senses are to the four limbs...
Alone, life can't be preserved
but in the harmony of their flow health is found.
Let us stay united, let us love one another,
Let us not betray our cause for French interests.
Let us stay united, let us help one another,
By being like the body's four limbs we shall prevail
Transforming our country in an earthly paradise.
Let us love one another, and let us stay united.
As it's a citizen's duty to love his motherland.
Let us improve the intellectual, moral, and material condition of our people
Let us learn to live and die for a common cause
Dear compatriots hear these mantras and stay in love
with one another, and in unity.

Reply to our friend the student “X”

September 27, 1925

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 13, September 27, 1925.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 505-506

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In your last letter, you did not acknowledge being one of us; in spite of that, we already recognize you as such, because we are convinced that you will accept being one of us after having read this article.

1° Kings, mandarins, secretaries and interpreters are, according to you, anti-revolutionaries. You are mistaken, dear friend, for a king is capable of reflection and knows how to sympathize with the unheard-of misfortunes that befall his people; it is therefore preferable for him to live as a simple citizen rather than to rule over a subjugated people. It is up to us to give lessons to kings and to show them that it is in their interest to make a revolution rather than to live under the sway of the foreigner.

As for the mandarins, secretaries and interpreters, they serve the French by compulsion. Plunged into the darkness of obscurantism since their youth, they have never been able to educate themselves by reading the classics or to know the progress of humanity by reading newspapers and magazines. They do not know why men are happy and slaves unhappy. They are like lame chickens pecking around the husking mill; they make no effort and satisfy themselves with the food they are given. It is therefore our duty to introduce them to revolutionary theory.

2° If we say to the plowmen and workers:

All that you earn by the sweat of your brow goes into the pockets of the French. If the revolution succeeds, you will pay lower taxes than at present, and we will use them to dig canals, to lay out roads, to build schools, to create hospitals, to do everything that can be useful to you. The triumph of the revolution will mark the advent of democracy, that is, of your freedom and autonomy.

Look at the Russians, they were oppressed like you. But since the revolution they are the happiest people on earth. All of them have

rice fields and houses, all of them can educate themselves and vote.

If we can make the peasants and workers understand this, they will all want to help us make the revolution.

3° Women and girls are part of the population. If the whole nation is free, it is obvious that they will also have to be free. If, on the other hand, the nation remains in slavery, they and their children will be kept there too.

In Russia, no distinction is made between men and women. The latter have the right to vote and to be elected; at this very moment, there is a woman who is minister, another woman ambassador, and several others who are deputies.

This proves that it is in the interest of the women and girls of Annam to help us make the revolution.

Fable

1925

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, pp. 84-85.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 507-509.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Listen to this tale. All of you, quiet down and pay attention.

The animals disputing the palm of merit.

Being the first one to take the floor, the dragon, his beard and eyebrows shining, his crest and scales gleaming, utters:

—I am the primordial ancestor of this Annamite race, which has seen the birth of so many illustrious heroes.

The shrimp:—You must be joking, my friend. My fate is preferable to that of the Annamites. Look at my body. It is bent by the will of heaven, while your descendants bend their backs under the weight of taxes and chores.

The sheep:—Your words sadden me. The truth is that the Annamites are like hares and rabbits. I am shorn, you know, only once a year, whereas these poor buggers are skinned every season by the French.

The ox:—And that's not all. I would dare to add that the Annamites are more miserable than cattle. We have bright skin, a belly full of grass and ribs in the shape of palm leaves, but we can pride ourselves on enjoying greater freedom than they do.

While smiling wryly, the crab said:—We are frankly superior to these Annamites who bend to all the whims of the French and resign themselves as poor slaves to serve the latter without a word of protest.

The snake:—You are being ironic, my sisters. Let's see who wins in the field of noble feelings? Is it me, or those Frenchmen with the mouths of a Buddha and the hearts of a reptile that the Annamites have welcomed into their country?

The elephant:—The Annamites will eternally atone for the mistakes and errors they have innocently committed. They brought the elephant to their

country to trample on the tombs of their ancestors and they abandoned to the French the power to rule their country.

The eel:—I am sad when I think of the Annamites. They let themselves be seduced by money like flies attracted to honey. It doesn't matter to them, to these slaves, to be humiliated and dishonored for them to acquire empty titles of nobility.

The rat:—Look at my people, we have our own skin. But the Annamites no longer think of their country. Fascinated by goods and wealth, they watch the extinction of their race and the loss of their homeland indifferently.

The rooster:—I am the prince of the barnyard. I live in good harmony with my subjects and we never fight for the sweet and tasty food like the Annamites do for some money.

The fish:—The water and I are happy together, and a day will come when, transformed into a dragon, I will rise to the Palace of the Fairies. As for the Annamites, they spend their whole life in slavery, kneeling with folded hands, without daring to revolt.

The frog:—All things considered, my friends, if we really pity the Annamites, let us come to their aid. We, humble frogs, succeed by our complaints to move the sky, whereas the sky, without a reason, remains deaf to their prayers and lets their race disappear for good? If they unite their hearts and their forces, if they coalesce inside and outside, the French will be moved, frightened, and will give them back their right to freedom.

O, Annamites, always remember that unity is strength!

French Colonization on Trial¹⁹²

1925

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 23-144.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 15-144.

CHAPTER 1—BLOOD TAX

1—WAR AND THE “NATIVES”

Before 1914, they were only dirty negroes and dirty Annamese, at the best only good for pulling rickshaws and receiving blows from our administrators. With the declaration of the joyful new war, they became the “dear children” and “brave friends” of our paternal and tender administrators and of our governors—more or less general. They (the natives) were all at once promoted to the supreme rank of “defenders of law and liberty. This sudden honor cost them rather dear, however, for in order to defend that law and that liberty of which they themselves are deprived, they had suddenly to leave their rice fields or their sheep, their children and their wives, in order to cross oceans and go and rot on the battlefields of Europe. During the crossing, many natives, after being invited to watch the wonderful spectacle of the scientific demonstration of torpedoing, sank beneath the waves to defend the fatherland of the marine monsters. Others left their skins in the poetic desert of the Balkans, wondering whether the motherland intended to enter the Harem of the Turk as first wife; otherwise why should they have been sent to get killed in these countries? Yet others, on the banks of the Marne or in the mud of Champagne, heroically allowed themselves to be massacred to water the laurels of the chiefs with their blood and to sculpture the marshals’ batons with their bones.

¹⁹² *Le procès de la colonisation française* was published in 1925 by Librairie du travail. Many parts of the book includes articles he previously published in various newspapers, mostly *L’Humanité*. However, Hồ Chí Minh was able here to remove all the previous self-censorship from when his articles were released in the press.

Finally, those who toiled at the rear, in monstrous gunpowder factories, though they didn't breathe the "Boches" asphyxiating gases, were subject to the glowing red vapors of the French, which amounts to the same thing, because the poor devils coughed up their lungs just as if they had been gassed.

Seven hundred thousand natives all told came to France, and of this number, 80,000 will never again see the sun of their country!

2—VOLUNTEERING

Here is what a colleague tells us: the native proletariat of Indochina, since time immemorial squeezed in the form of taxes, forced payments, *corvées* of all kinds, and the compulsory purchase of spirits and opium, has, since 1915-16 had to put up with volunteering.

The events of the last few years have provided the pretext, throughout the length and breadth of the country, for big round-ups of human material quartered under the most varied appellations: sharp shooters, skilled workmen, unskilled workmen, etc.

In the opinion of all impartial competent bodies called upon to make use in Europe of the Asian human material, this material did not give result in keeping with the huge expenses that its transport and keep entailed.

And then, the chase after the said human material, called for the occasion "volunteers" (a dreadfully ironic word), gives rise to the most scandalous abuse.

Here is how this voluntary recruitment is done: the satrap, that every Indochina Resident is, informs his mandarins that within a fixed period, his province must supply such-and-such a number of men. The means are of small importance. It is up to the mandarins to find a way. As for being in the know, they certainly are, those fellows, where coining money is concerned.

They begin by picking up hale and hearty individuals without resources, who are sacrificed without recourse. Afterwards, they call on sons of wealthy families; if they prove stubborn, it is easy enough to find an opportunity to make trouble for them or their families, and, if need be, to imprison them until they have solved the following dilemma: "volunteering or finance."

It can be seen that people picked up in such circumstances are lacking in any enthusiasm for the job they are destined to perform. No sooner are they in barracks than they watch for the smallest opportunity to escape.

Others, unable to ward off their sad fate, catch the most serious diseases, the most common of which is purulent conjunctivitis, caused by rubbing the eyes with various ingredients, ranging from quicklime to gonorrhoeal discharge.

Notwithstanding, having promised mandarinal ranks to Indochinese volunteers who survived and posthumous titles to those who died “for the fatherland,” the government general of Indochina continued its declaration thus:

You enlisted *en masse*, you have *unhesitatingly* left your native soil to which you are nevertheless very attached; you, tirailleurs, to give your blood; you, workers, to give your arms.

If the Annamese were so delighted to be soldiers, why were some taken to the chief towns in chains, while others, while awaiting embarkation, were shut in a Saigon college, under the eye of French sentinels with fixed bayonets and loaded rifles? The bloody demonstrations in Cambodia, the uprisings in Saigon, Biên Hòa and elsewhere, were they thus a display of the eagerness to enlist “en masse” and “unhesitatingly”?

Escapes and desertions (there were 50 percent in the reserves) provoked pitiless repression, and the latter, revolts which were stifled in blood.

The government general took good care to add that, of course, in order to deserve the “obvious benevolence” and “great kindness” of the Administration, “You (Indochinese soldiers) must behave well and not give rise to any displeasure.”

The commander-in-chief of the troops in Indochina took another precaution: on each recruit’s back or wrist he had an indelible number written with a solution of nitrate of silver.

As in Europe, the great poverty of some is the cause of profit for others: professional stripe wearers, for whom the windfall of recruiting and officering natives enables them to keep away from the perilous operations in Europe as long as possible, suppliers who get rich quickly by letting the unfortunate recruits die of hunger, and market keepers, who carry out shady deals in connivance with officials.

Let us add, in this connection, that there exists another kind of volunteering: volunteering to subscribe to various loans. An identical procedure. Whoever owns anything is liable to subscribe. Means of persuasion and coercion

of a kind which force everyone to comply are employed against the recalitrants.

As most of our Asian subscribers are completely unaware of our financial machinery, they consider the instalments paid for the loans as new taxes and consider the bonds as of no greater value than receipts.

Let us see now how volunteering has been organized in other colonies.

Let us take, for example, West Africa:

Commanding officers, accompanied by their armed forces, went from village to village to oblige local notables to supply them *immediately* with the number of men they wanted to recruit. Didn't one commanding officer think it ingenious, in order to induce young Senegalese, who were running away from him, to leave their hiding place and wear the military cap, by torturing their parents? Didn't he arrest old people, pregnant women and young girls, making them take off their clothes which were then burnt before their eyes? Naked and bound, the unfortunate victims were flogged as they ran through the district at a trot, to "provide an example"! A woman carrying her baby on her back had to beg to have one hand freed to keep her child balanced. Two old people fainted on the way; young girls, terrified at such cruelty, had their periods for the first time; a pregnant woman gave premature birth to a stillborn child; another gave birth to a blind baby.¹⁹³

Recruiting procedure was, furthermore, carried on in various ways.

The following was particularly expeditious:

A rope was strung across one end of the main street in a village, and another rope at the other end. And all the negroes who were between the two ropes at that particular time were automatically enlisted.

On March 3rd, 1923, at midday, [wrote a witness] the quays of Rufisque and Dakar were surrounded by mounted police, and all the natives working there were picked up. As these fellows didn't seem much inclined to go at once and defend civilization, they were invited to step into trucks which took them to prison. From

¹⁹³ See "Colonial Militarism," p. 121 of this volume.

there, after they had had time to change their minds, they were taken to the barracks.

There, after patriotic ceremonies, 29 volunteers were proclaimed future heroes for the next list. All of them were now thoroughly keen to return the Ruhr to the Motherland.

“But,” wrote General Mangin, who knew them well, they are troops “to be consumed before winter.”

We have in our possession a letter from a native of Dahomey, an ex-soldier who did his “duty” in the just war. A few extracts from that letter will show you how the “Batouala” are protected and in what manner our colonial administrators manufacture the native loyalism which ornaments all the official speeches and feeds all the articles of the Regimansets and the Hausers of all calibres.

In 1915, [says the letter,] during the enforced recruitment ordered by Mr. Noufflard, Governor of Dahomey, my village was pillaged and burnt down by police agents and guards of the Club. During this pillage and burning, all that I owned in the way of possessions was taken away from me. Nevertheless, I was enlisted by force and, notwithstanding the shocking outrage of which I was a victim, I did my duty on the French front. I was wounded on the Aisne.

Now that the war is ended, I am going back to my country, homeless and penniless.

This is what has been stolen from me:

1,000 francs in cash

12 pigs

15 sheep

10 goats

60 chickens

8 loincloths

5 jackets

10 pairs of trousers

7 head-dresses

1 silver chain

2 trunks containing various objects.

Here are the names of comrades living in my district who were forcibly enrolled on the same day as me, and whose houses were pillaged and burnt [Seven names follow].

Many are the victims of these feats of arms of Mr. Governor Noufflard, but I do not know their names to give you them today..

Wilhelm's "Boches" couldn't have done better.

3—THE FRUIT OF SACRIFICE

As soon as the guns had had their fill of black or yellow cannon fodder, the loving declarations of our leaders were magically silenced, and Negroes and Annamese automatically became people of a "dirty race."

As a memento of services rendered, before re-embarking at Marseilles, weren't the Annamese robbed of all they possessed: new clothes bought at their own expense, watches, souvenirs of all kinds, etc.? Weren't they submitted to the control of brutes who struck them without reason? Weren't they fed like pigs and made to sleep as such in damp holds, without bunks, without air, without light? Back in their country, weren't they warmly welcomed by this patriotic speech by a grateful administrator: "You have defended the motherland, that is good. Now we don't need you any more, go away!"

And the former "poilus"—or what remained of them—after valiantly defending right and justice, returned empty-handed to their indigenous state where right and justice are unknown.

According to Indochinese newspapers, opium house licenses are granted to widows of French soldiers killed in the war and to French war-wounded.

In this way, the colonial government has in one stroke committed two outrages against humanity. On the one hand, it doesn't want to do its own dirty work as a poisoner, it wants to associate with it its poor victims of fratricidal butchery. On the other, it values so low the lives and blood of its dupes whom it considers by throwing them this rotten bone, it is paying sufficiently for the loss of a limb or mourning for a husband.

We do not doubt that the war-wounded and war widows will spurn this repugnant offer, spitting their indignation in the face of its author; and we are sure that the civilized world and the good Frenchmen are on our side in con-

demning the sharks of the colonies who do not hesitate to poison a whole race to line their pockets.¹⁹⁴

According to an Annamese custom, if in a village someone dies, the rice huskers must show that they respect the rest of the deceased's soul and the family's sorrow by abstaining from singing during work as they usually do. Modern civilization, implanted by force in our country, doesn't make so much ado. Read the following anecdote published in a paper in Cochinchina:

FESTIVAL AT BIÊN HÒA

The Commission in charge of organizing the festivities for the benefit of the *Memorial* to the fallen Annamese of the province of Biên Hòa is actively working to draw up a wonderful program.

A garden party, a village fair, an open air ball, etc. are mentioned... In short, the *attractions will be numerous* and varied to enable everyone to participate in a good work in *the pleasantest way in the world.*

Messrs. the airmen of the Biên Hòa club will give their assistance and the organizers can already count on the presence of the highest authorities from Saigon to enhance the sparkle of the festival with their presence.

Let us add that then ladies and gentlemen of Saigon will not need to return to the capital for dinner, which would only result in cutting short *their share of pleasure; a wonderful, carefully prepared and well furnished buffet will give satisfaction to the most delicate gourmets.*

Let us go to Biên Hòa on January 21st, we will be present at a *fine festival* and we will have shown the families of the Annamese who died during the war, that, we know how to remember their sacrifice.

The following letter has been communicated to us:

Saigon,...

¹⁹⁴ See "The Rights of the 'Poilus,'" p. 24.

If there exists an anomaly which is both painful and grotesque, it is to have the victory of “right” and “justice” celebrated by a people which is suffering every injustice and has no rights whatever. That is, however, what we have done here. No need to describe to you the festivities and “public rejoicing” which took place in this town on November 11th. It’s the same everywhere and at all times. Torchlight tattoos, fireworks, troop reviews, a ball at the Governor’s palace, flower processions, patriotic collections, advertising speeches, banquets, etc. Out of all these masquerades, I have retained only one psychologically interesting fact. Like the crowd in all countries, the crowd in Saigon are very keen on the cinema. Therefore a compact mass was standing in front of the Palace Hotel where films succeeded each other and Charlie Chaplin, cowboys and wonderful people filed past one after another. People crowded into the boulevard and streets. Then the proprietor of the Saigon Palace, wanting to clear the pavement in front of his hotel, began hitting the crowd with a stick. Madame helped him, and she too struck the crowd. A few ragamuffins managed to “pinch” Madame’s stick, and people clapped. Furious, Monsieur came to the rescue, with a bigger stick this time, and heroically struck about with all his might. The “nhà quê”¹⁹⁵ drew back to the boulevard, but drunk with his “victory,” this good Frenchman bravely crossed the road and continued to rain his big stick on the head, shoulders and backs of these poor natives. He caught a child and gave him a sound beating.

4—THE MILITARISM CONTINUES

Immediately on arriving in Casablanca, Marshal Lyautey addressed to the occupation troops in Morocco, the following order of the day:

It is to you I owe the highest military dignity with which the government of the Republic has honored me, because for nine years, you have unstintingly given your devotion and *your blood*.

We are going to undertake a campaign which will ensure the definite pacification of Morocco for the *common benefit of its loyal population* and of the protector nation, etc.

¹⁹⁵ See footnote 68, p. 77.

Now on that day (April 14th) the following communique arrived:

During an engagement with the Beni Bon Zert, at Babel-Harba, there were 29 killed and “wounded.”

When it is remembered that it needed the blood of fifteen hundred workers to make six marshal’s batons, the death of 29 poor devils does not sufficiently applaud the Marshal Higher Resident’s eloquent speech. So where is the right of peoples to dispose of themselves, for which people cut each other’s throats for four years? And what a strange way to civilize: to teach people to live well, a start is made by killing them!

Here (in Haiphong) there are also sailors’ strikes. Thus on Thursday (August 15th), two steamers were due to leave carrying a large number of Annamese tirailleurs *bound for Syria*.

The sailors refused to leave, under the pretext that their pay was not given them in piastres. In effect, the piastre being worth ten francs at the rate of exchange instead of 2 fr. 50, the Companies, with unbelievable abuse, drew up the sailors’ accounts in francs, while the officials were paid in piastres.

Everyone was then disembarked and the crew were immediately arrested.

As can be seen, the sailors of the Yellow sea have nothing to envy the sailors of the Black sea.

We protest with all our might against the dispatch to Syria of Annamese contingents. Is it considered, in higher circles, that not enough of our unfortunate yellow brothers were killed on the battlefields between 1914 and 1918, during the “war of civilization and right”?

It is usual for our illustrious ones to “educate” the natives with kicks and sticks.

The unfortunate Nahon—doubly assassinated, first by Captain Vidart, then by the sawbones officer in charge of the autopsy, who to save his pals’ skins, did not hesitate to steal and hide the dead man’s brain—is not, alas! the only victim of colonial militarism. One of our colonial colleagues notified us of another:

This time, [he said] it was at Maison-barrée,¹⁹⁶ at the 5th Tirailleurs. The victim was a young soldier of the 21 class, Terrier, from Ténès.

The circumstances of his death are especially painful. On August 5th, the young soldier Terrier went to the regimental infirmary to ask for a laxative. It was given to him, or to be more precise, what he thought was a laxative; he took it, and a few hours later he was writhing with, terrible pains and died.

Mr. Terrier senior then received a telegram announcing, without consideration nor explanations that his son—his only son—had died and would be buried the next day, Sunday.

Mad with grief, the poor father dashed to Algiers, to the 5th Tirailleurs at Maison-barrée. There he learned that his son's body was at the Maillot hospital. (How was he taken there? Is it true that to avoid the regulation inquiry prescribed for all deaths occurring at the infirmary, he had been taken *dead* to hospital, with the pretense that he had died on the way?)

At the hospital, the unfortunate father asked to see the body; *he was told to wait*.

A long time after, a Major came and told him that the autopsy which had just been carried out *had revealed nothing* and left him there *without giving him permission to see his son's body*.

According to the latest news, it appears that Mr. Terrier senior, who had asked the Colonel of the 5th Tirailleurs for an explanation, received this answer from him: *his son had died from poisoning!*¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Maison-barrée: a village near Algiers.

¹⁹⁷ See “‘Vidartism’ Goes On,” p. 83.

CHAPTER II—POISONING OF THE NATIVES

The worthy Mr. Sarraut, former radical minister for the Colonies, little father of the natives (so he says) adored the Annamese and was adored by them.

In order to instil French civilization into them, of which he was the principal agent, he did not stop at anything, not even infamy and crime. Here is proof of this: it is a letter which, in his capacity of Governor General of Indochina and to swell the pockets of the colonial bandits and his own, he addressed to his subordinates:

Mr. Resident,

In accordance with instructions from Mr. Director General of the Excise, I have the honor to beg you to be so kind as to second the efforts of my department in the establishment of new alcohol and opium houses.

To this effect, I am taking the liberty of sending you *a list of the homes which should be installed* in the various villages mentioned, most of which are entirely without spirits and opium.

Through the channels of Cambodian governors and village heads, your preponderant influence could be fortunately used to draw the attention of certain native small traders, to the advantages of going in for some additional business.

On our side, the agents of the active service, on their rounds, will endeavor to install premises, unless you would prefer, Mr. Resident, that they should wait until you have first acted with the authorities in order that they may second your action, in which case, I beg you to be so kind as to inform me.

It is only through complete and constant understanding between your administration and ours that we shall obtain the best results, in the best interests of the Treasury.

Signed: Albert Sarraut.

There were at the time fifteen hundred alcohol and opium houses for a thousand villages while there were only ten schools for the same number of localities. Already, before this famous letter, the 12 million natives—women and children included—had been made to swallow 23 or 24 million liters of spirits yearly.

For the monopolies, Indochina will be represented by a magnificent stag, pitilessly bound, dying under the curved beaks of insatiable vultures.

The society for the monopoly of alcohol had among its subscribing members the most eminent personalities in Indochina and all branches of the Administration were brilliantly represented. Most of them had the advantage of being undeniably useful:

Justice, to settle differences with those on whom they wished to impose:

2 Attorneys General

1 Public Attorney

1 Clerk notary

The Army, to suppress a revolt considered as a possibility by mere fact of the application of the coveted monopoly:

1 Brigadier General

1 Lieutenant Colonel

2 High-ranking military doctors

1 Major

2 Captains

The Administration, whose disinterested complaisance was to be the best guarantee for the success of the operation:

1 Resident of France

1 District Tax Collector

1 Paymaster General

1 Inspector of Posts

1 Registrar

1 Civil service administrator

2 Professors, etc.

Finally: the honorable Mr. Clémentel, deputy for Puy-de-Dôme.

“Let France look and be proud!” cried Mr. Sarraut at the Colonial Exhibition in Marseille. In effect, here beside the majestic Caymans of West Africa, the camels of Tunisia yawn philosophically; friendly Malagasy crocodiles chat familiarly with august Indochinese cows. Never was understanding so perfect

and, opposite the peaceful invasion of colonial fauna, the legendary sardine from the Vieux-Port, as a good hostess, smiles graciously.

The visitors examine with lively interest the historic settle of a certain Governor General, the administrator's sword with which Resident Darles pricked the thighs of Tonkinese detainees, and the torch which administrator Bruère used to smoke out alive more than two hundred natives of Houassas.

The pavilion of the Cameroons attracts particular attention. A signboard bearing these patriotic words can be seen there:

The Germans imported large quantities of spirits into the Cameroons.

The French prohibited its use.

However, under this signboard a waggish hand had stuck a copy of the letter from Mr. Sarraut advising his subordinates to increase the number of alcohol and opium houses in Annamese villages with the following inscription:

While the Annamese have already: 10 schools, and 1,500 alcohol and opium houses for 1,000 villages.

A significant fact concerning an official who was at the head of a province in Tonkin, Sơn Tây. In this province there was a population estimated at 200,000 inhabitants. For the needs of the cause, when it was a question of pushing consumption, this population rose with sudden rapidity: it was brought up to 330,000 inhabitants. But as these 330,000 inhabitants consumed too little, the Resident of Sơn Tây managed, at the end of a year, to obtain a consumption of 560,000 liters of spirits.

Thereupon, his promotion was assured, he was congratulated.

Mr. de C... affirmed that another Resident showed him a letter from hierarchical superiors in which was stated: "Spirits consumed in the prefecture of X, have dropped to less than Z per head of those registered. Do you not think it necessary to make an example?" The Resident thus called upon convened the notables and explained that if they consumed so little, it was because they were engaged in smuggling; and the villagers, in order to be left in peace, forthwith bought the quantity of official alcohol, proportionate to the number of inhabitants, that estimates by the offices wished to impose on them.

Factually, if not legally, the annual consumption of each native was determined. And when we say *each native*, it should not be forgotten that this does

not mean only adult natives; it means the *whole* population; it means old people, women and children, even at the breast; the parents are in a way forced to substitute for them to consume not one, but two or three liters of spirits.

The inhabitants of a village in Tonkin, finding they were forced to consume in view of the threat hanging over them, approached their European official:

“We haven’t even anything to eat.” The official replied: “You are accustomed to taking three meals of rice a day; you can cut out one meal, or, if need be, one and a half meals, so as to be able to consume the government spirits.”

Until then, the native consumers had been accustomed to obtaining spirits in small quantities and could collect them in whatever receptacle they wished. But a system of stamped bottles was established. Spirits could only be delivered in official half-liter or one-liter bottles. The Annamese were accustomed to 20 or 22 degree spirits: 40 to 45 degree spirits were imposed on them. They were used to drinking spirits with a kind of pleasant empyreumatic flavor, due to the amount of raw materials that they used, and among which was a most delicate kind of rice: the drug the Annamese are forced to swallow is made with cheap rice and chemical ingredients, and has a bad taste.

The monopolizers put out a circular prescribing that their employees should water the spirits on sale: to one hectoliter of spirits were to be added 8 liters of water.

It was worked out that as 500 hectoliters of these spirits are sold daily in Indochina, that makes 4,000 liters of water, and that 4,000 liters at 30 centimes a day make 1,200 piastres a day, 36,000 piastres a month; say a small benefit from the fountain alone, of 432,000 piastres or 4 million francs yearly!

Thus the spirits as they are made and sold in Indochina do not correspond, neither as to the degree nor the taste, to what the natives wish for, and they have to be imposed on them by force.

The Administration, pressed by a constant need for money, because of having to meet the growing expenditure by the government general on big loans and military constructions and because of the need to find—if not genuine employment—at least salaries for a host of officials imposed on it by Paris, used every means to urge the officials and agents, from the Resident to the most humble State employee, to increase the consumption of spirits.

CHAPTER III—THE GOVERNORS

1—M. FOURN

Mr. Fourn, Governor of Dahomey, governs so well that the natives of the colony complain about him. In order to quieten the discontent, a pretense was made of sending an inspector to that colony. The latter inspected so well that he beat it without examining the complaints put forward by the population.

We have received a letter on this subject from the Franco-Moslem Action Committee at Porto-Novo, of which here are the main passages:

Well before the arrival of the French in Dahomey, there was a Moslem chief in Porto-Novo called an Iman, who was responsible for representing the Moslem collectivity whenever necessary, to manage the property belonging to this collectivity and to ensure the celebration of religious ceremonies.

According to custom, the Iman must be elected by an electoral body from among the devout Moslems known for their morality and who have fulfilled the duties of assistant for a long time. Furthermore, before his death, the Iman in power passes his opinion on his assistant, who normally has the qualifications required to replace him.

The opinion given by the Iman on this occasion is irrevocable.

Before the death of Iman Cassoumou, the latter designated as his successor his assistant Saroukou, whom the electoral body as well as the majority of Moslems accepted.

Iman Saroukou should have been elected on the death of Cassoumou, but Ignacio Paraiso, *confident of the support of the Governor*, arbitrarily opposed the nomination and imposed on the Moslems one named Lawani Kossoko, a personal friend of his, and who, like him, is Moslem only in name.

Seeing that the electoral body and the majority of the Moslems were against the illegal nomination of Lawani Kossoko, Mr. Ignacio Paraiso obtained the intervention of the superior chief Houdji, who is a fetishist and who, *under cover of the Government*, elected the said Lawani Kossoko against the wishes of the Moslems.

However, if Lawani Kossoko was a good and honest Moslem we would pass over his nomination in silence, but he is the most dishonest man the world has ever known. Here moreover are the proofs of what we affirm.

Lawani Kossoko was born in Lagos (British Nigeria). He is a British subject. Following murders and other crimes committed in British Nigeria, Lawani Kossoko was prosecuted by the British authorities.

Our then Governor took in this undesirable British subject and, to reward him, named him chief of the lakeland villages of: Affotonou, Agugue, Agblankantan, etc., where all the inhabitants have now had enough of his exactions and crimes, and are complaining of him.

We had a mosque in the Akprassa district in Porto-Novo. The French authorities demolished this mosque for public utility reasons and gave us an indemnity of 5,000 francs.

The indemnity being insufficient for the building of a new mosque, from private subscriptions we collected a sum of 22,000 francs.

Among the members of the Committee responsible, for buying the materials and paying the workmen, was Ignacio Paraiso.

On the death of assistant Iman Bissirou, to whom was entrusted the key of the cashbox, Ignacio Paraiso became the depositary of the key. He took advantage of this office to misappropriate a sum of 2,775 francs. The Committee was compelled to expel him.

Ignacio Paraiso, angered, *concerted together with the Governor*. The latter took arbitrary measures *against us and put obstacles in the way of the building of our mosque*.

Now, following Ignacio Paraiso's intrigues, to which the Governor lent a hand, at the time of the unholy nomination of Lawani Kossoko as Iman, the Moslems of Porto-Novo are divided into two camps. This state of affairs is harmful to harmony and the free exercise of our cult and causes much trouble.

2—M. LONG

Extracts from a letter dated 6-12-22 addressed to the *French Republic* by Colonel Bernard who, rest assured, Mr. Minister, is not a communist.

Exports from Indochina, [says the letter] are at a standstill or even regressing. In 1914 Indochina exported: 45,000 kilos of silk, 99,000 tons of maize, 480 tons of tea; last year it exported only 15,000 kilos of silk, 32,000 tons of maize, 156 tons of tea.

It is believed, too, that the government of Indochina is already actively carrying out large works indispensable to the development of the colony. However, since 1914, *not a kilometer of railways has been built nor a hectare of rice fields been developed*. Ten years ago Mr. Sarraut had a program of works approved, including the building of a railway from Vinh to Đông Hà¹⁹⁸ and the construction of four big irrigation systems; all these works have been suspended for more than five years, under the pretext that no credits are available. Yet, during this same period, Indochina assigned 65 million piastres, i.e. 450 million francs, to the building of roads and civil constructions. Let Mr. Faget meditate upon such figures! Nearly 500 million spent on building motor car roads on which not a ton of goods circulates; on erecting houses and offices for officials who swarm in Indochina with the exuberance of tropical vegetation; and during this time, works recognized as indispensable and already approved by a vote of Parliament, have been abandoned!

And do not think that there is any intention, in Indochina, of altering the methods. To complete the 1912 program, Mr. Long has already asked Parliament for authorization to raise a loan; at present he is asking for permission to contract a second one. Those who are at the present time responsible for exploiting Indochina, seem determined to do nothing really useful, if they are not

¹⁹⁸ Vinh: chief town of Nghệ An province, 300 km from Hanoi, in the northern part of Central Việt Nam.

Đông Hà: a locality of Quang Tri Province, 13 km from the chief town.

The railway section from Vinh to Đông Hà was still in the blueprint stage. The Trans-Indochinese, a narrow-gauge line connecting Hanoi with Saigon, was devised by Paul Doumer in 1898 and was not completed until 1936.

allowed, first of all, to get into debt. As for budgetary resources, as for reserves accumulated during and after the war, they are determined to throw them munificently out of the window if Parliament doesn't put the matter in order.¹⁹⁹

3—M. GARBIT

Mr. Garbit, Governor General of Madagascar, has returned to France. Like all governors, his colleagues, Mr. Garbit is very pleased with *his* colony. Progress, wealth, loyalism, projects, order, organization, etc. Such is the eternally invariable stock-in-trade of proconsuls on leave, which Mr. Garbit, in turn, obligingly displays for all those who have eyes to see. And on top of all this worn out bluff, Mr. Garbit artistically throws in the following extra special other bluff (or the other's bluff): the development of the colonies. In wishing him welcome, we ask Mr. Governor:

Is it true that the inspection mission sent by the ministry hasn't enough soap to wash the gubernatorial head and to soap the slope down which His Excellency must let himself slide towards the metropolitan country to stay there forever and ever?

Is it true that, in order to save face, a few zealots organized an official reception in his honor before his departure; and that this required a toilsome recruiting, for no one besides the organizers wanted to come?

Is it true that Mr. Governor's proteges had planned a petition requesting his return to the colony; but that that petition did not see the light of day because of fears of a counter-petition?

Is it true, finally, that the affectionate wish the native population addressed him was the following:

Farewell, Garbit! Hope never to see you again!

4—M. MERLIN

The fate of 20 million fortunate Annamese is in the hands of Mr. Martial Merlin.

Who is this Mr. Merlin? You ask. He is a gentleman who was administrator of the Gambier Islands, then Secretary General of West Africa, then Governor

¹⁹⁹ See "Indochinese Prosperity Under the Rule of M. Long," p. 94.

of the same colony. He is a gentleman who has spent 36 years of his life stuffing native heads with blessings of French civilization.

You might perhaps say that it is a huge *Indochinoiserie*²⁰⁰ to have a country governed by a man who knows nothing about it.

Well, there it is. But it's the fashion, A colleague informs us that he found enthroned in the French West Africa bureau of the Ministry of Colonies a former administrator of Indochina. A former official of the Sudan was chosen to deal with questions concerning Madagascar; while the Cameroons are represented at the Colonial Exhibition by an official who has never set foot there.

So before going to civilize the Indochinese in Indochina, proconsul Merlin wanted to begin by civilizing the Indochinese who died in France, you know, those who died for the fatherland, justice, etc.

Laughing in cemeteries is one of the pleasures of great men, but laughing there alone would probably hold no charms. That is why His Excellency Martial Merlin gave orders to subsidized Annamese youth to accompany him to the Garden of Remembrance at Nogent-sur-Marne, as a speech was to be made in his august presence. But before being read in public, the said speech had to be submitted to His Excellency for censorship. This was done, and the speech, considered too subversive, was purely and simply canceled by His Excellency and replaced by another of which His Excellency gave the outline himself.

Naturally, the speech thus cooked in official sauce, was flavored strongly with loyalism and indefectible attachment.

If the dead could speak, as spiritualists claim, the Annamese ghosts at Nogent would have said: "D...eeply grateful to you, oh Governor! But get to h... out of here!"

5—M. JÉRÉMIE LEMAIRE

We read this paragraph in the *Colonial annals*:

We learn that Jérémie Lemaire, a former Governor of the Colonies, a former deputy of India, is at present the subject of court proceedings. He was in fact President of the Bank of which Mr. Frezouls was the administrator delegate and which was declared bankrupt two years ago.

This is the just crowning of this sorry individual's career.

²⁰⁰ A pun on the French word "chinoiserie," meaning monkey trick.

Well, well! So there are sorry individuals in the noble corporation of Governors and deputies of the Colonies? Who would have believed it!

6—M. OUTREY

He is a Cochinchinese deputy (as Cochinchinese as Mr. P. Loti is Turkish). He makes speeches at the Palace and does business in Saigon. As a parliamentarian, he regularly receives his salary; as a colonist, he doesn't pay his taxes. This upright representative of the people has a concession of 2,000 hectares, and, for fifteen years, the honorable concessionary hasn't paid a cent. When the treasury department asked him to put his affairs in order, he replied: ah... an't. Because he is a deputy, he is left alone.

There was a time when this same Outrey was Governor ad interim of Cochinchina.

Cochinchina is administered by a governor appointed by decree of the President of the Republic. This *high* official is assisted in his *high* functions by a mixed assembly, the Colonial Council, one of the most important prerogatives of which no doubt is to vote the Colony's budget every year. Let us say straight away that this budget is supplied by receipts from direct or indirect taxes, *paid by the Annamese*, that the expenditure earmarked therein must, in principle (*but never in fact!*) *be on behalf of the Annamese*, that in a word, *it is the interests of the Annamese* which are entrusted to this Colonial Council. However, this famous Colonial Council is composed *of more Frenchmen than Annamese: 18 French members*, of which 12 are elected and 6 are delegates of various companies, Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber of Agriculture, etc., and *6 Annamese members*. Even allowing that they are always in full strength, what can 6 Annamese voices do against 18 French voices? The government thus enters against the budget everything it pleases, and it is sure that the headings in it are voted in advance.

This is, furthermore, what it does three quarters of the time; and that is how in 1905, Governor ad interim Outrey, today deputy for the French in Cochinchina, increased by *one hundred percent* the already too heavy taxes hitting the rice fields. This increase, which immortalized Outrey in the memory of the Annamese, caused the collective resignation of the then native counsellors. No matter! Outrey had them replaced by others, whom he himself imposed on the Annamese. Didn't one of the executing agents, the administrator Maspero (province of Biên Hòa) shut up in prison all the electors of the province on the

eve of the poll in order to prevent them from communicating with the candidates? They were thus forced to vote, under the threat of reprisals, for Outrey's candidate Bùi Thế Khâm so as to prevent the reelection of counsellor Hoài who had resigned and who had been wrong not to act as Outrey wished.

CHAPTER IV—THE ADMINISTRATORS

I—M. SAINT

As you know, the colonies are overseas Frances and the French in these Frances are Anamese or Malagasies, or... etc. Moreover, what is all right here is not all right there and what is tolerated there is forbidden here. Examples: all the French are allowed to besot the natives with opium, the more they sell, the more highly are they thought of; but if you were to take it into your head to sell this poison here, you would immediately be put in prison. On the other hand, in France a high official is allowed to travel in his underwear; contrariwise, a native prince is forbidden to wear native dress, even when he is at home and ill.

As he was ill, the late Bey of Tunis received the Resident General wearing a dressing gown. This was bad enough; but even worse, they said Bey's grandson and nephew had forgotten to greet the aforementioned Resident. Two days later, just time enough to think about it, Mr. Resident, dressed in his uniform and escorted by his squadrons, came to demand an apology. Good for him. When a Bey is under the protection of a saint, whether he be the holy father, the holy son or the holy ghost, one hasn't the right to be ill. And you, native "Poulbots"²⁰¹ know that when one is under the motherly wing of democracy, one must not play, nor laugh, nor have fun, but learn to salute.

In Indochina and in other colonies, many a "protector" modestly contents himself with "third degreeing" natives who do not greet him quickly enough; but they have never yet mobilized armed forces to exact greetings from kiddies. It is true that they are not all Residents General!

Although this "serious happening," notified from the heights of the dais in Parliament, could, as Mr. Poincaré says, have been harmful to the influence of France, we cannot without being ungrateful towards Mr. Resident General Saint, accuse him of "defeatism"; for, thanks to this friendly, childish and peaceful demonstration, the natives will from now on know how to greet a "white brother." It will be recalled that, during his visit to Africa, M. Millerand was greeted by natives who, to show their sincere attachment and profound respect for the head of the protector state, had pulled their shirts out of their trousers.

²⁰¹ Francisque Poulbot was a French cartoonist fond of portraying Parisian street urchins.

2—M. DARLES

The *Cahiers des Droits de l'Homme* recently published a letter from M. Ferdinand Buisson, President of the Human Rights League to M. Sarraut, Minister for the Colonies, concerning the revolt which occurred in Thái Nguyên (Indochina) in 1917, and the repression which followed.²⁰²

In this letter, the role of the Resident of the province, M. Darles is clearly defined: this official, through the abuses of which he was guilty, was the cause of the rebellion. His guilt was, furthermore, established by the Court of Saigon as early as 1917.

Yet is it to be believed? No administrative sanction was imposed. Quite the contrary, M. Darles was named a member of the Municipal Council of Saigon. As for the legal sanction, it was derisory: a 200 francs fine.

This M. Darles is a valuable administrator. He acquired his political science in the Latin Quarter, where he was a restaurant keeper.

Through the wishes of an influential politician, M. Darles, then without resources and loaded with debts, was made an administrator in Indochina.

Comfortably installed at the head of a province of several thousand inhabitants, and invested with limitless power, he was mayor, judge, bailiff and bailiff's man—in a word, he held all the offices. Justice, taxes, property, lives and property of the natives, rights of officials, elections of mayors and canton chiefs, that is to say the fate of a whole province was entrusted to the hands of this former innkeeper.

As he had not been able to get rich by extracting money from his clients in Paris, he had his own back in Tonkin, by having the Annamese arbitrarily arrested/imprisoned and condemned to extort money from them.

Here are a few facts illustrating the despotic reign of this charming administrator that the mother Republic has been kind enough to send us in order to civilize us.

Some native volunteers (!) were taken to serve as tirailleurs, and to this end, had to undergo a medical examination. They were illiterate and intimidated fellows that Mr. Resident was addressing, punching and hitting them with a stick because they didn't answer quickly enough.

²⁰² See footnote 13 p. 14.

He brutally punched three militiamen who had let a prisoner escape, pulling them along the ground by their hair and knocking their heads against the wall of his residence.

To interrogate some prisoners Mr. Resident pricked their thighs with his administrator's sword. Some of them fainted on returning to prison.

Some unfortunate, ill-fed prisoners dressed in dirty rags, up since dawn, a cangue around their necks and heavy chains around their ankles, fastened one to the other, were pulling a roller, a huge compressing roller which had to be dragged over thick layers of stones. Completely exhausted, they were advancing wearily under an implacable sun. The Resident arrived, as usual carrying a thick stick, and, without rhyme nor reason, with unbelievably bestial sadism, struck these unfortunates with all his might reproaching them with laziness.

One day, our civilizer, having just rebuked a European agent and not knowing on whom to vent his anger, picked up an iron ruler from his desk and broke two fingers of an unfortunate native clerk who had nothing to do with the matter.

Another day, he struck a native sergeant in the face with a riding whip, in the presence of his men.

On another occasion, he had some militiamen who had displeased him buried up to the neck, and had them dug out only when they were half dead.

When he goes along the roads where he compels the natives to work for one or two cents a day, after making them buy themselves out of their day's *corvée* at the price of fifteen cents a day, legs broken through being struck with spades and pick-handles can be counted by the half dozen.

Once, on a construction site, he got hold of a guard's rifle to strike a prisoner. The latter having managed to escape, the Resident turned against the guard and hit him with the rifle. His better half, Madame Resident, intervened in her turn, she was only too ready to strike the prisoners and, on occasion, had militiamen punished.

Mr. Resident has been seen to put out a sergeant's eye with a stick. He has accomplished other exploits, but we cannot enumerate them all here.

All this is with everyone's certain knowledge, including his hierarchic superiors, the governors general and residents superior who, to reward him for

his “energy” and his “very republican virtue” pitilessly inflict promotion on him.²⁰³

3—MESSRS. BOUDINEAU, BEAUDOIN AND OTHERS

In spite of clamorous exhibitions, pompous speeches, royal trips and grandiloquent articles, nothing is going well in Indochina.

The dock in which the upright administrator Lamon sat was hardly cold, when other prospective scandals were announced.

The first was the Boudineau affair. Mr. Boudineau is a typical civilizer, an embezzling administrator. Among the counts indicted against him, we note the following:

The village of Tân An, the district chief town, had built a power station by means of communal resources or loans. The transaction was successful because the village receipts considerably exceeded the expenses. Its buildings and streets were, furthermore lighted free.

There existed an administrator [Boudineau], ingenious enough to impose a combination whereby the village of Tân An granted its enterprise free of charge to a contractor for the pleasure of paying for the lighting of the buildings and streets in the town. It was then realized that it would be of interest to buy back this privilege conceded free of charge, and this amounts to tens of thousands of piastres that the commune will have to pay out. This whole business is a veritable novel in which the gifts of imagination of a former district chief were given free rein with incredible cynicism.

The second scandal in view is the Théard affair. This is what an Indochinese colleague says about it:

We are living in a really... unaccustomed atmosphere: the Boudineau affair, the Luno affair and soon the Théard affair.

For Mr. Théard, an engineer of great merit, the director of a big French firm in Haiphong, to have offered as an anticipated and undue remuneration to Mr. Scala, director of the Customs and Excise, the sum of ten thousand dollars with a view to concluding

²⁰³ See “The Crimes of Colonialism,” p. 31.

some opium business with the administration, he must be led by extra special considerations to think that there is nothing abnormal about such a step. The squeeze would thus, in Indochinese business circles, be quite usual. All those who hold similar authority would speculate for the greater benefit of their purse and the greater harm to the collectivity.

Since Mr. Darles, the cruel Resident of Thái Nguyên, has been named a member of the Saigon Municipal Commission, and Mr. Beaudoin, impatiently awaited by Mr. Justice Waren, has been made Governor General *ad interim* of Indochina, the least that can be done for Messrs. Théard and Boudineau is to decorate them.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ See “From One Scandal to Another,” p. 105.

CHAPTER V—THE CIVILIZERS

A question: Is it true that in the Sûreté of the Government General of Indochina a Frenchman named C... is employed? That C..., sent on a "mission" to Phú Xuyên, obliged the Annamese in the area to call him *quan lớn* (great mandarin), and violently struck those who didn't do so quickly enough? Is it true that the same C... violated a *linh lê* (Annamese militiaman)? Everything is allowed, everything is possible in this Indochinese paradise.²⁰⁵

In the middle of December 1922, a European sergeant in the Saigon urban police—completely tipsy—went into a native house and seriously injured two of the occupiers, one of them a woman.

Questioned by the examining magistrate, the policeman declared *that he remembered nothing*, while denying that he had been drunk.

The witnesses, one of them a European, affirmed on the contrary that this *guardian of law and order* was not in a normal state at the time of the tragic incident.

Whether this civilizer was mad or drunk matters little, we wish with all our heart that he may be decorated for the act of courage he has accomplished.

In the colonies, if one has a white skin, one belongs to the aristocracy: one is of a superior race. In order to maintain his social status, the least of European customs officers has at least one servant, a "boy" who, quite often, is a maid of all work.

As native domestic labor is very malleable and cheap, it is not rare to see colonial officials returning to France on leave or retirement, taking their domestics with them.

This was the case of Mr. Jean le M... rigny, living in rue Carnot at Cherbourg. This gentleman, home from Indochina, brought with him a boy, at a wage of 35 francs a month. Needless to say, the native had to drudge from morning till night. Weekly rest-times and days off were unknown in this house. In addition, bad board and lodging.

²⁰⁵ See "Under the Guidance of..." p. 76.

One day, Mr. Jean le M... rigny wanted to send his “protégé” to work in the country. The son of Annam, having previously tasted of the happy country existence his kind boss had in store for him, declined the offer.

Thereupon, the ex-civilizer, in a temper, threw the Annamese out after thoroughly hauling him over the coals. Despite repeated requests by the native, Mr. le M... rigny would not return his belongings to him: money, trunk, clothes, etc. Thrown suddenly out into the streets, not knowing the language of the country, without resources, friendless, removed from his usual surroundings, this unfortunate individual was in dire straits.

Colonial officials are the main cause of the high cost of living in the colonies. In order better to understand to what heavy extent this parasitic factor weighs on the budget, that is to say, on the backs of the working people:

British India has 4,898 European officials for 325 million inhabitants.

French Indochina has 4,300 European officials for 15 million inhabitants.

That is to say that in the British colony there is one European official for 66,150 inhabitants, and in the French colony there is one European official for 3,490 inhabitants.

In India, the Customs and Excise administration has 240 European officials.

In Indochina, the same administration has 1,100 European officials.

There are in India 26,000 post and telegraph offices with 268 European officials.

Indochina has 330 offices and 340 European officials.

Why this disproportionate number of budgetivorous people in Indochina? Because the colony is an earthly paradise where, apart from a few very rare exceptions, all the refuse of politics, finance, journalism, etc., thrown out by the metropolitan country, find a very favorable field for their development... Let us begin with the biggest bigwig of all, the Governor General. On this subject, an impartial colonial settler writes as follows:

On arriving in Tonkin, the governors have but one aim: to place people, friends, sons, relatives, electoral brokers of all those it is of interest to them to gain the support; often, it is a man weighed

down with debts, harried by his creditors, so that one needs money.

For the noble writer who writes the glorious history of civilizing colonialism, the so-called war of right and justice will be an inexhaustible source of documentation. Mr. Albert Sarraut, in a surge of eloquence and enthusiasm, said: "It was in the conquest of the colonial Empire that most of the big military leaders who have led us to victory and whose glory and exploits French opinion was already celebrating when they carried our flag under the skies of Africa and Asia, became versed in combat."

As frank in idea, but less of a juggler with verbs, the *Journal de Genève* says outright that "the Republic has seen in the building of its colonial empire, a derivative of the defeat of 1870. The French race has found therein a revenge for its European rebuffs and the military, a fresh opportunity to distinguish themselves in successful combats."

And be hanged to you, if after such authoritative evidence, you persist in not believing that colonization is neither more nor less than a civilizing and humanitarian mission.

1) A theft of 5,000 francs was committed to the detriment of Mr. Guinaudeau. In order to obtain confessions from the natives employed by him, this good employer and great civilizer submitted them to electric current. The author of the theft was later discovered; it was not a native, but another civilizer: Mr. Guinaudeau's son! Mr. Guinaudeau was acquitted. And the eight unfortunate natives are still in hospital.

2) Mr. Vollard, a civilizer and businessman, does not regularly pay his native employees. One of them asked the overseer to demand the wages due to him. Mr. Vollard handed the following note to the overseer: "Tell that pig to eat sh..., it's the only food fit for him."

This happened in Tunisia in 1923, at the actual time when Mr. Millerand²⁰⁶ was making a presidential tour of that country.

²⁰⁶ Étienne Alexandre Millerand: a right-wing socialist, born in Paris in 1859, died in 1943. Deputy of Paris in 1885, Minister of Commerce 1899-1902. His political program, defined in a speech at Saint Mandi in 1896, discarded the class struggle and revolutionary ways, and left the door open to chauvinistic tendencies. Minister of Public Works and War in the governments of Briand and Poincaré from July 1909 to January 1913, he played into the bourgeoisie's hand and actively contributed to mislead the French working class on the eve of the First World War. He

If one has a white skin, one is automatically a civilizer. And when one is a civilizer, one can commit the acts of a savage while remaining the most civilized.

An overseer in charge of public works in Cochinchina obliged the Annamese he met on his way to give him the correct form of greeting due to the superior race by the conquered race.

One day, a native clerk left work reading a novel. Coming to an amusing passage, the reader began to laugh. Just then, he passed Mister overseer of public works and the latter flew into a rage, first of all because the native, absorbed in his reading, hadn't noticed him and greeted; secondly, because the native had taken the liberty of laughing as he passed a white man. Our civilizer therefore stopped the Annamese and, after asking his name, asked if he wanted a slap in the face. Naturally, the clerk declined the far too generous offer and expressed surprise at such a storm of abuse. Without more ado, the official grabbed the native by the jacket and dragged him before the head of the province.

This same overseer of public works, under the pretext of bringing houses and gardens into line, ordered the inhabitants living along the sides of provincial roads, under the threat of fines, to move out, uproot their trees and do away with their gardens in a time limit set by him.

And people are surprised at the discontent on the part of the natives in the colonies!

Not only can Governors and Residents do as they think fit, but also customs officers, policemen and all those who hold a scrap of authority, make use of and abuse it, in the certainty of remaining unpunished.

A commissioner of police in Tuyền Quang (Tonkin) struck a native and broke his arm.

Another commissioner, the one in Đà Lạt (Cochinchina), has just inaugurated a tremendously interesting trading system which we take pleasure in relating here for the benefit of Mr. Dior and Mr. Sarraut. One day this official needed some planks. He sent his militiamen to buy some in town. To buy is a

again became Minister of War in 1914 and strove to carry out a policy of radical chauvinism. In January 1920, he was invested in the forming of a government in which he took the portfolio of the Foreign Ministry. The same year, he managed to get elected President of the Republic but had to retire in face of the non-confidence shown by the majority in the May 1924 elections. The next year he was elected senator.

manner of speaking, for Mr. Commissioner hadn't given his men any money. The latter went to town, however, chose the wood and wanted to take it with them, without paying of course. The salesman wouldn't let his goods be taken away without being paid for. The militiamen gave their white chief an account of the tradesman's extraordinary demands.

Furious, Mister Commissioner delegated three armed men to go and seize the assuming tradesman. The latter, suffering from influenza, refused to let himself be taken away. The militiamen came back to inform their superior. Exasperated, Mister Commissioner doubled the team, ordering them to bring the recalcitrant alive or dead.

The armed guards surrounded the salesman's house and carried out the orders.

A European trader intervened on behalf of the native trader and wrote to Mister Commissioner. But the energetic collaborator of Mr. Maurice Long stuck to his "summons" and let it be known that if the native persisted in refusing to come, he would lay himself open to considerable trouble.

The native trader was obliged to leave his business and his country to escape the "civilizing" anger of the white official.

They were seven poor Annameese in a long, narrow boat which, driven by the current and the effort of their seven oars each pulled by two arms, slid along the river as fast as a steam launch. The customs officer's sampan emerged from an arroyo hidden by mangroves, with the French flag flying aft. A sailor called to them to halt: they went on rowing. They hadn't understood. And the customs sampan wasn't going fast. The customs officer took a Winchester and fired. The boat carried on. Bang! Bang! A rower gave a cry and fell. Bang! Another. Meanwhile, a European, a brick-maker, wandering about there by boat too, surprised the "pirates" at a bend. Bang! Bang! Bang! He was a good marksman. Three bullets, three victims. The boat with two survivors disappeared in the arroyos...

Another day, the same customs officer, followed by six armed sailors, had discovered a poor devil hidden in a pond, buried in the mud, breathing through a straw, one end of which was held in his mouth, the other emerging; lotus leaves were artistically arranged on the surface: the customs officer brought to the Residence the head of this "pirate," an ordinary villager who

had been afraid of seeing frightening looking strangers armed with revolvers, cartridge belts and carrying Winchesters coming towards his village. In the huts were found three cartridge cases, some Chinese cakes and a woodcutter's knife. How could there be any doubt that this was a pirate village and which supplied the pirates!

A young officer newly arrived from France came to a village, saw the huts empty and the population assembled in the square. He imagined he had fallen into a trap and fired on this inoffensive crowd who were celebrating a religious festival and who dispersed in a panic. He pursued them and exterminated them.

When I arrived in Tonkin, relates an "old Tonkinese," do you know what the life of an Annamese was worth on the boats of a big exploiter? Not a cent! It is true.

—Look here! I remember when we were going up the Red River on our steamers, we played for a drink of absinthe to be stood to whoever could, from the boat, "bowl over" the greatest number of Annamese on the banks with ten carbine shots.

A few of them, Winchester in hand, held the villagers and the boats to ransom.

A marine infantry company left for Vĩnh Thường; the local mandarin, out of courtesy, set out with great ceremony with his *linhs* (militiamen) to meet the arrivals. The head of the company's scouts gave order to his section to fire on the mandarin escort and collected several bodies.

When an insurgent cannot be got rid of, his village is burnt down. Thus the region around Hưng Hóa was razed.

Along a lonely path, we passed a yellow-skinned man who was staggering because he was carrying two big baskets of peanuts slung from a shoulder pole. He didn't get out of our way as we neared him. He was taken and shot.

People spend all day hitting the Annamese with sticks or the flat of a sword to make them work.

The Annamese are very gentle and very submissive; but they are spoken to only through kicks on the backside.

We consider Annamese patriots as brigands. That is how Đội Văn,²⁰⁷ a patriot who had struggled against domination for several years, was beheaded

²⁰⁷ Đội Văn or Tuấn Văn: one of the military leaders of the Bãi Sậy maquis (1885-1889). He was again up in arms on August 17, 1889. At the head of 500 men equipped with 100

in Hanoi, his head exhibited in Bắc Ninh and his body thrown in the Red River.

Tổng Duy Tân,²⁰⁸ captured after ten desperate years of struggle, was beheaded.

Phan Đình Phùng,²⁰⁹ a high mandarin, resisted for ten years; he died finally in the forest. This death does not mollify us; his body is exhumed and the remains dispersed; he is pursued beyond the tomb.

In the province of Quảng Trị, a drunken overseer of public works, with a shot from his rifle, brought down a native guilty of not having heard or understood his orders.

A customs officer, drunk too, with a cudgel stroke in the midriff, knocked down an Annamese sailor assigned to his service in Bà Rịa (Cochinchina).

A French contractor killed a militiaman at Đà Lạt where, furthermore, following violence by another civilizer, a native carpenter also succumbed.

A contractor compelled his workmen to work in the water night and day to dig a tunnel. Many of them died, the rest went on strike. The contractor himself burnt down the strikers' houses to oblige them to go back to work. A whole village was in flames during the night.

rifles, he crossed the Canal of Rapids, and the Cầu river to get entrenched in the north of Yên Thế, during the thick of the fight between the French army and Đê Thám partisans who were thus reinforced. The French had to launch against him two columns commanded by Major Dumont and Captain Piquet. Đội Văn, then ill, fell into the hands of reactionaries and was given up by a missionary to the French who beheaded him in Hanoi on November 7, 1899.

²⁰⁸ Tổng Duy Tân: after the capitulation of the Court of Huế, a broad resistance movement, the "Royalist Movement" spread throughout Việt Nam from 1885 to 1896. The struggle headed by Phan Đình Phùng and Tổng Duy Tân was part and parcel of this movement led by scholars or former Court mandarins.

²⁰⁹ Phan Đình Phùng, a former official, set up his headquarters at Hương Khê, Hà Tĩnh province (Central Việt Nam), but operated throughout the mountain area north of Central Việt Nam where he had many forts built. Well organized, experienced in guerilla warfare, armed with self-made rifles, his partisans inflicted serious losses to the enemy. It was not until his death that the resistance ended after 12 years of struggle. Tổng Duy Tân, a doctor of Literature, entrenched himself in the mountain area of Thanh Hóa, north Central Việt Nam, seconded by an excellent military chief, Cao Điển. The resistance lasted 6 years. After having ordered his partisans to stop fighting to prevent useless sacrifice, he withdrew to the mountains, where he was surprised and caught by the French in 1892.

A senior company sergeant major artillery set fire to a house, under the pretext that the owner, whose husband was away, would not receive him at midnight. The poor woman was naturally terrified.

A polygamous lieutenant threw a young woman to the ground and knocked her senseless with a cane under the pretext that she wouldn't live with him.

An official in the naval arsenal murdered an Annamese railway employee by pushing him into a furnace after violently striking him.

Nowhere in the world, writes Vigné d'Oceton, is there a vanquished people who are the object of more ill-treatment than the native.

Another traveler writes:

Colonial life only develops an individual's defects: lack of morals, debauchery and dishonesty, cruelty among those who have seen war; among profiteers and other adventurers, a taste for plundering and theft. Opportunities for this sort of thing were lacking in France, and fear of the police was stronger! Here, this kind is sometimes alone with a few natives, in their junk or in some village; they are more thieving than Europeans in the market and more brutal towards peasants who protest.

All the Frenchmen, writes a third, arrive here with the idea that the Annamese are their inferiors and must serve them as slaves. They treat them like brutes good only for leading with a stick. All of them have got into the habit of considering themselves as members of a new and privileged aristocracy. Whether they are military men or colonial settlers, they normally visualize no other kind of relations with the natives than those they have with their servants. It seems that the boy is for them the representative of the entire yellow race. You should hear with what idiotic disdain a Frenchman of Indochina speaks of the "yellow-skinned man."

You should see how boorishly a European treats a native.

The conqueror attaches a great price to signs of submission or respect on the part of the conquered. The Annamese in the towns, like those in the countryside, are obliged to take off their hats before a European.

An agent of the security service brutally struck any Annamese who forgot to call him Great Mandarin. A customs clerk obliged natives passing by his

house to doff their hats or get off their mounts. One day, this civilizer brutalized an Annamese woman who, though she had greeted him, had forgotten to call him Great Mandarin. This woman was pregnant. A violent kick right in the stomach aimed by the agent caused a miscarriage; the unfortunate woman died shortly after.

If our protectors demand that the Annamese should be humble, submissive, docile and polite, on the other hand, "it seems that nothing is done but to make our presence odiously unbearable," says a writer who has visited Indochina. And he continues: "In Europe, the yellow race is considered as being full of every trickery and deceit. Yet we care very little for making our frankness appreciated."

There are officers who pull bonzes' beards during services. A daddy's boy gave an Annamese official a third degreeing because the latter, the occupier of a seat in a bus, would not give it up to him.

On the arrival of a governor general in Marseille, at the lunch given for him, it was suggested that the mandarins living in that town should be brought. "If the mandarins are brought," replied the Governor General of Indochina, "I shall bring my houseboy."

We have extracted from a colonial soldier's travel diary the following fact:

While the "Tonkinese" are amusing themselves, to starboard a few junks are selling fruit and shellfish. To reach us, the Annamese hold up big poles holding baskets in which they display their goods. One has only the trouble of choosing. By way of money, those who allow themselves the luxury of paying, deposit the most varied objects in the bottom of these baskets: pipe stems, trouser buttons and cigarette ends. (That is perhaps how one teaches commercial honesty to the natives!) Sometimes, just for a laugh, a stoker throws a bucket of boiling water onto the unfortunates' backs. Then there are cries of pain, a frantic flight of oars which bumps the canoes together.

Just below me an Annamese *is burning from head to toe*; completely maddened, he wants to throw himself into the sea. His father, forgetting the danger, lets go the oars, grabs hold of him and forc-

ibly stretches him out on the bottom of the sampan. The struggle hasn't lasted two seconds, is barely over, when another bucket of water, thrown with unerring aim, *in turn scalds the rescuer*. I see him twisting in the boat, his flesh raw, with cries that have nothing human about them! And it makes us laugh, it seems exceedingly funny. *We already have a colonial soul!*

And further:

At the time I was there (in Tonkin) not a week passed without our seeing a few heads fall.

From these spectacles, I have noted but one thing, it is that we are crueller and more barbarous than the pirates themselves. Why these physical tortures, these processions of prisoners through the villages?²¹⁰

Mr. Doumer,²¹¹ a former Governor General of Indochina pronounced the following solemn words at a session of the Chamber of Deputies:

I have known the police in the colonies and have even increased the number of their brigades, after noting that it was the police force which gave the natives the guarantee of being defended

²¹⁰ See "The Superior Civilization," p. 29.

²¹¹ Paul Doumer: A French politician born at Aurillac (Center) in 1857. He was deputy in 1889, then Minister of Finance in 1895 before being Governor General of Indochina from 1896 to 1902. Doumer was the organizer of the colonial system in the forms which it kept in the main until 1945. The three excises of opium, salt and alcohol which he created fed the general budget of Indochina on the people's misery. In Tonkin, the receipts of head tax and land tax doubled between 1896 and 1907 while in Annam, his financial "reorganization" brought the contributions made by the Vietnamese from 83,000 piastres in 1894 to 2 millions in 1899. In the political field, he busied himself in consolidating the division of Viêt Nam in three arbitrary parts; Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina. It was under his pro-consulate that Tonkin from a protectorate became a semi-colony with its mandarinat directly attached to the Resident Superior in Hanoi. The unpopularity of these measures necessitated the organization of a most costly repressive apparatus and involved a considerable augmentation of French officials whose pressure the Indochinese had to bear. By so doing Doumer created the political and economic conditions for French capital to invade Indochina. Once again deputy in 1902, senator in 1912, he successively held the functions of President of the House of Representatives, Minister of Finance and President of the Senate. He was elected President of the French Republic in 1931 and was assassinated on May 6, 1932 in Paris.

against the possibility of abusive measures taken by some settlers.

The police were popular among the natives.

We shall see how the gentlemen of the police interpret working up “their popularity.” Let us say straight away that they are generally very gentle and paternal with wrongdoers, this is an established fact. But as far as peaceful natives are concerned, it’s another story. Without mentioning for the moment the tragic affair of the Saigon central prison in 1916, where, driven by a highly patriotic zeal, the police gentlemen made haphazard arrests, and innocent people thus arrested were condemned and executed. If the Annamese blood reddening the Plain of Tombs disappears with time, the bruised hearts of the widows, orphans and mothers will never heal. The guilty ones, of whom the police were the vile instruments, will not be punished, and justice is not yet done; today, let us quote only a few particular cases.

A commissioner in Tonkin, under the pretext of keeping the gutters clean, walked along by the outlets all day long and, as soon as he noticed the smallest scrap of grass in the water, distributed countless punishments and fines to the unfortunate inhabitants of the area.

To avoid accidents on the waterways used by craft in the west of Cochinchina, a police post has been installed along each canal with the task of preventing the junks from sailing too fast or hampering circulation. With the presence of the police, a veritable dam of fines and transgressions has been opened. Nearly all the junks passing through this locality find fines ranging from one to two piastres inflicted on them. To the crushing taxes levied by the State is added the toil instituted by the “popular” police, and the Annamese are happy, very happy!

Besides the promotion awaiting the most zealous, it appears that the gentlemen of the police are entitled to a commission of 20 percent, on the proceeds of the fines! What a wonderful system!

A native paper said that “the native population no longer wants French policemen, who are too often a calamity for honest people.”

One Pourcignon, furious, threw himself on an Annamese who had the curiosity and audacity to look for a few seconds at the European’s house. He struck him and finally brought him down with a revolver shot in the head.

A railway employee hit a Tonkinese village chief, arrested him and shut him up in a dog's cage.

Mr. Beck split open his chauffeur's skull with a punch.

Mr. Brès, a contractor, kicked to death an Annamese whose arms he had bound, after making his dog bite him.

Mr. Deffis, a receiver, killed his Annamese servant with a tremendous kick in the small of the back.

Mr. Henry, a mechanic, heard a noise in the street; the door of his house opened; an Annamese woman entered, pursued by a native. Henry, who thought this individual was chasing his own *con gái* (girl), got hold of a hunting rifle and opened fire. The individual fell down dead.

A Frenchman fastened his horse in a stable in which there was already a native's mare. The horse reared, which provoked a mad fury in the Frenchman. He struck the native, and blood ran from his mouth and ears. After which, he garroted him and hanged him from the staircase.

A missionary (ah yes, a gentle apostle), suspecting his native seminarist of stealing 1,000 piastres from him, suspended him from a beam and struck him. The poor man fainted. He was brought down. When he regained consciousness, the business was started again. The native is dying. He is perhaps dead already.

Etc., etc....

Has justice punished these individuals, these civilizers?

Some have been acquitted, and the others have not even been disturbed.²¹²

Seeing three natives taking their sheep to pasture in his olive-woods, a French settler sent his wife to fetch a rifle and cartridges. He hid in a bush, fired three times and seriously injured the three natives.

Another French settler had two native workmen, Amdouni and Ben Belkhir, working for him. These had, it appears, stolen a few bunches of grapes. The settler summoned the natives and beat them black and blue with bull pizzle until they fainted. When they regained consciousness, our protector had them

²¹² See "Racial Hatred," p. 68.

bound with their arms behind their backs and hung up by the hands. This odious torture lasted four hours and ended only on the protests of a neighbor.

Taken to hospital, they each had to have a hand amputated. It is not certain that the other hand can be saved.

An Annamese aged 50 who had been employed in the Railway services of Cochinchina for 25 years, was murdered by a white official. Here are the facts:

Lê Văn Tàì had under him four other Annamese. Their duties consisted in lowering a bridge when trains passed, and opening it for craft. Instructions prescribed the lowering of the bridge 10 minutes before trains were due to pass.

On April 2nd, at 4.30 p.m., one of the Annamese had just closed the bridge and lowered the signal. Just then arrived *an administrative launch carrying an official of the naval arsenal returning from a hunt*. The launch began to whistle. The native employee ran to the middle of the bridge, waving his red flag to make the agents of the small steamer realize that the train was going to pass. But then the launch came alongside a pillar of the bridge. The official jumped down and, looking furious, went towards the Annamese. The latter, being prudent, ran towards the house of his chief Tàì. The official ran after him pelting him with stones. Hearing the noise, Tàì came out of his house and went up to the representative of civilization, who exclaimed, "You brute! Why don't you open up?" For an answer, Tàì, who couldn't speak French, pointed to the red signal. This simple gesture exasperated Mr. Long's collaborator who, without more ado, fell on Tàì and, *after giving him a good "third degreeing," pushed him onto a nearby brazier*.

Terribly burned, the Annamese crossing keeper was taken to hospital, where he died after six days of atrocious suffering.

The official was not worried. In Marseille, the official prosperity of Indochina is exhibited; in Annam, people are dying of starvation. Here loyalism is sung, over there, murder is done!

While the life of an Annamese dog isn't worth a cent, for a scratch on the arm, Mr. Inspector General Reinhart receives 120,000 francs' indemnity.²¹³

²¹³ See "Murderous Civilization!," p. 70.

The civilizing of the Moroccans by gunshots is continuing.

A Zouave major garrisoned at Settat, speaking to his men, told them: “We must put an end to these savages. Morocco is rich in agricultural and mineral products. We civilized Frenchmen are here with two aims: to civilize it and enrich ourselves.”

He is right, this major. He is frank enough, especially, to admit that if one goes to the colonies, it is to steal from the natives. For, after only ten years of protectorate, 379,000 hectares of arable land in Morocco are occupied by Europeans, 368,000 of which by civilizing Frenchmen. The surface of the colony being 815,000 square kilometers, if civilization continues to march on in this way, in a few years, the unfortunate Moroccan will no longer have an inch of land free to live and work on in his own fatherland without putting up with the yoke of exploiting and enslaving colonialism.

CHAPTER VI—ADMINISTRATIVE FRAUD

The budget for Cochinchina, for example, amounted to 5,561,680 piastres (12,791,000 francs) for 1911; it was 7,321,817 piastres (16,840,000 francs) for 1912. In 1922, it rose to 12,821,325 piastres (96,169,000 francs). A simple reckoning shows us that in 1911 and 1922 there was a difference of 83,369,000 francs in the budget for this colony. Where does this money go? Quite simply to expenditure on staff, which swallows up more or less 100 percent of the total receipts.

Other follies are piled one on top of the other to waste the money the poor Annamese have sweated for. We do not yet know the exact number of piastres spent for the king of Annam's trip to France;²¹⁴ but we do know that, to await the propitious day, the only one on which the Bamboo Dragon could embark, the steamship Porthos had to be compensated for four days delay at the rate of 100,000 francs a day (400,000 francs). Traveling expenses. 400,000 francs. Expenses for the reception, 240,000 francs (not counting the salaries of the police entrusted with watching the Annamese in France). To provide board in Marseille for Annamese militiamen for "presenting arms" to His Excellency and His Majesty, 77,600 francs.

Since we are in Marseille, let us take advantage of this to see what the Colonial Exhibition has cost us. First of all, besides the favored ones from the metropolitan country, thirty, high officials have been brought from the colonies who, while they sip cocktails along the Canebière, are collecting bonuses both at the Exhibition and in the colonies. Indochina alone has to spend 12 millions for this Exhibition. And do you know how this money was spent? Here is an example: the famous reconstruction of the palaces of Angkor took 3,000 cubic meters of timber at 400 or 500 francs a meter. Total: 1,200,000 to 1,500,000 francs!

Other examples of waste. To transport Mr. Governor General, luxury cars and coaches are not enough; he needs a special carriage, the fitting up of which cost the Treasury 125,250 francs.

In 11 months of functioning, the Economic Agency has burdened the economy of Indochina with a sum of 464,000 francs.

In the Colonial School, where future civiliziers are made, 44 professors of all kinds are subsidized for 30 to 35 students. Several thousand francs more.

²¹⁴ King of Annam: Khải Định went to France where the Colonial Exposition of Marseille was held.

The permanent inspection of defense works in the colony costs the budget 785,168 francs yearly. Now these gentlemen the inspectors have never left Paris and don't know the colonies any better than they know the moon.

If we go to other colonies, we find the same fraud everywhere. To receive an unofficial "economic" mission, the Treasury of Martinique is "relieved" of 40,000 francs. Within the space of ten years, the budget of Morocco has risen from 17 to ago million francs, although local expenditure has been reduced by 30 percent, that is to say, expenditure which would have been of advantage to the natives!²¹⁵

On his return from a visit to the colonies, a former deputy exclaimed: "Highway robbers are honest people compared with the officials in our colonies!" Although favored with huge salaries (a European agent, even illiterate, starts at 200 piastres = 2,000 francs), these gentlemen are never satisfied. They want to earn more, by any means.

Scholarships have been awarded to daddy's boys who, as residents or administrators on duty, earn meagre salaries (40,000 to 100,000 francs).

Certain sessions of the Colonial Council²¹⁶ are, so to speak, solely devoted to a methodical plunder of the budget. A certain president has, for himself alone, nearly two million francs for supplying contracts. Yet another, a director of the Interior representing the government within the Council, asks for his salary to be doubled and obtains this. The building of a road, prolonged from year to year and carried out without control, provides regular benefits for a third. The functions of doctor for the officials in the colony procures considerable emoluments for a fourth. The fifth is a doctor for the municipal services; the sixth is a stationery supplier and printer to the Administration. And so on.

If the cash-box seems a bit empty, there are some who do not take long to have it filled up. On their own authority, they notify the natives that they

²¹⁵ See "The Colonial Abyss," p. 109.

²¹⁶ Colonial Council: Assembly created in 1880 in Cochinchina to assist the governor of Cochinchina. Of a mixed composition it numbered, as these lines were being written, 18 French members of whom 12 were elected and 6 Vietnamese members, elected through a suffrage limited to voters enfranchised by virtue of the payment of a high property-tax. Its functions were very small. Besides the voting of the annual budget of the Colony, it restrained itself to formulate motions and give advice.

need a certain sum. The charges are distributed among villages, which hasten to comply so as not to incur immediate reprisals.

When a resident general has some expense or other to meet, he issues mandarin's certificates. A certain province is quoted where an operation of this kind took place to the tune of 10,620 francs. And these facts are not rare.

One of our residents superior, whose credits for a steamer had run out a few months too early, had the charges reimbursed from some festival or other during which the king was invited onto the steamer.

The commercial travelers of civilization and democracy know all the wangles.

A former governor general of Indochina one day confessed that that colony is covered with officials who are too numerous for its budget and often useless.

A good half of these officials, writes a settler, province chiefs and others, fulfil only very imperfectly the qualities demanded from men on whom such wide and formidable powers are conferred.

All of them are good at wasting public funds, and the poor Annamese wretches pay, and pay again. They pay not only officials whose functions are useless, but they also pay employees whose employment doesn't exist: In 19..., 250,000 francs were volatilized in this way.

For the journey of an Excellency, a warship was detailed. The fitting out amounted to 250,000 francs, not counting the "petty expenditure" which cost Indochina more than 80,000 francs for each journey.

Mr. Governor was not content with the sumptuous palaces he occupies in Saigon and Hanoi, he also needed a villa by the sea. It was again Indochina which forked out.

In 19..., a noted foreign Thingumbob²¹⁷ came to Saigon, and the governor received him in a princely manner. For four days it was a debauchery of festivities, blow-outs and champagnes; poor Cochinchina paid the bill: 75,000 francs.

The administrators are petty potentates, who like to surround themselves with luxury and sumptuousness to enhance, so they say, their prestige with the natives. One resident formed a company of lancers to serve him as guard,

²¹⁷ Meaning: whose name has been forgotten.

and he doesn't go out without an escort. In all the residences there are from 6 to 11 horses, 5 or 6 coaches: victorias, mylords, tilburies, malabars, etc. To these already superfluous means of transport are added luxury cars costing the budget tens of thousands of piastres. One administrator even keeps a string of racehorses.

These gentlemen are housed and provided with furniture and lighting at the expense of the state; in addition, their coachmen, chauffeurs, stablemen and gardeners, in a word, their domestic staff, are paid by the administration.

Even literary entertainment is supplied free to these fortunates. One administrator puts down to the budget 900 piastres for his heating! and 1,700 piastres subscription costs for papers! Another, by juggling with the accounts, managed to transform the purchase of dresses, pianos and toilet articles into the purchase of materials needed for the maintenance of the residence or other similar qualification, in order to make the State budget bear the cost!

Whether they have been restaurant keepers or college ushers, once they arrive in the colonies our civilizers lead a princely life. One administrator employs five or six militiamen to mind his goats. Another has had made for him by sculptor militiamen, pretty statues of Buddha or elegant chests in camphor wood.

The case is cited of a brigade inspector who, according to the regulations, was entitled to only one militiaman as an orderly and who employed:

1 sergeant steward, 1 butler, 3 waiters, 2 cooks, 3 gardeners, 1 manservant, 1 coachman, 1 groom.

And Madame had in her service: 1 tailor, 2 laundrymen, 1 embroiderer, 1 basket-maker.

The child had a special boy who never left his side.

A witness cites a meal at an administrator's—an ordinary meal and not a banquet—where each guest had a militiaman behind him to change the plates and pass him the dishes. And all the militiamen in the room were under the orders of a sergeant major.

CHAPTER VII—EXPLOITATION OF THE NATIVES

After stealing fertile land, the French sharks levy tithes on poor land a hundred times more scandalous than feudal tithes.

Vigné d'Octon

Before we were occupied, the roll of land taxes listed according to the category of crops all village lands, common property and private property. The tax rate varied from 1 piastre to 50 cents for rice fields. For other lands from 1 piastre 40 to 12 cents. The surface unit was a *mow*, each side 150 *thuoc*. The length of the *thuoc* varied. It was, according to provinces, 42, 47 or 64 centimeters, and the corresponding surfaces of the *mow* were 3,970, 4,900 and 6,200 square meters.

To increase State revenue, as a basis for all measurements, a length of 40 cm. was adopted, which was less than all the measurements in use: the surface of the *mow* was thus fixed at 3,600 square meters. Land taxes were thereby augmented in the proportions varying in the different provinces; a dozen in some localities, a third in others, two-thirds in the less favored.

From 1890 to 1896, direct taxes had doubled; from 1896 to 1898, they increased by half again. When an increase was imposed on a village, the latter resigned itself and paid: to whom would it have taken its complaints? The success of these operations encouraged the Residents to repeat them. In the eyes of many Frenchmen, the docility of the communes was manifest proof that the limits had not been overstepped!

Personal tax went up from 14 cents to 2 piastres 50 cents. Those not registered, *i.e.* young people under 18, who had until then had nothing to pay, were hit by a tax of 30 cents, say more than double that which those registered formerly paid.

According to a decree by the Resident superior in Tonkin dated December 11th, 1919, all natives aged from 18 to 60 were subject to a uniform personal tax of 2 p. 50.

Every Annamese was required constantly to carry his card and to present it on demand. Anyone who forgot or lost this card was arrested and imprisoned.

To remedy the fall in the piastre, Governor General Doumer simply increased the number of taxable people registered!

Every year each village is assigned a certain number of registrations and a certain area of land of various categories; are additional resources wanted? The figures are modified during the carrying out; the villages are obliged to pay a number of registrations and a surface of land higher than that distributed at the beginning. That is how in the province of Nam Định (Tonkin), the total area of which does not reach 120,000 hectares, the statistics mention 122,000 hectares of rice fields and the Annamese is forced to pay taxes for non-existent land! If he shouts, no one hears him.

Not only are taxes crushing, they vary every day.

The same applies for certain rights of circulation. It is, moreover, impossible to collect taxes of this kind equitably: a permit for 150 kilos of tobacco is delivered, and things are so contrived that the same product is hit many times in succession, when these 150 kilos have been distributed among three or four different buyers. There exist no rules other than the whims of the customs officials; they inspire such fear that the Annamese, at the sight of them, abandon along the road the basket of salt, tobacco or areca nuts they are carrying; they prefer to give up their property rather than pay eternal dues on it. In some regions, people are obliged to pull up tobacco plants and cut down areca palms so as not to have to put up with the bother the new tax would entail.

In Luang Prabang, poor, pitiful women loaded down with iron are employed at cleaning the roads. They are guilty only of having been unable to pay.

Devastated by floods, the province of Bắc Ninh (Tonkin) was compelled to pay 500,000 piastres in contributions.

You have heard M. Maurice Long, Governor General of Indochina, M. Albert Sarraut, Minister for the Colonies and their press—a disinterested press—loudly proclaiming the success of the Indochinese Loan. However, they carefully refrain from telling you by what means they obtained this success. They are probably right in not divulging their professional secret, and the secret is this: first, they begin by luring gullible folk with a bait of benefits. As this does not bring in enough, the villages are stripped of their communal property. This is still not enough; then well-off natives are called, they are given a receipt in advance, and it is up to them to manage to pay in the sums entered. As the government cash-box is big and the native industrialists and businessmen are not numerous, compulsory loans from the latter do not fill

the fathomless bottom of this cash-box. Then the hitting-state hits the pack of the most hit: two, three, four or several wretches are obliged to subscribe in common to a shareholding!

Here, for example, is a trick our administrators use to get money out of the pockets of the native *cái áo*.²¹⁸

It was in a western province, a few weeks before the opening of the Indo-chinese Loan.

The head of this province gathered together all the heads of cantons within his competence, and after having explained to them, through an interpreter, the terms of the loan, said to them in conclusion:

“There, it is my duty to give you these explanations. Now subscribe!”

Then catching sight of a canton head standing next to him, the distinguished *quan lớn*²¹⁹ asked:

“And you, what can you get from your canton?”

The poor man, taken unaware by the question, stammered a few words to indicate that he couldn't supply figures, not yet having seen his subordinates in order to realize their possibilities.

“Shut your mouth. You're not worthy of our office. I dismiss you!”

The loan was opened. The Governor of Cochinchina, during his tour, stopped in the chief-town and enquired what the subscription figure for the week was.

“73,000 piastres!” he was told.

The governor didn't seem satisfied with the figure, seeing that the province is reputed to be the richest in West Cochinchina, and *that is made more than this* at the last loan.

After the departure of the colony's head, the province head decided to make a propaganda tour in his fief. He saw all the wealthy natives possessing a fire-arm. He fixed a figure for everyone, and, to make the person concerned realize that it was not a joke, he confiscated a rifle.

“You know, if you don't go along, your rifle won't be returned to you!”

And people went along.

²¹⁸ *Cái áo*: jacket or dress worn by the Vietnamese.

²¹⁹ See footnote 69, p. 77.

Let us note in passing that the same administrator spent 30,000 piastres to build a 9-kilometer-long road which is crumbling into a neighboring canal. Let us hope that the Trans-Indochinese will meet a better fate.

A pagoda was being built. The labor was supplied by prisoners led by a notable. The duty roster and workmen's days were regularly marked and regularly paid by the contractors. But it was Mr. Resident who pocketed the money.

Mr. Resident had just been decorated. To celebrate his decoration, a public subscription was opened. The total of the subscription was peremptorily determined for the officials, agents and notables; the minimum was 6 piastres. The sum collected: 10,000 piastres. A fine rosette, wasn't it?

Supplies for the building of wooden bridges and communal schools left our upright administrator a little pocket money of about 2,000 piastres.

The registration of animals being free, Mr. Resident allowed his employees to collect from 0.50 to 5 piastres per head of animals registered. In return, he receives a monthly income of 200 piastres.

A faked classification of rice fields brought in for this official—now decorated—4,000 piastres.

An illegal concession of a few hectares of land added 2,000 piastres to the residential funds.

Civilizer, patriot and right-to-the-ender, Mr. Resident has been able to benefit greatly from Victory loans: some villages subscribed to the 1920 loan—note that we have a loan for every victory and a victory for every year—55,900 francs, at the rate of 10 francs 25 to the piastre, say 5,466 piastres. In 1921, the piastre having fallen to 6 francs, Mr. Resident generously took all these stocks himself and had 5,466 piastres reimbursed. He later collected 9,325 piastres following a rise.

We call attention to the following fact from the *Journal Officiel*, first session of December 22nd, 1922:

During the war, African tirailleurs sent money orders to their families which often amounted to considerable sums. *These money orders never reached the addressees.*

A colleague quite recently notified us of a similar “phenomenon,” This time, in Reunion Island. For months, the inhabitants of the island haven’t received a single parcel addressed to them.

Such a phenomenon, [says the newspaper] surprised both those who sent and those who didn’t receive

There were complaints. There was an enquiry, and hardly had it opened when, together with an explanation of the mystery, it brought about the discovery of a series of thefts committed with remarkable diligence and persistence.

One employee was arrested, then another, then a departmental head, and finally, when all the employees were under lock and key, the director joined his staff in prison.

Every day the enquiry revealed some new fact. More than 125,000 francs worth of parcels had been stolen; the books had been cooked and were in such a mess that it took six months to put the accounts in order.

Though a dishonest employee is sometimes encountered in an administration, it is rare for a whole department, from top to bottom, to be affected, but what is even stranger *is that this whole gang of thieves has been able to operate undisturbed for several years.*²²⁰

On the occasion of this discussion of the draft bill relating to air forces expenditure, expenditure for which the colonies, i.e. the natives will have to cough up (Indochina, 375,000 francs; West Africa, 100,000 francs), Mr. Morinaud, deputy for Algeria, said this:

On this occasion, permit me, dear colleagues, after all the congratulations which have been addressed them, including one in the *Times*, which described this feat as miraculous, in turn to pay the homage of our admiration to the valiant Frenchmen who recently accomplished such a fine exploit, a homage which deserves to be shared by *Mr. Citroën, the disinterested industrialist*, who did not hesitate to supply them with the financial and technical means. (*Applause*).

²²⁰ See “Colonial Honesty,” p. 98.

What happened the day after this great event? *Just that the military posts we have in southern Algeria immediately ordered those means of transport unparalleled for the Sahara, called caterpillar trucks.*

The posts at Touggourt and Ouargla—this information was given to me recently by the Governor of Algeria—have just ordered two.

All our other forts will evidently soon be supplied with them.

It is necessary, within a short space of time, to install four or five more, so that they succeed each other every 200 kilometers.

New posts will thus be created. They will immediately order caterpillar trucks. In this way all the Sahara forts will easily be able to intercommunicate. They will be able to ensure their supplies from post to post with surprising facility. They will receive their mail regularly. (*Applause*).

(From the *Journal Officiel*, 22-1-23).

Corvées do not serve only to build promenades around the residences for the pleasure of a few Europeans, those liable for *corvée*, always at the mercy of the residents, also perform harder jobs.

At the mere announcements of the journey of the Minister of Colonies in Indochina, 10,000 men were raised to complete the V.L... line, which it was desired he should inaugurate.

During the Summer of 18..., a short while before the famine which devastated the center of Annam, 10,000 Annamese, led by the mayors of their villages, were requisitioned to drag a canal. A good part of this huge labor force was without work: they were however kept for months, far from the rice fields, at a time when the presence of so many idle hands would have been indispensable in the fields. It should be noted that such armies have never been called up when it was a question of warding off a public calamity; at the end of 18..., the greater part of the unfortunates who died of starvation in Annam could have been saved if a transport service had been organized from Tourane to supply the regions where famine was rife; the 10,000 Annamese of the canal could in a month have distributed 2,000 tons of rice in their provinces.

Works on the Tourane road and those of Trấn Ninh²²¹ and Ai Lao²²² have left painful memories behind. Those liable for *corvée* had to cross a hundred kilometers before arriving at the sites. Then they were housed in deplorable huts. No hygiene, an unorganized medical service, no relay or shelter along the roads. They were given an insufficient rice ration, a bit of dried fish, and drank the unhealthy and dreaded mountain water. Diseases, fatigue and ill-treatment caused a tremendous death rate.

If *corvées* are replaced by requisitions, there is only one difference between the two systems: it is that the duration of *corvées* is limited and that of requisitions is not. Both meet all needs: if the customs want to get salt carried, they requisition boats; if a warehouse is to be built, workmen and materials are requisitioned at the same time.

Requisitioning especially, is ill-disguised deportation. Without taking agricultural work and religious festivals into account, it channels whole communes to work sites. Only a small part return and furthermore, nothing is done to ensure a return.

On the way to Lang Bian,²²³ on the way to the mountain where death awaited them, parsimoniously fed, even spending days without food, *corvée* and requisitioned workers, in whole convoys, dispersed or revolted, provoking terrible repression on the part of the guards and strewing the road with their corpses.

The administration of Guangzhouwan²²⁴ received instructions from the government to recruit. On this occasion, all the natives working on the quayside were seized. They were tied up and thrown into the convoy boat.

²²¹ Trấn Ninh: a Laotian province constituted by a vast plateau (average height: 1,200 m.) bordered by peaks of over 1,500 m. Chief town: Xieng Khouang. Population: 60,000 inhabitants.

²²² Ai Lao: Laos. A vast country of Central Indochina extending on 214,000 sq. km, between China in the north, Cambodia in the south, Việt Nam in the east and Thailand in the west. Population: 3,000,000 inhabitants. Capital: Vientiane. Formerly a part of the Indochinese Union, Laos was a most economically backward country lacking in means of communication. Roads were very few and railways non-existent. No work on the rapids of the Mekong was made to turn this river into an excellent waterway.

²²³ Lang Bian: a plateau of 400 sq. km. (average height: 1,500 m.) 250 km. from Saigon, in the south of Central Việt Nam, on which the French colonialists set up a health-station, Đà Lạt, connected with Saigon by road and railway.

²²⁴ Guangzhouwan: a narrow strip along the coast of Guangdong province (China) with 842 sq.km, and 205,850 inhabitants. In 1898, France grabbed this territory on a lease contract for

The inhabitants of Laos, the miserable locals, live in perpetual fear of *corvées*. When the recruiting officers arrive at the huts, they find them empty.

At Thủ Dầu Một, an administrator deems that he needs a garden roller. What does he do? He reaches agreement with a concessionary society looking for cheap labor. The society buys the roller and delivers it to the administrator at the price of 13,500 francs. The administrator imposes *corvée* on those he administers to the benefit of the society, agreeing that one day's *corvée* is worth 0.50 francs. For three years the inhabitants of Thủ Dầu Một are put at the disposal of this society and by *corvée* pay for the roller it was Mr. Administrator's pleasure to buy for his garden.

In another locality, the *corvée* workers, after their day's work, were compelled to transport free over a distance of one kilometer, stones intended for building a wall to surround the Administrator's hotel.

At any hour, the Annamese can thus be taken away, compelled to do the worst tasks, badly paid, ill-fed, requisitioned for an unlimited time, abandoned hundreds of kilometers away from his village.

The Annamese, in general, are crushed by the benefits of French protection. The Annamese peasants especially, are even more odiously crushed by this protection: they are oppressed as Annamese, they are expropriated as peasants. It is they who do the *corvées*, they who produce for the whole band of parasites, civilizers and others. It is they who live in misery when there is plenty for the butchers; and die of starvation when there is a bad harvest. They are robbed on all sides and in all ways, by the Administration, by the modern feudal system, by the Church. Formerly, under the Annamese system, lands were classed in several categories, according to their production capacities. Taxes were based on this classification. Under the present colonial system, this has changed. When money is to be found the French Administration simply modifies the categories. With a magic stroke of the pen, it transforms poor land into fertile land.

That is not all. The surface of ground is artificially increased by reducing the unit of measurement. By this fact, the tax has automatically increased by a third in some localities, two-thirds in others. This is not sufficient to appease

99 years and put a French administrator at its head. During the Second World War, in 1943, she had to give it back to China after Japanese occupation.

the voracity of the protector State, which increases taxes from year to year. Thus, from 1890 to 1896, taxes doubled. They increased by half again from 1896 to 1898, and so on. The Annamese always let themselves be fleeced, and encouraged by the success of these operations, our protectors continue their gambling.

In 1895, the administrator of a province in Tonkin stripped a village of several hectares to the benefit of another village, the latter Catholic. The dispossessed people complained. They were put in prison. Do not think that administrative cynicism stopped there. The unfortunates dispossessed were moreover obliged to pay taxes until 1910 on lands which had been taken away from them in 1895!

After the thieving Administration, come thieving concessionaries. Europeans who possess nothing but a fat belly and white skin are given concessions the size of which often exceeds 20,000 hectares.

These concessions are established for the most part on legalized thefts. During the conquest, the Annamese peasants—like the Alsatians in 1870—had abandoned their lands to take refuge in that part of the country which had remained free. When they came back, their lands had been “concessioned.” Whole villages were thus despoiled, and the natives were reduced to working for the lords of the modern feudal system, who sometimes appropriated for themselves as much as 90 percent of the harvest.

Under the pretext of encouraging colonization, a large number of big concessionaries were exempt from land tax.

After obtaining the land for nothing, the concessionaries obtained the labor free, or almost free. The Administration supplied them with a certain number of convicts who worked for nothing, or else it exerted its influence to recruit workers for them who were paid starvation wages. If the workers didn't come in sufficiently large numbers or if they were discontented, violence was resorted to; some concessionaries seize village mayors and notables, and beat and torture them until they sign a contract undertaking to supply the number of workers requested.

Besides this temporal power, there are spiritual saviors who, while preaching the virtue of poverty, seek nonetheless to enrich themselves with the sweat and blood of the natives. In Indochina alone, the Holy Apostolic Mission by itself owns one fifth of the rice fields in the region. Although it isn't taught in the Bible, the method of acquiring these lands is very simple: it is usury and

corruption. The Mission takes advantage of poor harvests to lend money to the peasants, obliging them to pledge their lands as a security. The loan rates being usurious, the Annamese cannot discharge their debts when they fall due; then the lands pledged definitely belong to the Mission.

The more or less general governors to whom the mother country has entrusted the destiny of Indochina, are generally ignoramuses and scoundrels. It is enough for the Mission to possess a few of those secret, personal and compromising documents to frighten the sparrows and obtain from them all it desires. It is in this way that one governor-general conceded to the Mission 7,000 hectares of riverside land belonging to natives, who were in a single stroke condemned to beggary.

Through this brief glimpse, it can be seen that under the mask of democracy, French imperialism has transplanted in the country of Annam the cursed system of the Middle Ages, and that the Annamese peasant is crucified, by the bayonet of capitalist Civilization at the cross of prostituted Christianity.²²⁵

Algeria suffers from famine. Now Tunisia is hit by the same scourge. To face this situation, the Administration arrests and sends to jail many hunger-stricken. The latter are given nothing to eat to remind them that the prison is not an asylum. Some of them die from starvation. Others in the caves at El Ghiria nibble the carrion of an ass dead several days ago.

At Beja, some Khammes contend with crows for carcasses.

At Souk El Arba, at Ghida, at Oued Mlize, every day scores of natives die from starvation.

Apart from famine, typhus breaks out in many areas and threatens to spread.

To hide the ugliness of its system of criminal exploitation, colonial capitalism always decorates its rotten blazon with the idealistic motto: Fraternity, Equality, etc.

In the same workshop and for the same work, a white workman is paid several times better than his colored brother.

²²⁵ See "Annamese Peasant Conditions," p. 150.

In the administrations, the natives, despite length of service and recognized ability, draw starvation wages, while a newly pushed up white man receives a higher salary for less work.

Young natives who have studied in Faculties in the metropolitan country and obtained doctor's or law degrees, cannot exercise their profession in their own country if they are not naturalized, and goodness only knows what difficulties a native meets, what humiliating steps he must accomplish before obtaining naturalization.

Dragged from their lands and their homes, enrolled by force as "volunteers," the militarized natives are not long in savoring delightful "equality."

Holding the same rank as a native, the white man is nearly always considered as a superior. This "ethnomilitary" hierarchy is still more striking when white and colored soldiers travel together in a train or on a ship.²²⁶

How can a native become naturalized? The statute of March 25th, 1915, relating to the acquisition of the quality of French citizen by French subjects, states as follows:

Art. 1—Can be admitted after the age of 21 to the enjoyment of rights of a French citizen, French subjects or proteges not originating from Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco, who have set up residence in France, Algeria or a country placed under the protectorate of the Republic and who have satisfied one of the following conditions:

- 1) Having obtained the cross of the Legion of Honor or one of the diplomas of university or professional studies, a list of which will be drawn up by a decree.
- 2) Having rendered important services to colonization or to the interests of France.
- 3) Having served in the French army and having acquired either the rank of officer or non-commissioned, officer, or the military medal.
- 4) Having married a French woman and having one year's domicile.

²²⁶ See "Equality!," p. 59.

- 5) Having resided more than ten years in the said countries and having a sufficient knowledge of the French language.

Despite the insufficiency of this law, it might pass muster if it were genuinely applied: but no, the gentlemen officials sit on it and like indiscreet fools, they oblige candidates for naturalization to supply written answers to the following questions:

- A— Do your wife and children speak French?
- B— Do they dress in European style?
- C— Have you furniture in your home?
- D— And chairs?
- E— Do you eat at table or on a mat?
- F— What do you eat?
- G— Do you eat rice or bread?
- H— Do you own property?
- I— And your wife?
- J— What is the income from your profession?
- K— Your religion?
- L— To which societies do you belong?
- M— What are your functions in these societies?
- N— Why are you asking for naturalization, the native status being good and gentle. Is it to become an official? To be important? Or to prospect for gold and precious stones?
- O— Who are your closest friends?

A little more, and these gentlemen would ask us if our wives take us to the W.C.!

CHAPTER VIII—JUSTICE

Is it true that through an excess of humanitarian feelings so many times proclaimed by Mr. Sarraut, the prisoners in the prison of Nha Trang (Annam) were put on a day diet, that is to say, they were deprived of water with their meals? Is it true that the prisoners' noses were daubed with iodine to make them more easily recognizable in case of escape?²²⁷

Concerning the precautions taken to combat the plague, the *Independent* of Madagascar dated July 13th, 1921, published a report of which the following is an extract:

A number of dwellings have been burnt, notably a rather attractive one last Monday, that of Rakotomanga in rue Gallieni. Mr. Desraux's dwelling did not undergo the same fate; it is estimated to be too valuable with all it contains (50,000 francs); consequently it was decided simply to disinfect it, and that it would be forbidden to inhabit it for a fairly long time, six months we think.

We may add that Mr. Desraux is a French citizen while Rakotomanga is subject because he is a native. We remind our readers that the law of 1841 was voted for all French peasants.

In Madagascar, six natives were arrested on a settler's concession for not having paid their taxes. In court, the accused declared that the settler who employed them, M. de la Roche, had promised them:

1) to pay their taxes; 2) to have them exempted from prestations due to the public services, and 3) to give them 10 francs salary for 30 days' work. It should be noted that this settler only employs them for one day a week. To meet their needs, these natives are obliged to go and work for Malagasies in the neighborhood of the concession. Furthermore, not only has M. de la Roche not paid their taxes, as he had promised, but has, moreover, it seems, kept the money these natives had handed to him for payment of these taxes.

The Administration for once opened an enquiry. But you will see...

²²⁷ See "The Colonial Abyss," p. 109.

Notified of the matter the Agricultural Syndicate of Mahanoro, of which M. de la Roche is probably a member, telegraphed to the Governor General to protest against the inopportune raid by the police on M. de la Roche's property and to demand a sanction against the chief of the police station, whose crime was to have uncovered the abuses committed by a Frenchmen to the detriment of the natives.

The Governor General, so as to avoid a fuss, purely and simply hushed up the scandal.²²⁸

The Council of war in Lille condemned to 20 years' hard labor Von Scheven, a German officer who during the occupation, horsewhipped the natives of Roncq.

But why, in Indochina, the French gentleman who shoots down an Annamese with a revolver shot to the head; the French official who shuts up a Tonkinese in a dog's cage after savagely beating him; the French contractor who kills a Cochinchinese after binding his arms and making his dog bite him; the French mechanic who "brings down" an Annamese with a hunting rifle; the French naval employee who kills a native crossing-keeper by pushing him into a furnace, etc., etc. Why are they not punished?

And why are only 8 days' prison, with reprieve, "inflicted" on these young gentlemen in Algeria who after having punched and kicked a little native boy of 13, impaled him on one of the spikes surrounding the "Tree of Victory"?

And why does the N.C.O. who horsewhipped Nahon and the officer who murdered him remain unpunished?

It is true that Annam and Algeria are conquered countries—as was Roncq; but the Frenchmen in these countries are not "Boches" and what is criminal for the latter is an act of civilization when committed by the former, and finally, that the Annamese and the Algerians are not men; they are dirty "nhà quê" (peasants) and "goats." There is no justice for them.

The ironic Vigné d'Octon was not mistaken when he wrote: "Law and justice for the natives? Get along! The stick, the revolver and the rifle, that is all they deserve, these vermin!"

²²⁸ See "Modern-Style Slavery," p. 86.

In the terribly well-stocked arsenal of hardships to be weighed on the heads of the natives, are encountered fines ranging from 200 to 3,000 piastres.

Mr. Doumer is not unaware that the Annamese will never be able to pay such sums; yet he wants to make money at all costs, and this clever man fore-saw that *the villages could be made responsible*. (Art. 4)

To have a whole village condemned, it is necessary, you will say, to establish its complicity.

Not at all; with article 4, this is not necessary. Any village is responsible for an individual offense, which has not been able to prevent this offense.

This article 4 is infernally clever, as it suffices for the farmers' agents, paid to bring the greatest number possible of infractions to notice, to declare that the village has done nothing to prevent such-and-such an offense.

Heading III rules the method of ascertaining offenses which the farmer's agents are empowered to carry out.

But there is a stumbling-block. More often than not, these agents, who are illiterate, draw up irregular reports. This inconvenience is obviated by having reports drawn up by customs officers in the chief towns, on the strength of the reports prepared by the farmer's agents.

Indochina is a darling daughter. She is worthy of mother France. She has all that the latter has: her government, her means, her justice and also her little conspiracies. We will speak only of the two latter.

Justice is represented by a good lady holding scales in one hand and a sword in the other. As the distance between Indochina and France is so great, so great that, on arrival there, the scales lose their balance and the pans melt and turn into opium pipes and official bottles of spirits, the poor lady has only the sword left with which to strike. She even strikes innocent people and innocent people especially.

As for the conspiracies that is another story.

We will not recall the famous conspiracies of 1908 and 1916²²⁹ thanks to which a good number of French proteges were able to appreciate the bless-

²²⁹ Conspiracy of 1908: its authors tried to poison the French garrison and attack Hanoi by surprise. The plan of attack was disclosed before its carrying out and the poisoning did not have the expected effect. The conspiracy failed and was drowned in blood by the French colonialists.

ings of civilization on the scaffold, in prison or in exile; these conspiracies are already old and leave traces only in the memory of the natives.

Let us speak only of the most recent conspiracy. While the metropolitan country had the resounding Bolshevik conspiracy, the colonialist gentlemen of Indochina—like the frog in the fable—also wanting a conspiracy, puffed themselves up and ended by having one.

This is how they went about it:

A French mandarin (Resident of France, if you please), an Annamese sub-prefect and a native mayor took it upon themselves to manufacture a conspiracy.

The administrative trinity put out the rumour that the conspirators had received two hundred and fifty bombs intended to blow up the entire Tonkinese territory.

Now on February 16th, the Criminal Court of Hanoi recognized that not only was the existence of a revolutionary organization disposing of destructive engines not established; but that the conspiracy was simply a provoking manoeuvre by government agents desirous of winning administrative favors.

Do you think that after this decision the incarcerated Annamese were going to be released? No! The prestige of the conquerors must at all costs be maintained. For this, instead of simply decorating the clever inventors of the affair, twelve Annamese, most of them scholars, were condemned to 2 to 5 years in prison, and, on the door of this prison can be read—in French, of course—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

And the so-called nativophile newspapers hasten to extol the impartiality of this caricature of justice.

Listen rather to the *Dépêche coloniale* which holds the championship for Annamesophobia:

French justice has just given its verdict. It is an acquittal for half of the accused and light sentences for the other half... Scholars who

Conspiracy of 1916: Many secret associations were formed in Cochinchina and struggled against the forced recruitment of Vietnamese and the robbery of the country by the French colonialists during the First World War. On the night of December 15, 1916, the Saigon people in arms, with political prisoners, attempted to take the Saigon Central prison. But the French rushed in reinforcements and repelled the badly organized and led insurgents. The conspiracy failed.

had, through bad rhymes of circumstance, *celebrated the blessings of liberty*.

You see, it is a real crime for Annamese to praise the blessings of liberty, and they are given five years in prison, merely for that!

We must, [continues the same newspaper] *rejoice* over the *highly* impartial verdict of our magistrates and our juries, etc.

Furthermore, the *Dépêche coloniale* noted with joy the highly impartial verdict of French justice in the affair of the famous conspiracy of Vĩnh Yên. The *Annamese* in Paris, like their far-off compatriots, have displayed their confidence in our magistrates and have declared that they were right and that the affair in question has been concluded to *their entire satisfaction*. No, Monsieur Pouvourville, you are too much of a humbug.

The newspaper *Le Journal France-Indochine* has noted the following fact:

A few days ago, the firm of Sauvage notified the security services of the disappearance from their workshops of a very large quantity of iron, about a ton. As soon as the complaint was received, our policemen immediately got down to the job of discovering the authors of the crime, and we learn with pleasure that a European detective-inspector assisted by a few native police recently laid hands on the thieves as well as their accomplice.

Mr. S..., the manager of the firm of Sauvage, as well as a certain Trần Văn Lộc, an apprentice mechanic, and a certain Trần Văn Xa, have been apprehended and handed over to the Public Prosecutor for theft and complicity.

Have you noticed our colleague's great tactfulness? When it is a question of Mr. the French thief, manager of the firm of Sauvage, his name is hushed up, it is replaced by dots. The prestige of the superior race must be saved above all. But for common Annamese thieves, their surname and first name are quoted, and it is no longer Mr., it is "a certain."

By a decree dated October 10, 1922, the government has just brought about an important change in the colonial magistrature. We quote, among other names, those of Messrs. Lucas and Wabrand.

It is as well to recall in a few words the history of these two magistrates.

M. Lucas, who was then deputy public prosecutor in French West Africa, is the same who was in question on the occasion of the recent scandals in Togoland. In a communique to the press, the minister of Colonies was obliged to declare that “the enquiry also brings to light that Mr. Lucas’ part in the affair brings the *heaviest responsibilities* to bear on this magistrate.”

It is probably to compensate him for these heavy responsibilities that he is today being pushed up as President of the court of appeal in French Equatorial Africa.

As for Wabrand, his story is simpler and less known. In 1920, a Frenchman called Durgrie, an agent of the trading firm of Peyrissac in Kankan (Guinea) was out hunting. He shot down a bird which fell into a river. A little native boy passed by Durgrie caught him and threw him into the river, telling him to go and fetch the game. The water was deep and the current strong. The child, who couldn’t swim, was drowned. His parents complained. Durgrie, summoned by the district commissioner, agreed to give a hundred francs to the bereaved family.

The unfortunate parents refused this disgraceful bargain. Mr. Commissioner, angered, sided with his compatriot, the murderer, and threatened to put the parents in prison if they persisted in prosecuting the assassin, then he “filed” the matter.

However, an anonymous letter denounced the fact to the Public Prosecutor in Dakar. This high magistrate sent Public Prosecutor Wabrand to investigate. M. Wabrand went to Kankan, spent the evening with the stationmaster and the next day with M. Cousin de Lavallière, the assistant district commissioner. He left the next day, without even having begun his investigation. This did not prevent M. Wabrand from concluding that the denunciation was slanderous. The inter-colonial Union brought the fact to the notice of the League for the Rights of Man (December 22, 1921), but the latter, probably thinking that the matter was not sensational enough, didn’t deal with it.

Since his visit to Kankan, M. Wabrand has stayed quietly at his port, receiving chickens and sacks of potatoes sent by his friend M. Cousin de Lavallière, assistant district commissioner, while awaiting promotion. As you see, Mr. Wabrand well deserves the... just reward the government has recently granted him by naming him public prosecutor at Dakar (sic).

With the Darleses and the Beaudoins, the Wabrands and the Lucases, higher civilization is in good hands and so is the fate of the natives in the colonies.²³⁰

The court of summary jurisdiction has just awarded 13 months' imprisonment to Fernand Esselin and the widow Gère, and 10 months to Georges Cordier, for having owned, transported and sold one kilo of cocaine or opium.

Very well. And that makes—by a simple reckoning—36 months of prison for 1 kilo of drugs!

It would therefore be necessary—if justice were equal for all, as it is said—for the life of M. Sarraut, Governor General of Indochina, to be enormously long in order to pay the whole of his penalty; for he would have to do at least *one million three hundred and fifty thousand* (1,350,000) months' prison *every year*, because every year he sells to the Annamese more than *one hundred and fifty thousand* kilograms of opium.

Unable to rid themselves of the famous Đê Thám,²³¹ not having succeeded in killing him, nor in making him disappear by poisoning or dynamite, they had the remains of his parents exhumed and thrown into a river.

After the demonstrations in South Annam, many scholars were condemned to death or exiled. Among others. Dr. Trần Quý Cáp,²³² a distinguished schol-

²³⁰ See "Our Esteemed Colonial Judges," p. 92.

²³¹ Đê Thám: a leader of the resistance movement against the French colonialists in Yên Thế, midland region of Tonkin. Hereunder are the main stages of the resistance:

From 1887 to 1804: the French being unable to get the better of the partisans ceded the administration of 4 cantons and 22 villages to Đê Thám.

From 1894 to 1897: the French, with fresh troops, launched an offensive which again failed. New truce of 11 years.

From 1909 to 1913: for 4 years, the French kept on vigorously pursuing the partisans and only overcame them in 1913, after having Đê Thám murdered.

²³² Trần Quý Cáp (1870-1908) was a scholar, one of the leaders of the renovation campaign which hit Central Việt Nam in the first years of the 20th century, following the Royalist movement. The instigators advocated the opening of schools teaching in the romanized national language to popularize sciences, wearing of short costumes, cutting of hair, abandonment of the habit to lacquer teeth, creation of trading societies and peasants' associations. These social

ar revered by everyone, was arrested at his post as a professor and, without being questioned, was beheaded twenty-four hours later. The Administration refused to return his body to his family.

At Hải Dương, following a riot which had not caused a single victim, sixty-four heads fell without judgment.

At the time of the execution of the tirailleurs in Hanoi, the Administration had their fathers, mothers and children brought by force to make them witness this ceremonial killing of those dear to them. To prolong the impression and to “give the population a lesson,” there was a repetition of what was done in the eighteenth century in England, when in the streets of the City or on London Bridge, the heads of defeated Jacobites were planted on stakes. For weeks along the main streets of Hanoi could be seen grinning on bamboo stakes, the heads of victims of French repression.

Weighed down by ruinous charges and exposed to countless vexations, the Annamese of the Center demonstrated in 1908.²³³ Despite the altogether peaceful nature of these demonstrations, they were pitilessly repressed. There were hundreds of heads cut off and mass deportations.

Everything is done to arm the Annamese against their own and to provoke betrayals.

Villages are declared responsible for disorders which occur on their territory. Any village which gives shelter to a patriot is condemned. To obtain information, the procedure—always the same—is simple: the mayor and notables are questioned, whoever remains silent is executed on the spot. *In two weeks, a militia inspector had seventy-five notables executed!*

Not for an instant is there any thought of distinguishing patriots who struggle desperately from the riff-raff of the towns. To destroy the resistance, no other means are conceived than to entrust “pacification” to traitor’s to our

and cultural reforms were soon followed after 1908: on the political field, by vast “campaigns of revendication against taxes and *corvées*.”

²³³ Campaigns against taxes and *corvées* in Central Việt Nam: In March 1908, the population of Đại Lộc district (Quảng Nam province) manifested in front of the yamen of the Vietnamese provincial head, then went to the office of the French Resident to lodge petitions. The demonstrators, whose ranks swelled steadily, stayed on the spot for over a month and urged for reduction of taxes and prestations, limitation and eventual suppression of *corvées*. From Quảng Nam, the movement spread to the other provinces of Central Việt Nam. Efficaciously seconded by the mandarins, the French fired on the demonstrators, carried out many arrests and, by a savage repression, put an end to the movement in May 1908.

cause, and in the Delta, in Bình Thuận and in Nghệ Tĩnh, to these terrible columns of police the awful memory of which will remain forever.

CHAPTER IX—OBSCURANTISM

In order to deceive public opinion in the metropolitan country and exploit the natives undisturbed, the sharks of civilization in addition to stupefying the Annamese by alcohol and opium, keep them in complete obscurantism.

Thus by virtue of the decree of 1898, the native press is submitted to preventive censorship.

This decree states:

The circulation of newspapers and periodicals, in whatever language they may be, can be prohibited by a simple order of the governor general.

The publication of newspapers in the Annamese language is not possible without authorization of the governor general. This authorization will be given only on condition that the texts of the articles to be inserted in this publication will be submitted for signature by the governor. This authorization can at any time be revoked.

Any display or dispatch of songs, drawings or paintings contrary to the respect due to the representatives of authority is punishable.

You can just see with what dexterity the colonial Anastasia handles her scissors!

It is by this means that the Indochinese administration can stifle any scandals and commit every kind of abuse with impunity.

At certain municipal elections in Saigon, the governor forbade three proprietors of Annamese newspapers to publish in their pages the text of the decree governing municipal elections in the Colony. These proprietors were candidates to these elections, and they were strictly forbidden to insert anything whatever concerning their program! As the Annamese have not the right to gather if more than 20 people are present, the candidates were compelled to see singly the 3,000 voters making up the electoral body. At the same time, the governor informed the other Annamese newspapers that censorship would be drastic for articles, paragraphs, headings or any allusions referring to the colonial or communal elections. One of these newspapers, having translated into Annamese the text of the law repressing acts of corruption in electoral operations, had the said translation censored, while Mr. Governor, without scruples,

summoned the party leaders to his office to urge them to vote and obtain votes for the register towards whom he felt the most sympathetically inclined!

The censorship is not confined to publications in the native language, but puts its dirty paws on private correspondence and French newspapers which refuse to extol the virtues of our colonial administration: the Postal Administration and the *Sûreté générale* in Cochinchina, the latter's director being M. Albert Sarraut's son-in-law, have received instructions not to allow any notes, letters, etc. addressed to or coming from the new Paris newspaper *Le Paria* to pass under any pretext.

For having written in *Le Paria* and other metropolitan newspapers articles denouncing the abuses committed in his country by French administrators, a Malagasy, engaged as a volunteer during the war and married to a Frenchwoman, was driven from his country and condemned to five years' exile.

In Indochina the population is demanding schools, the number of which is scandalously insufficient. Every year, at the beginning of the school-year, parents, in spite of knocking at all doors, begging everywhere for support, even offering to pay double the fee, do not manage to get their children in. And the latter, in thousands, are condemned to ignorance for lack of schools.

I remember a cousin of mine who, wanting to get into one of these scholastic paradises, had taken many steps, and addressed request upon request to the resident superior, to the resident of the province, to the headmaster of the national school and to the headmaster of the primary school. Naturally, he received no reply. One day, he plucked up enough courage to deliver by hand a written request to the headmaster, a Frenchman, of a school to which I had the privilege of being admitted some time before. Our "headmaster," furious at such audacity, said: "Who allowed you to come here?" and he tore the request to shreds in front of the bewildered class.

The budget doesn't allow the government to build new schools, one may say. Not exactly. Out of 12 million piastres making up the budget of Cochinchina, 10 million manage to get swallowed up in the pockets of officials.

On the other hand, fearing that they might be contaminated by bolshevism, the colonial government does all it can to prevent young Annamese going to study in the metropolitan country. Article 500 (b) of the order dated June 20th, 1921, on public education in Indochina, states as follows:

Any native, whether a French subject or protege who wants to go to the metropolitan country to continue his studies, *must obtain authorization to do so from the governor general*. The decision will be taken after a decision by the chief of the local administration and the director of public education.

He must, before leaving, be equipped, at the directorate of public education, with a university pass-book bearing his photograph and indicating his civil status, his parents' address, the scholastic establishments he has previously attended, the scholarship or assistance from which he has benefited, the diplomas he has obtained, and the address of his correspondent in France. This pass-book must be signed by the governor general.

The files of natives carrying on their studies in France are deposited with the directorate of public education.

“Stupefy to reign,” that is the method dear to the governors of our colonies.

L'Humanité related how, four years after the war for rights, postal censorship is still rigorously applied in Madagascar.

Indochina has nothing to envy Madagascar.

We have quoted the case of *Le Paria*.

As if by chance, this new abuse of power coincides with the arrival in Saigon of the forging administrator Baudouin, and his brilliant second, son-in-law of M. Albert Sarraut and chief informer.

On the other hand, the administration is continuing to intercept and search private letters.

While natives are killed and stolen from with impunity, they have not even the most elementary right: that of correspondence! This infringement on individual freedom adds a rosette to the shameful policy of spying and abuse which reigns in our colonies.

The government of Indochina is organizing the sabotage of the newspaper *Le Paria*, that of French West Africa prohibits the entry into the colony of newspapers published by the Negroes in America; that of Tunisia has expelled

the editor of *L'Avenir social*. M. Lyautey has driven out the editor of the *Guêpe Marocaine*. (The expelled journalist was given *one hour* to pack his bags.)

At the time of the opening of the Hanoi Fair and while M. Baudouin, governor general ad interim of Indochina, was examining the stands, policemen entered one of them and seized the collections and albums of caricatures shown by the newspaper *L'Argus Indochinois*, the criticism and satire of which were not to the taste of those in power at the time.

M. Clementi, proprietor of the said paper, was arrested and put in prison.

CHAPTER X—CLERICALISM

During the pacification, the ministers of God did not remain inactive. Like brigands on the look-out for panic to indulge in pillage after a fire, our missionaries took advantage of the disorganization of the country after the conquest to... serve the Lord. Some betrayed secrets of the confessional and gave up Annamese patriots to the conquerors' guillotine or execution squad. Others spread through the country to recruit forced proselytes.

[One priest], his feet and legs bare, the *cai quàn* [trousers] rolled up to the thighs, a cartridge belt around his stomach, a rifle on his shoulder and a revolver hanging from his waist, marched at the head of his flock armed with lances, knives and rifles; this is now he did armed proselytizing, supported by our troops whom he led into pagan villages notified by him as being rebel villages.

After the Beijing expedition, Monsignor Favier, apostolic bishop and knight of the Legion of Honor, alone pocketed 600,000 francs, the result of pillage.

In front of the palace of Prince Lý, [wrote an eyewitness] arrived a long convoy of carts and cars, under the direction of Mgr. Favier, escorted by 300 to 400 Christians as well as French soldiers and sailors. *They have become removal men in the interests of Heaven!...* The job finished, the soldiers and sailors received a cheque for 200 francs each, drawn on the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul. In an official report, we read this formal accusation: "The dykes of discipline have been broken by the example of collective pillage under the direction of Mgr. Favier."

Naturally, Mgr. Favier was not alone to evangelize in this way. He had emulators.

As soon as the siege was lifted, [it was written] the missionaries led the soldiers into the houses of bankers whom they knew and where were deposited gold bars; they were accompanied by their pupils or converted Chinese who accomplished the pious work by helping to rob their compatriots and obtaining for the good Fathers the money needed for saintly use.

It would take too long here to tell of all the Satanic acts committed by the disciples of Pity. Let us mention in passing the priest who held and struck a lit-

tle native boy fastened to a pillar in his rectory, and threatened with a revolver his employer, a European, who had come to fetch the martyred boy. Another sold a Catholic Annamese girl to an European for 300 francs. Another struck a native seminarist until he was half dead. When the victim's indignant village wanted to make a complaint against the brute—beg pardon, I meant against the reverend father—human justice warned the naïve complainants in these terms: “Be careful, children, no fuss, or else...” Didn't Monsignor M... declare that French education is dangerous for the Annamese; and Monsignor P... that God knew what he was doing when he made rattan grow next to the behinds of the Annamese?

If paradise existed, it would really be too small to house all these good colonial apostles; and if the unfortunate Crucified One were to come back to this world, he would be disgusted to see the way in which his “faithful servants” observed holy poverty: the Catholic Mission in Siam owns one third of the country's arable land. That in Cochinchina, one fifth. That in Tonkin, a quarter in Hanoi alone, plus a small fortune of about 10 million francs. Needless to say, the greater part of this property has been acquired by unavowable and unavowed means.

What the colonial settler does with the help of the State, [writes Colonel B.] the missionary does despite the State. Beside the planter's domain is the Church's domain. Soon there will no longer be a corner of land available where the Annamese can establish themselves, work and live, without resigning themselves to being nothing more than serfs!

Amen!

God is good and all-powerful. Sovereign maker, he has created a so-called superior race to throw on another, so-called inferior race, created too by him. That is why every civilizing mission—whether it be destined for the Antilles, Madagascar, Indochina or Tahiti—always goes in the wake of a so-called evangelizing mission. We know, for example, that it was at the instigation of their colonial Eminences, supported by the wife of Napoleon III, that the Tonkin expedition was decided.²³⁴ And what did Their Eminences do? They

²³⁴ Expedition of Tonkin: After setting foot on Cochinchina in 1867, the French imperialists set about to attack Tonkin. With the connivance of the Saigon authorities, a trader, Jean

took advantage of the hospitality of the Annamese to get military secrets out of them, draw up plans and communicate them to the expeditionaries. We do not know what this procedure is called in Latin, but in plain English, it is called spying.

Dupuis, freighted a shipload of arms and munitions and sailed up the Red river for Yunnan. The next year, he came back to Hanoi and loaded many junks of rice and salt in defiance of the Vietnamese legislation. The Court of Huế sent a delegation to lodge a complaint with Saigon. Availing of this opportunity, the French authorities sent Francis Garnier to Tonkin with a flotilla.

Arrived in Hanoi, the latter summoned the Vietnamese authorities to sign a trade agreement and, after receiving fresh reinforcements, he declared free navigation on the Red river. He sent an ultimatum to Nguyễn Tri Phương, the Governor of Hanoi, and stormed the citadel on November 20, 1873. He had begun conquering the main towns of the delta when he was killed in an ambush near Hanoi in 1873.

A peace treaty was signed at Saigon on March 15, 1874, after which the Court of Huế acknowledged the annexation of Cochinchina, pledged to align its foreign policy with that of France, open the Red river, Hanoi, Haiphong and Quy Nhơn to international trade. France had the right to an ambassador at Huế and consuls in the above-mentioned towns.

But that was only a shift urged by the difficulties France had met with in the 1871 defeat. In 1882, pretexting the non-application of the 1874 treaty by the Vietnamese, she sent to Tonkin a corps of 400 men commanded by Henri Rivière. The latter sent an ultimatum to Hoàng Dieu, the Governor of Hanoi, and took the town on April 25, 1882. Having received fresh reinforcements, he captured Hạ Long and Nam Định in 1883. While the Court of Huế vacillated, the Vietnamese people reacted energetically. Backed by the Black Flags of the Chinese general Liu Yongfu, they launched a vigorous attack near Sơn Tây. Henri Rivière was killed in a sally on the road of the Paper Bridge in May 1883.

A regular expeditionary corps was then constituted in July 1883 led by Harmand. Availing of the confusion caused to the Court by the death of King Tự Đức, Harmand took the capital and forced the signing of the Harmand treaty setting up a French protectorate on Tonkin and Central Việt Nam.

But the surrender of the Court of Huế did not put an end to the war, the people continuing to fight. The French brought in fresh reinforcements and had to reconquer the delta of Tonkin. They got in touch with the Emperor of China and signed the Treaty of Tianjin (May 11, 1884) after which the Court of Beijing pledged to recall its troops from Tonkin. A new treaty called Patenotre treaty was imposed upon the Court of Huế, confirming the Harmand treaty in its general scheme.

After the signing of these treaties, the French captured the border towns where they met Chinese and Vietnamese troops at Bắc Lệ. During the fight which followed, the French suffered heavy losses. They brought in fresh reinforcements but were again defeated at Lạng Sơn. This caused the Jules Ferry government to collapse. But China, not knowing how to turn the events to account, parleyed with France and signed the second Tianjin treaty on April 4, 1885 after which the belligerents pledged to withdraw their troops from Tonkin and South China.

As the F. Garniers, H. Rivières and their associates didn't know the country and couldn't speak the native language, the missionaries served them as interpreters and guides. In these roles, the saintly men did not fail to put Christian pity into practice. One priest said to the soldiers: "Burn this village, it didn't pay us taxes," or "Spare this one, it is obedient to Us." (Col. B). Us, was the mission.

The colonial clergy was responsible not only for colonial wars, but also the continuators and to-the-enders," disdaining "premature" peace. In a report to the Ministry of the Navy, Admiral R. de Genouilly²³⁵ wrote:

I want to try and establish relations with the Annamese authorities with the aim of concluding a peace treaty, but we are meeting very great difficulties created by the missionaries... A treaty with the Annamese, however advantageous it might be, would not satisfy the wishes of these Gentlemen; they aspire to the complete conquest of the country and the overthrow of the dynasty. Monsignor Pellerin has declared this several times, and I find Monsignor Lefèvre has the same ideas.

Was it through patriotism? No, for further on, the Admiral declares that "the ecclesiastics operating in Cochinchina are sacrificing the interests of France to their personal views."

The following anecdote will illustrate this declaration:

King Hàm Nghi²³⁶ had left his capital occupied by the French. With his partisans, he besieged a village defended by Christians, six of them mission-

²³⁵ Rigault de Genouilly: Following the advice of Charles de Montigny and the entreaties of missionaries such as Mgr. Pellerin, Mgr. Hue backed by Empress Eugénie, Napoleon III, and Isabella II of Spain decided in 1857 to send a French-Spanish expedition against Việt Nam. Rear-Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, its commander-in-chief, arrived in front of Tourane on August 31, 1858 with 14 vessels and 3,000 men. He sent an ultimatum and stormed the defensive works of the harbor. But the Vietnamese troops blocked his way to Huế and he had to stay on the spot for 5 months.

Then with 2,000 men, he launched an attack on Cape Saint Jacques on February 17, 1859, sailed up the river and took Saigon on February 18, 1859. Negotiations were opened at Huế when Genouilly fell ill and was replaced by Rear-Admiral Page.

It was not until 1862 that a peace treaty was signed at Saigon on June 5, 1862, recognizing the annexation by France of three western provinces of Cochinchina and imposing the payment of a heavy war contribution to France and Spain.

²³⁶ King Hàm Nghi: a King of the Nguyễn dynasty, enthroned in 1884, when 13 years old. The French imperialists, whose forces were released by the 1885 Tianjin treaty, alleged that the

aries. Alerted, a French general asked a priest to lend him junks to carry relief troops to the besieged. The priest refused, pretexting that all the junks had gone to sea to fish and would return only three or four days later. On making enquiries, the general found that the priest had purposely sent the junks away so that the relief troops would not be able to leave. Then he called the priest to him and said: “If I don’t have my junks in six hours, I will have you shot.” When the junks arrived, the general asked the Reverend Father: “Why did you lie?” “General, if you arrive after the massacre of the missionaries, we will have six more martyrs to beatify.” Such are the evangelic actions that our “Fathers are endeavoring to perform every day, and always in His name.”

King had been crowned without their consent and occupied Mang Ca fort near Huế citadel. Regent Tôn Thất Thuyết, standing for a resistance, launched a surprise attack on the garrison and the Resident Superior’s office on the night of July 4-5, 1883. The French counter-attacked the next day and took the capital.

Tôn Thất Thuyết and Hàm Nghi fled to the mountains where they organized the resistance. A royal decree and many appeals called on the people to fight, which gave birth to a vast movement of resistance known as “Royalist movement.” Its main stages were the uprisings of:

- Ba Đình with Phạm Bạch and Đinh Công Tráng: 1886-1887.
- Hương Khê with Phan Đình Phùng: 1885-1896.
- Hương Lĩnh with Tống Duy Tân and Cao Điển: 1886-1892.
- Yên Thế with Đê Thám: 1887-1913.

But Hàm Nghi was captured by the French in 1888 and deported to Algeria.

CHAPTER XI—THE MARTYRDOM OF NATIVE WOMEN

From what we have related in the preceding pages, it can be seen in what manner the Annamese woman is “protected” by our civilizers. Nowhere is she secure from brutality. In town, in her home, at the market or in the countryside, everywhere she is exposed to ill-treatment from the administrator, the officer, the policeman, the customs officer, the station employee. It isn’t rare to hear a European call an Annamese woman *con đĩ* (prostitute) or *còn bú dù* (monkey). Even in the Central Market in Saigon, a French town so they say, European guards do not hesitate to strike native women with bull’s pizzlies or truncheons—to make them circulate!

We could multiply these sad examples infinitely, but the facts quoted are sufficient, we hope, to enlighten our sisters in the metropolitan country on the misery and oppression of which the unfortunate Annamese woman suffers. Let us see now whether the native woman in other colonies—also under the protection of the mother country—is better respected.

At Fedj-M’Zala (Algeria) a native was condemned to one year’s imprisonment for theft. The prisoner escaped. A detachment commanded by a lieutenant was sent to surround the dower. After a thorough search, the escaped man was not found. Then 35 women belonging to his family and people connected to him were assembled. Among them were 12-year-old girls, 70-year-old grandmothers, expectant women and mothers breastfeeding their babies. Under the kindly eye of the lieutenant and the administrator who had come, every soldier got hold of a woman. Notables and heads of confraternities were forced to witness this spectacle. To impress them, so it was said. After which, houses were demolished, cattle were taken away and the raped women were pushed into premises where they were watched by their tormentors and where the same sadistic acts were renewed for more than a month.

It was said: “Colonisation is theft.” We add: rape and assassination.

Under the title “Colonial Bandits,” Victor Méric told us of the incredible cruelty of the administrator who poured liquid rubber into a negress’s private parts. After which: he made her carry a huge stone on her head in the blazing sun until death overtook her.

This sadistic official is today carrying on his exploits in another district.

Facts as odious as this are unfortunately not rare in what the worthy press calls “overseas France.”

In March 1922, a customs and excise officer in Bà Rịa (Cochinchina) almost killed an Annamese woman salt carrier, under the pretext that she had disturbed his siesta by making a noise under the verandah of his house.

The best of the affair is that this woman was threatened with dismissal from the site on which she worked if she complained.

In April, another customs and excise officer, who succeeded the first, was worthy of his predecessor by his brutalities.

An old Annamese woman, also a salt carrier, had had a discussion with her forewoman concerning money held back from her wages. The former complained to the customs officer. The latter, without more ado, gave the salt carrier two hard slaps in the face. As she bent down to pick up her hat, the civilizer gave her a violent kick in the stomach, causing an immediate and severe hemorrhage.

She fell down in a faint. But M. Sarraut’s collaborator, instead of picking her up, sent for the village chief and ordered him to take the injured woman away. The notable refused. Then the official sent for the victim’s husband, *who was blind*, and instructed him to take his wife away.

Would you like to bet that, like their colleague the administrator in Africa, the two customs and excise officers in Cochinchina weren’t in the least bit worried. They were probably even promoted.²³⁷

The little natives in Algeria are hungry. To have something to eat, kiddies of six or seven become shoeshine boys or basket carriers in the market.

The colonial and civilizing government thinks these little pariahs earn too much. It compels each of them to be registered and pay a license of from 1 franc 50 to 2 francs a month.

Workers in the metropolitan country who protest against the iniquitous tax on salaries, what do you think of this odious tax?

Before the war, in Martinique sugar was sold at 280 francs a ton; rum at 35 francs a hectoliter.

²³⁷ See “The Civilizers,” p. 66.

Today, the former sells at 3,000 francs and the latter at 400 francs.

The boss thus makes a profit of 1,000%.

Before the war, a workman earned 3 francs a day. Today, he earns 3 francs 75 to 4 francs a day.

The increase in wages is thus barely 30%.

The cost of living has increased by at least 300%.

To this scandalous disproportion adds the decrease in purchasing power of the franc and you will gain some idea of the native workman's poverty.

In February 1924, following the bosses' refusal to increase wages, the workers went on strike.

Like everywhere, and in the colonies more than elsewhere, the employers do not hesitate to spill the blood of the workers. That is how, in this strike, two young workers of Martinique, one aged 18 and the other 19, were assassinated in a cowardly manner.

The savagery of the employers spared neither children nor women. This is what *Le Paria* told us in its issue of May 1923:

The prejudice of the authorities against the workers is obvious. All those who refused to work for the wages offered by the bosses were denounced, arrested, and searched by the police, who everywhere displayed the greatest ill-will towards the unfortunates.

Thus, the day before yesterday, two policemen went to fetch a woman, Louise Lubin, from the Trinite almshouse; she had both her thighs struck by bullets on February 9th during the fusillade at Bassignac. She was thrown into prison under the pretext that "by assault or threats, she had endangered the freedom of work."

But, what is certain, is that the poor woman couldn't walk, and the policemen intended *to take her on foot 32 kilometers away, to appear before the magistrate.*

At the time she was arrested, it was five or six days since she had seen the doctor, who lives at Fort-de-France, 32 kilometers from there.

Who said she could leave the hospital, since this mother of three children, imprisoned, declares that she is not cured, that she is still an invalid and cannot walk?

I have quoted this fact out of so many others, just as revolting, which are repeated more or less everywhere in the colony.

During the strike, on some properties, the “engaged” workers were compelled to work under the supervision of police and marines, just like in times of slavery.

We read in a paper:

In Constantine, groups of prostitutes go around begging. One of these unfortunates died near the El-Kantara bridge, holding her child in her arms.

From Bogharic to Djelfa, the trains are assailed by old people, women and children, carrying babies in their arms and begging for alms.

They are like skeletons covered in rags. They are prevented from approaching the stations.

It is a painful irony that civilization—symbolized in its various forms: liberty, justice, etc. by the gentle image of woman and managed by a type of men who pride themselves on their manners—should cause its living image to undergo the most ignoble treatment and shamefully strike at her in her morals, her modesty and her life.

Colonial sadism is unbelievably frequent and cruel, but we will merely recall here a few facts seen and related by witnesses not to be suspected of taking sides, and which will enable our sisters in the West to understand the value of the “civilizing mission” and the sufferings of their sisters in the colonies.

On the soldiers’ arrival, [relates a settler] the population had fled, there remained only two old men, a young girl and a woman breastfeeding her newborn baby and holding an eight-year-old girl by the hand. The soldiers had asked for money, spirits, and opium. As no one understood French, they furiously struck down the old men with rifle butts. Then, for hours on end, two of them, already drunk on arrival, amused themselves by roasting the other old man over a wood fire. During this time, the others violated in turn the young girl, the mother and her little girl. Then, they lay the young girl on her back, pinioned her and one of them drove

his bayonet into her stomach, cut off a finger to steal a ring and her head to take a necklace.

On the flat land of the salt-marshes, the three bodies remained, the naked little girl, the disemboweled young girl, her stiffened left arm raising a clenched fist to the indifferent sky, and the old man's corpse horrible, like the others disfigured by the roasting, with his fat which had run and congealed, with the skin of his stomach swollen, grilled and golden, like the skin of roast pork.

After the taking of Chợ Mới (Tonkin), one evening an officer of the Africa battalion saw a prisoner alive and unwounded. In the morning he saw him dead, burnt, his fat running, the skin of his stomach swollen and golden. Some soldiers had spent the night roasting this unarmed individual, while others had tormented a woman.

A soldier obliged an Annamese woman to give herself up to his dog. She refused. He killed her with a bayonet thrust in the stomach. The same witness says that "one festival day a tipsy soldier threw himself on an old Annamese woman and ran her through with his bayonet without the slightest reason."

A soldier gardener, seeing a group of men and women entering his garden one morning at ten o'clock, a peaceful group of market gardeners drawn by curiosity, immediately shot at them with a sporting gun and killed two young girls.

A customs officer, refused entry into a native's house, set it on fire and broke the wife's leg just as, blinded by smoke, the unfortunate woman was coming out to escape with her children.

The unrestrained sadism of the conquerors knows no limits. They carry their cold cruelty as far as the refinements of a bloodthirsty civilization allow them to imagine.

Crushing taxes hit not only lands, animals and men, but their blessings (!) also extend to the female population:

Poor native women, loaded with irons, are employed to clean the roads. They are guilty only of having been unable to pay.

Among all the efforts the civilizers have made to improve the Annamese race and lead it towards progress (?), *the enforced sale of official spirits must be noted*. It would take too long to enumerate here all the abuses born of the sale of a poison, intended to give proportionate doses of democracy and get it swallowed.

We have described how, in order to enrich the sharks in the metropolitan country, the criminal government of Indochina allows its lackeys to oblige women and children to pay for spirits they do not drink. To please the monopolizers, laws destined to punish contraband are invented, a terribly well-stocked arsenal of punishments weighs on the head of the natives. The customs men are armed. They have the right to enter private property.

We are somewhat surprised—and there is good reason to be—when we see arriving in Hanoi or Haiphong long files *of old folk, expectant women and children tied together in twos*, led by policemen to render an account of their defaults in the matter of customs.

But this is nothing beside what happens in the provinces, and especially in Annam, where the Resident judges and locks up all together young and old, men and women.

The same author then recounts the procession of relatives at the prison doors. “Old folk, women, kiddies, all these people were dirty, ragged, hollow-cheeked, their eyes burning with fever; the children were dragged along, unable to follow on their little legs. And all these worn-out people were carrying the most varied objects: hats, rags, balls of cooked rice, food of all kinds, meant to be secretly passed to the accused, father, husband, bread-winner, in nearly every case the head of the household.”

Everything that can be said is less than the truth. Never at any time and in any country has the violation of all human rights been practiced with such cruel cynicism.

It is not only incessant visits into the home, but *corporal visits which can be operated everywhere on natives of both sexes!* Customs officers go into native dwellings, *oblige women and young girls to undress completely in front of them and, when they are in the garb of Eve, carry their lewd whims as far as affixing the customs stamp on the body.*

French mothers, women, daughters, what do you think of this, sisters! And you, French sons, husbands and brothers? It is certainly “colonialized” French gallantry, isn’t it?

The enthusiasm of the Annamese for modern education frightens the Administration of the Protectorate. That is why it is closing down communal schools and turning them into stables for the officer gentlemen, driving out the pupils and locking up the teachers. A native woman teacher was arrested

and taken bare-headed in the burning sun to the chief-town, a cangue around her neck.

A senior company sergeant-major of artillery set fire to a house, under the excuse that the owner, a woman, would not receive him at midnight.

A polygamous lieutenant threw a young Annamese woman to the ground and lashed her with a cane because she didn't want to be his concubine.

Another officer had violated a little girl in odiously sadistic conditions. Summoned before the Criminal Court, he was acquitted because the victim was an Annamese.

In all the speeches, in all the reports, in every place where they have the opportunity to open their mouths, and where there are idlers to listen to them, our statesmen ceaselessly affirm that only barbarous Germany is imperialist and militarist, while France, this peaceful, humanitarian, republican and democratic France, this France represented by them, is neither imperialist nor militarist. Oh, not at all! If these same statesmen send soldiers—children of workers and the workers themselves—to massacre the workers of other countries, it is simply to teach the latter to live properly.

CHAPTER XII—AWAKENING OF SLAVES

1—IN INDOCHINA

In November 1922, following a cut in wages, 600 dyers in Chợ Lớn (Cochinchina) decided to stop work.

The bosses' offensive is being launched everywhere and everywhere the working class is beginning to be aware of its strength and its value.

If these unfortunate native workers, normally very docile and very manageable, uneducated and unorganized, were driven—through an instinct of preservation, if we can express it thus—to group themselves together and struggle against the savage demands of the bosses, it is because their situation is much more unfortunate than people imagine in Europe. It is the first time that such a movement has appeared in the colony. Let us note this sign of the times and let us not forget that our duty—workers of the metropolitan country—is not only to show verbal solidarity with our class brothers over there, but to educate them and teach them the spirit and methods of organization.

2—IN DAHOMEY

French capitalism, anxious at the awakening of the working class in the metropolitan country, is trying to transfer its domination to the colonies. It draws from there both raw materials for its factories and human material for its counter-revolution. Bourgeois newspapers in Paris and the provinces regularly devote whole pages to colonial items. Generals and members of Parliament hold conferences on colonies. These virtuous pen-pushers and braggarts cannot find enough words to extol our loyalism and the blessings of "their" civilization.

Sometimes these gentlemen carry their impudence so far as to oppose their... generosity to British colonial banditry: they describe British policy as a "cruel method" or "heavy handed," and uphold that the French practice is full of justice and charity.

It suffices to glance at our colonies to judge how "fine and gentle" this civilization is.

In Dahomey, the already-crushing native taxes are being increased. Young men are dragged from their homes and their lands to be turned into "defenders of civilization." The natives are forbidden to possess arms to defend themselves against wild animals, which devastate whole communes. Education and

hygiene are lacking. On the other hand, no means are neglected to submit the “protected” of Dahomey to the abominable native status, an institution which places men on a level with animals and which dishonors the so-called civilized world. The natives, their patience at an end, revolt. Then comes bloody repression. Energetic measures are taken. Troops, machine guns, mortars and warships are sent; a state of siege is proclaimed. Mass arrests and imprisonments are carried out. That is the gentleness of civilization!

3—IN SYRIA

The population of Syria is pleased, very pleased with General Gouraud’s administration,²³⁸ say the official gazettes. But the following facts prove the opposite:

In March 1922, Mustapha Kemal went to Messina. To welcome him, the Moslems in Syria had erected a triumphal arch decorated with black flags bearing the inscriptions: “Turko-Arab fraternity,” “Do not forget your Syrian brothers!,” “Deliver us!,” etc.

Mustapha Kemal’s visit to Adana provoked enthusiastic demonstrations. The irredentists of Antioch and Alexandretta carried black flags about the streets for two days, uttering hostile shouts against the Administration of the French representative.

Replying to the manifesto of the irredentist delegation, Mustapha Kemal is said to have answered: “A center dating back so many centuries cannot remain in foreign hands.”

French colonialism hasn’t altered its motto: “Divide and rule.” That is why the empire of Annam—that country inhabited by a people descended from the same race, having the same customs, the same history, the same traditions and speaking the same language—was divided into five parts. Through this hypocritically exploited division, it is hoped to cool off the feeling of solidarity and fraternity in the hearts of the Annamese and to replace it with an antagonism of brother against brother. After throwing them one against the other,

²³⁸ General Gouraud: French general born and died in Paris (1867-1946). Colonel in 1907, he seconded general Lyautey in the conquest of Morocco. During the First World War, he commanded a division in Argonne; then a colonial corps and in 1915, replaced General Amade at the head of the Dardanelles Expeditionary Corps. He was afterward commander of the 11th army in Champagne.

In 1916-1917 he made a brief sojourn in Morocco as resident general and from 1911 to 1923 was French High Commissioner in Syria.

the same elements were artificially regrouped in a “union,” the Indochinese Union.

The same tactics can be seen in the new colonics. After dividing Syria into a series of “States,” the French High Commissariat in Beyruth claimed the constitution of a Syrian “Federation” formed by the “States” of Aleppo, Damascus and the Alaouites. A flag was devised to this end. As with the flag of Annam, it was not forgotten to add to this federal flag—on top, near the flagpole—the “protector color.” December 11th, 1932, was the “solemn” day on which this flag was hoisted for the first time on the federal palace in Aleppo.

On this occasion, official speeches were made. Soubhi Barakat Bey, the federal President, spoke of the “generous protector,” the “sincere guide,” of “victorious leaders,” and hosts of things. M. Robert de Caix, High Commissioner ad interim, discoursed at length too. Among other things this high official recalled that “independent Syria is not the first people over whose cradle France has watched,” etc. All this high-sounding palaver deceives no one, however. And the Syrio-Palestinian delegation responsible for defending Syria’s genuine independence and unity at the Lausanne Conference sent a letter of protest, which was published by our colleague *La Tribune d’Orient* and which we are happy to reproduce here.

Your Excellency,

At a time when an endeavor is being made to repair the breaches that the Sevres Treaty has opened in the question of the Near East and when the Arab people are, in proportion to the sacrifice they have made, the most directly harmed by the evils resulting from this treaty, the voices of the representatives of its various districts unfortunately continue to find no echo at this conference which has, however, met to establish a firm and lasting peace.

And this is the moment which the French authorities find opportune solemnly to crown the task of colonization which they undertook four years ago, by hoisting the emblem of eternal slavery, the tricolor, on the flag which the so-called Syrian Confederation has recently been made to adopt. Once again, the declarations of the Allies, the engagements undertaken in their name by England concerning the Arabs, and even the promises made by French statesmen guaranteeing independence to this unfortunate country are repudiated. Syria, which has indisputable claims

to speedy and total independence and which is no less worthy of it than any other country in the East or the West, is deprived of her own national flag. As a sign of mandate, which camouflages annexation, the three colors are imposed on her in her national flag.

Mr. President, we have always protested against the mandate, we have never recognized it, and we now protest energetically against the adoption of its symbol in our national flag.

Hardly any of the powers, even those which are no less great than France, have adopted this humiliating method, even in their most backward colonies.

The pact of the League of Nations specifies the provisional nature of mandates (art. 22, paragraph 4). On what do the French authorities therefore base themselves to have their colors adopted by a country they claim to be leading towards the independence already recognized by the aforementioned pact?

Your Excellency, we beg you to consider our protest on this subject and reiterate our keen desire to have our just claims put forward at the conference.

We beg you to accept, etc.

For the head of the Syria-Palestinian Delegation:

The Secretary General

Emir Shekib Arslan

Furthermore, the inhabitants of Hama, many of whom are government employees, lawyers, teachers, journalists and businessmen, addressed a letter to the President of the French Council of Ministers, of which the following are the main passages:

We have the honor, Mr. President of the Council, to put forward our claims, and to protest against the reactions of this Council, which we deem are contrary to our interests and those of the country in general.

1) The said Council was not elected by universal suffrage of the nation. Its members cannot in any way be the representatives of the nation, nor reflect its thoughts.

2) The said Council is devoid of powers; it cannot even deal with questions vitally concerning the country, compelled as it is to be acquainted only with matters submitted to it. Finally, its decisions are at the discretion of the High Commissariat, which can carry them out or reject them.

3) The actual basis of the said Council is falsified by the fact that each State possesses only a single voice in it despite the numerical inequality of the States. Add to this, inexplicable peculiarity, that no majority exists in this Council, and that each divergence cancels the debate, which is then taken before the High Commissioner.

4) The said Council, which is put forward as a progress of the path of unity, is in truth a negation of the unity and actual personality of the country, in the sense that this Council, being officially appointed, in no way reflects national ideas; it might even perhaps go counter to these ideas, while in the eyes of the whole world it would be considered as the interpreter of national aspirations and would supply an argument against the nation itself.

As for our wishes, we can formulate them in the following way:

a) The recognition of the effective independence and the unity of Syria;

b) The census at present being undertaken, once finished, an election will be carried out by universal suffrage of a National Assembly which will enact the constitution and will determine the form of government of the country. This Assembly could be convoked towards the end of 1922, the date on which the federal Council will be convoked;

c) The formation of a government responsible before the Assembly having full legislative powers within its functions.

These are the true aspirations of the population of Hama, they are also those of the majority of the Syrian people.

Since this booklet was written, serious events have taken place in many colonies. Let us quote the bomb thrown by an Annamese in Canton, the bombs in the Antilles and the strikes with bloodshed in Guadeloupe, the no less bloody demonstrations in Damascus, Bizerta and Hammanlif, and the unrest in Tunisia.

4—THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE COLONIAL PEOPLES

Capitalism is a leech with one sucker on the proletariat in the metropolitan country and another on the proletariat in the colonies. If the animal is to be killed, both suckers must be cut off at once. If only one is cut off, the other will continue to suck the blood of the proletariat; the animal will go on living and the cut off sucker will grow again.

The Russian revolution clearly understood this. That is why it was not content to make fine platonic speeches and to vote for humanitarian motions in favor of the oppressed peoples, but it is teaching them to struggle. It is helping them morally and materially, as Lenin wrote in his colonial thesis. It summoned them to the Baku Congress, to which twenty-one nationalities of the East sent delegates. Representatives of workers' parties in the West took part in the Congress. It was the first time in history that the proletariat of conquering countries and that of conquered countries fraternally shook hands and together sought for a means effectively to combat capitalism, their common enemy.

After this historic Congress, and despite difficulties from within and without which assailed it, revolutionary Russia never hesitated to come to the aid of these peoples which it had already—through the example of its heroic and victorious revolution—drawn out of lethargy. Its first gesture was the creation of the University of the East.

This University has today 1,025 students, 151 of whom are young girls. Of these students, 895 are communists. Their social status is as follows: 547 peasants, 265 workers, 210 intellectuals. There are, besides, 75 pupils aged from 10 to 16.

One hundred and fifty teachers are responsible for giving courses in social science, mathematics, historical materialism, history of the workers' movement, natural science, history of revolutions, political economy, etc. In the lecture hall, young people of 62 nationalities fraternally rub shoulders.

The University has ten big houses in the service of the students. It also possesses a cinema, which is open free to the students on Sundays and Thursdays, and is hired by a contractor on other days. Two libraries with 47,000 volumes enable the young revolutionaries to carry out a thorough research and supply them with food for thought. Every nationality or “group” has its private library with books and periodicals in their native tongue. Artistically decorated by the students, the reading room is full of dailies and magazines.

The students themselves publish a “single copy” newspaper, which is displayed on a large notice board outside the reading room. The sick receive medical care in the hospital belonging to the University. There is a rest home in the Crimea for convalescents. The Soviets have given the University two holiday camps with nine houses. Each one has a farmyard where breeding can be studied. “We already have 30 cows and 50 pigs,” said the agricultural secretary of the University with ill-disguised pride. The 100 hectares of land allotted to these camps are cultivated by the students who, during their holidays and after working and training hours, go and help the peasants.

Let us mention in passing that one of these camps was the property of the Grand Duke. It is quite strange to see the red flag proudly flying on the tower decorated with the grand-ducal crown, and little Korean or Armenian peasants irreverently chatting and playing in the hall of honor of “His Royal Highness.”

The students are clothed, fed and housed free. Each one receives 5 gold rubles pocket money per month.

To give its boarders essential notions of child welfare, the University supports a model children’s home and creche, whose population amounts to 60 fine babies.

The University spends 516,000 gold rubles a year.

The 62 nationalities represented at the University form a “Commune.” The president and officials of the Commune are elected every three months by universal suffrage. A student delegate takes part in the economic and administrative management. In turns, the students have to work in the kitchen, the library, the club, etc. All “misdemeanors” and differences are judged by a tribunal elected in the presence of all the comrades. The Commune meets once a week to discuss the international political and economic situation. From time to time, meetings and social evenings are organized, in which amateur artists give you a taste of the most varied art and literature from far-off countries.

One characteristic fact among all others, and which illustrates the “barbarism” of the Bolsheviks: not only do they treat the “inferior” colonials as brothers, they moreover invite them to take part in the political life of Russia. In Soviet elections, the students who, in their country of origin, are “subjects,” “protected” people, which means to say they have no other right than that of paying, who have no say in deliberations in the affairs of their own country, and who are not allowed to take part in politics, here take part in people’s suffrage and send their delegates to sit in the Soviets. Let my brothers in the colonies, who wear themselves out begging in vain for naturalization, make a comparison between bourgeois democracy and workers’ democracy!

All these students have suffered and seen suffering. All have lived under “higher civilization” and under the exploitation and oppression of foreign capitalism. That is why all of them are enthusiastic and avid for learning. They are zealous and serious. They have nothing of the “boulevardier” and Latin Quarter about them like the young Oriental in Paris, Oxford or Berlin. It can be said without exaggeration that the University shelters under its roof the future of the colonial peoples.

The Near and Far East, which stretches from Syria to Korea—we speak only of colonial and semi-colonial countries—cover an area of more than 15 million square kilometers and have a population of more than 1,200 inhabitants. All these huge countries are today under the yoke of capitalist imperialism. And despite their numbers, which should be their strength, these oppressed peoples have never seriously attempted to emancipate themselves, in the sense that they have not understood the value of national and international solidarity. They have not—like the peoples of Europe and America—any intercontinental relations. They have in themselves a gigantic force and are unaware of it! The foundation of the University of the East marks a new era and the University; by gathering together youthful, active and intelligent elements from the colonial countries, is undertaking an imposing task:

a) Teaching these future combatants the principle of class struggle, a principle which the struggles among races on the one hand; and patriarchal customs on the other have confused in their minds;

b) Putting the vanguard of the workers in the colonies in close contact with the proletariat in the West, in order to pave the way for an impending and effective collaboration, which alone will be able to guarantee the international working class final victory;

c) Teaching the colonial peoples—up till now isolated from one another—to get to know each other better and to unite, thus laying the foundations for a Federation of the East, which will be one of the pinions of the proletarian revolution;

d) Setting the proletariat of the countries whose bourgeoisie own colonies, the example of what they can and must do for their subject brothers.²³⁹

5—PROLETARIANS AND PEASANTS OF THE COLONIES!

The worldwide carnage has opened the eyes of millions of proletarians and peasants in the colonies concerning their intolerable living conditions. A series of powerful but so far unorganized revolutionary outbreaks marked the end of the world war. This spontaneous and irresistible force, which aspires to combat for a better future, has been led and organized by the national and native bourgeoisie. Grown up and strengthened during the war, this bourgeoisie has no longer wished to remain in the claws of imperialism and surrender to the latter the greater part of the exploitation of “its workers and peasants.” The struggle for national liberation, the watchword of the young colonial bourgeoisie, has been enthusiastically welcomed and powerfully supported by the laboring masses in India, Egypt, Turkey, etc.

The Communist International is struggling unremittingly against the rapacious capitalists in all the countries in the world.

Could it hypocritically turn away from the struggle for national liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries?

The Communist International has openly proclaimed its support and assistance for this struggle and, loyal to its aims, is continuing to furnish this support.

(Extract from the *Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the 3rd International*).

6—AN APPEAL FROM THE PEASANT INTERNATIONAL TO THE WORKING PEASANTS IN THE COLONIES

The Peasant International, gathered in its first Congress, which was held recently in Moscow, wished to show its interest in the working peasants in the colonies by addressing the following appeal to them:

²³⁹ See “The USSR and the Colonial Peoples,” p. 166. Interestingly, Hồ Chí Minh replaced “colonialism” by “capitalism” in some places here.

To the working peasants in the colonies!

Peasants in the colonies, modern slaves who, in millions, in the fields, savannas and forests in the two continents, are suffering under the double yoke of foreign capitalism and your local masters.

The International Peasant Conference, meeting for the first time in Moscow to work out the organization of struggle in which the workers of the world are so far lacking, appeals to your class consciousness and calls on you to come and swell its ranks.

Even more than your peasant brothers in the metropolitan countries, you put up with long working hours, poverty and insecurity.

You are compelled to do forced labor, backbreaking portorage and endless *corvées*.

You pay crushing taxes.

Exploiting capitalism is keeping you in obscurantism, oppressing you ideologically and decimating your race by the use of spirits and opium.

The odious system of denizenship, imposed by capitalist imperialism, is depriving you of all individual liberty and all political and social rights, thus placing you on the lower level of beasts of burden.

Not content with thus reducing you to poverty and ruin, capitalism is dragging you from your homes and your fields, to turn you into cannon fodder and throw you, in fratricidal wars, against other natives or against the peasants and workers of the metropolitan country.

Pariahs of the colonies!

Unite!

Organize yourselves!

Join your action to ours; let us struggle together for our common emancipation!

Long live the deliverance of the natives in the colonies!

Long live the Workers' International!

Long live the International Peasants' Council!

7—TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION IN THE COLONIES

Extract from a report of the session held on June 27th, 1923, by the third session of the Central Council of the Red International of Labor Union.

The trade union struggle in the colonies

Present day imperialism is based on the exploitation of several million workers in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Moreover, the dislocation of imperialism will be complete and definite only when we will have succeeded in tearing out these foundations of the imperialist edifice. From this point of view, the organization of trade unions in the colonial countries acquires an especially great importance. The partisans of the RILU have done hardly anything in this direction, either in Egypt, in Tunisia, or in any of the countries under the heel of French imperialism. The liaison which exists among the various workers' groups in the French colonies and the French trade unions is merely a chance effect. No systematic work is being carried out. Now it is quite evident that without winning over the masses in the colonies, we shall be powerless to undermine the imperialist system. What is needed is to undertake in the colonies a big work of propaganda to form trade-union organizations (in the colonies) and develop those already existing in an embryonic form. It is also necessary for us to overcome the suspicion of the workers in the colonies regarding the representatives of the dominating races, by demonstrating to them the effective class brotherliness between workers of all nations and all races. A coordinated liaison between the colonial trade unions and those of the metropolitan country can only be the result of very lengthy work in the colonies.

Not to forget the workers in the colonies, to help their organizations and struggle constantly against the governments of the metropolitan countries who are oppressing the colonies, that is one of the most pressing duties of the revolutionary trade unions, especially in countries whose bourgeoisie is enslaving and exploiting the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

MANIFESTO OF THE "INTERCOLONIAL UNION," AN ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIVES IN ALL THE COLONIES

Brothers of the colonies! In 1914, the public powers at grips with a frightful cataclysm, turned to you and asked you then to agree to contribute your share of sacrifice to safeguard a country said to be yours and of which you had until then known only the spirit of domination.

To induce you to do so, the advantages your cooperation would bring you were unfailingly dangled before your eyes. But once the

storm was over, as before, you remain subjected to the system of denizenship, exceptional jurisdiction, and deprived of the rights which make the dignity of a human being: freedom of association, to hold meetings, freedom of the press, the right to circulate freely, even in your own country; that much for the political side.

From the economic point of view, you remain subjected to the heavy and unpopular head tax and portage tax; to the salt tax; to poisoning by and enforced consumption of spirits and opium, as in Indochina; tonight watching as in Algeria to guard the property of the colonial sharks.

For equal work, your efforts remain less remunerative than those of your European comrades.

In a word, you were promised wonders.

You have now realized that they were only lies.

What is to be done to achieve your emancipation?

Applying the formula of Karl Marx, we say to you that your deliverance can only come through your own efforts.

It is to help you in this task that the Intercolonial Union has been founded.

It includes, with the co-operation of metropolitan comrades sympathetic to our cause, all those originating from the colonies now residing in France.

Means of action: In order, to accomplish this work of justice, the I.U. intends to set the problem before public opinion with the help of the press and the spoken word (conferences, meetings, use of the tribunes of deliberating assemblies by those of our friends who hold elective mandates), and finally, by every means in our power.

Oppressed brothers of the metropolitan country! The dupes of your bourgeoisie, you have been the instruments of our conquest: carrying out this same machiavellian policy, *your bourgeoisie, today intends to use us to repress any desire on your part for independence.*

In the face of Capitalism and Imperialism our interests are the same: remember the words of Karl Marx:

“Workers of all lands, unite!”

THE INTERCOLONIAL UNION

APPENDIX—TO THE ANNAMESE YOUTH

Mr. Paul Doumer, ex-Governor General of Indochina, writes: "When France arrived in Indochina, the Annamese people were ripe for slavery." More than half a century has gone by since. Tremendous events have shaken the world. Japan has been classed in the front rank of world powers. China has brought about its revolution. Russia has driven out its tyrants and has become a proletarian republic. A great breath of emancipation is rousing the oppressed peoples. The Irish, the Egyptians, the Koreans, the Hindus, all these defeated of yesterday and slaves of today, are struggling heroically for their independence of tomorrow. Only the Annamese remain as they were: ripe for slavery.

Listen to these miserable words spoken by a guest at a banquet for 200 served in honor of the honorable Outrey, Valude and Co., where, to sniff the smell of these so-called nationalist blocs' socks, the Annamese did not hesitate to pay 85 francs for a blow-out! "I am proud," said the speechifier, "I am proud to express to you, in the name of everyone, our feelings of profound respect, of joy and gratitude towards you, who, in our dazzled eyes, synthetize the government of the glorious French nation."

No fine enough word comes to my mind to state precisely the meaning of our innermost thoughts, but, Gentlemen, you can be quite sure of our faithful attachment, our sincere loyalty and veneration for Tutelary and Protector France, which considers us all as her children, without distinction as to race and color.

We have all seen for ourselves how many advantages we owe to the High Administration and the representatives of France in this country through the just and clear-sighted application of liberal and benevolent laws.

At the funeral of Governor General Long, Mr. N.-K.-V., Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Political Science and Economics, attached to the public prosecutor's office in Saigon, said that if the whole of Indochina could express itself through his voice, he was sure that that voice would be raised in sorrow to thank the Governor for all he had done for the Annamese people. And then Mr. V...s turn to exclaim:

Those who, thanks to your liberal measures, are today taking part, together with the representatives of the protector nation, in the growing prosperity of Indochina, thank you from the bottom

of their hearts and revere your memory. The economic question was your major preoccupation. You wanted to endow Indochina with all the economic apparatus to make of it a second France, the France of the Far East, strong and powerful, and which will be a subsidiary of republican France.

You put your heart and soul in your mission of civilizing a people halted on the path of progress by a conjunction of historic and climatic circumstances. You were the champion of progress and the apostle of civilization.

For his part, Mr. Cao Văn Sen, engineer, President of the Association of Indochinese, said that Indochina is in mourning because of the premature death of Mr. Long. And he ended his speech with these words:

We sincerely mourn for you, Mr. Governor General, for you were for all of us a benevolent and paternal head.

From all this; I have concluded that if all the Annamese were really such grovellers as these tools of the Administration, it would have to be admitted that they have only the fate they deserve.

It is not without its use for our youth to know that there are at present more than two thousand young Chinese in France, and about fifty thousand in Europe and America. Nearly all of them hold diplomas in Chinese characters and they are all student workers. We here have seen scholarship students, and just plain students, who, thanks to the generosity of the State or their family's fortune (one or the other are unfortunately inexhaustible pumps) spend half their time in the academy of... billiards; half of the other, half in other pleasure spots; and the rest, and there rarely remain any, at college or the Faculty. But the Chinese student-workers, they have nothing less in view than the *effective* recovery of their country's economic condition, and whose motto is: "To live by the fruits of their own labor, and to learn while working."

This is how they proceed: as soon as they arrive at their destination, all those who have the same aptitude and wish to learn the same trade form themselves into groups to approach the employers. Once they have been admitted to a workshop or a factory, they naturally begin as apprentices, then as ordinary workmen. It is very trying for many of them, who have been brought up surrounded by luxury and family comforts, to do hard and tiring work. If they

weren't endowed with a firm will and impelled by prodigious moral strength, most of them would have given up. But up till now, all of them have continued their work. Another obstacle they have been able to overcome thanks to a sense of observation which is almost a privilege for us Far Easterners, and which our young neighbors are able to use to their advantage, is the language. If they cannot understand their employers or understand them only with difficulty, they attentively observe what the latter show them.

They do not earn much. With the little they earn, they have first of all to support themselves. They then make it a point of honor not to allow themselves to ask for any financial assistance from the government or their families. Finally, according to their earnings, they pay in a percentage to the mutual aid fund they have founded. This fund has been set up with a double aim: 1) to help students who are sick or unemployed, the former producing a doctor's certificate and the latter, one from the employer; 2) to give an allowance for one year to all those who have completed their apprenticeship, to enable them to undergo a period of improvement.

In all the countries in which they work, they have founded a magazine (with contributions from the student-workers). The magazine, in Chinese characters, acquaints them with what is happening in their native country, and the important events of the day in the two worlds, etc. In the publication, a tribune is reserved for readers, in which the latter impart information useful to their apprenticeship, let each other know of everyone's progress, and give each other advice and encouragement. They work during the day; they study at night.

Proceeding from such tenacity, such will power and such a spirit of solidarity, our "young uncles" will certainly reach their goal. Assisted by a working army of 50,000 men endowed with admirable courage and trained through discipline and in modern technique, China will soon win its place among the industrial and commercial powers.

We have in Indochina all that a people can wish for: ports, mines, huge fields and vast forests; we have a capable and hard-working labor force.

But we lack organization and organizers! That is why our industry and trade are worth nothing. And what are our Youth doing? It is sad, very sad to say so: they are doing nothing. Those who are without means dare not leave their villages; those who have any, wallow in their laziness; and even those who are abroad think only of satisfying the curiosity of their age!

Poor Indochina! You will die, unless your old-fashioned Youth comes to life.

People's Journalism

January 17, 1926

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 28, January 17, 1926.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 510-511.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Our friends have complained on several occasions that our articles were too sloppy to be able to exert any influence on the minds of the people.

We want to let our readers know that we disregard the use of pretty words, the elegance of style, the swaying of sentences, the rhythm of parallel lines, and all the literary decorations of which the well-read are fond. We strive, in the interest of all, to use a clear, precise, and understandable style.

Our goals are: 1° to fight the cruelties of the French; 2° to exhort the Annamite people to unite; 3° to make known to the people the causes of their misfortunes and miseries and to show them how they can avoid them. Our newspaper fulfills the function of the alarm bell that is struck when a fire breaks out to warn the tenants of the burning house, to hasten their escape, and avoid them being buried or burned, and to call for help from the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

The sound of the guitar is certainly more harmonious than that of the alarm bell; but in the presence of the danger that threatens us, it is better to strike the latter than to pluck the former.

There are many ways to move the human heart. Weeping, lamentation, the *Tale of Kiều*,²⁴⁰ and the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*²⁴¹ can move us. But these are transient and superficial emotions that we do not want to arouse in the hearts of our readers. On the contrary, we want our prose to have a deep and lasting influence on them.

²⁴⁰ *The Tale of Kiều*, a poem in 3,254 verses written by Nguyễn Du (1766-1820). It's a classic of the Vietnamese literature that tells the story of a young woman sacrificing her life to save her family.

²⁴¹ *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, one of the Four Classic Chinese Novels written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century. The novel is a dramatized history of the struggle of the three states: Cao Wei, Shu Han, and Eastern Wu in the 3rd century AD.

For example: if we met a ragged Annamite farmer, we would say to him in a tone of pity, while repressing our emotion and our tears:

Oh, how miserable is your lot. You bought 2 piasters of seed, 4 piasters of fertilizer; you rented a buffalo for 3 piasters, workers for 5, and paid one piaster in taxes. Your expenses amount to 15 piasters, as you sold your crop for 16 only; but since you have to pay a piaster in tax at the market, your real gain, which ought to have been 2 piasters, has been taken away from you by the French: that is why we say you are unhappy.

Our farmer would not cry, would not complain. But he would start thinking, then understand, consequently revolt and make anti-imperialist propaganda himself.

As for those who love poetry, they are free to immerse themselves in reading *Cung oán*²⁴² or *Nhị độ mai*.²⁴³

²⁴² *Cung oán ngâm khúc* (The Complaints of an Odalisque), a poem written by Nguyễn Gia Thiều (1741-1798). It describes the loneliness and life of a girl confined in a King's harem.

²⁴³ *Nhị độ mai* (The Plum Tree Blossoms Twice), a compilation of poems inspired by Chinese literature. Published anonymously sometime between the 18th and 19th centuries.

Lenin and the East

January 21, 1926

Source: *Goudok*, January 21, 1926

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 233-235.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 139-141.

The First International laid the foundation for the international communist movement, but because of its short existence, it could formulate for the movement only the basic lines of action. Hence the question of colonies was not thoroughly studied by the First International.

As for the Second International, with its representatives such as Macdonald,²⁴⁴ Vandervelde,²⁴⁵ Henderson,²⁴⁶ and Blum²⁴⁷ etc., it paid only too much attention to this question. Its leaders did not sympathize with the struggle for self-liberation waged by the colonial peoples. Besides, after coming to office,

²⁴⁴ See footnote 155, p. 207.

²⁴⁵ Vandervelde, Emile (1866-1938), a Social chauvinist, a leader of the Belgian Labor Party and one of the leaders of the Second International, He actively contributed to the armed intervention against the Soviet Union, and the implementation of the policy of splitting the workers' movement.

²⁴⁶ Henderson, Arthur (1863-1935), a leader of the British Labor Party, Home Secretary (1924) and Foreign Minister in the second Government formed by the Labor Party—the Macdonald Government—(1929-1931). He carried out a reactionary home and foreign policy.

²⁴⁷ Blum Leon (1872-1950), a right-wing socialist, leader of the French Socialist Party, he was for many years editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Le Populaire* which is the principal organ of the French Socialist Party. After the “Front Populaire” had won in the 1936 general elections, Blum headed the French Government and carried out a policy of disrupting the “Front Populaire” and frustrating the realization of its political program. Being a sworn enemy of Communism and the USSR, Blum resorted to every possible means to overthrow Marxism and propagate the theories of “democratic socialism.”

Macdonald was no less active than Baldwin²⁴⁸ and Chamberlain²⁴⁹ in suppressing the peoples of India, the Sudan, and other colonies who courageously opposed their foreign oppressors.

On the orders of these gentlemen, native villages were bombed and colonial peoples suppressed in a ruthless and cruel manner that no words can depict. Everybody knows that the opportunists have carried out a policy of segregating the white workers from the colored workers, that the trade unions, under the influence of these wily socialists, do not want to admit workers of different color into their ranks. The colonial policy of the Second International has more than anything else laid bare the true face of this petit-bourgeois organization. Hence, until the October Revolution, socialist theories were regarded as theories particularly reserved for the Whites, a new tool for deceit and exploitation.

Lenin opened a new era, which is truly revolutionary, in various colonies.

Lenin was the first man determinedly to denounce all prejudices against colonial peoples, which have been deeply implanted in the minds of many European and American workers. Lenin's theses on the question of nationalities, approved by International Communism, have brought about a momentous revolution in all oppressed countries throughout the world.

Lenin was the first to realize and emphasize the full importance of a correct solution to the colonial question as a contribution to the world revolution. The colonial question has been brought to the fore in all congresses of Interna-

²⁴⁸ Baldwin, Stanley (1867-1947). Leader of the British Conservative Party, a reactionary politician. He was Prime Minister from 1923 to 1924, from 1924 to 1929, and from 1935 to 1937. He advocated a ruthless colonial policy and was one of the promoters of the armed intervention against the Chinese revolution from 1924 to 1927. Baldwin led the suppression of the general strike and of the miners' strike (1926). He maintained a most antagonistic attitude towards the USSR, proposed breaking off diplomatic relations with the USSR (1927), and carried out a policy of encouraging the Italian and German aggressors, and of collusion with Hitler's Germany to spearhead the German invasion of the USSR.

²⁴⁹ Chamberlain, Austen (1863-1937). A British statesman, was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Minister, etc., in various Conservative Governments. A sworn enemy of the Soviet Union, Chamberlain held that the essential goal of his policy was to isolate the Soviet Union and to found a bloc of big capitalist states directed against the Soviet Union. He supported the revival of German militarism and wanted to use it to provoke a war against the Soviet Union.

tional Communism, the world trade union body and the International Communist Youth.²⁵⁰

Lenin was the first to realize and assess the full importance of drawing the colonial peoples into the revolutionary movement. He was the first to realize that without the participation of the colonial peoples, the socialist revolution could not come about.

With his inborn clear sightedness, Lenin realized that in order to carry out work in the colonies successfully, it was necessary to know how to take full advantage of the national liberation movement which was gaining ground in these countries, he realized that with the support of the world proletariat for this movement we will have new, strong allies in the struggle for the socialist revolution.

All delegates of colonial countries who have taken part in various congresses of International Communism will never forget the concern that Lenin, their leader and comrade, displayed for them. They will forever remember with what insight he looked into the conditions of the most complex tasks peculiar to the East. Hence, everyone of us will deeply understand how correct Lenin's judgments are and how valuable are his teachings.

Only Lenin's wise attitude toward the colonial question can arouse the most backward colonial peoples. Lenin's strategy on this question is applied by various Communist Parties in the world and has won over the best and most positive elements in the colonies to take part in communist movements.

Lenin's solution of the very complex question of nationalities in Soviet Russia, and its practical application by the Communist Party, is the sharpest propaganda weapon for the colonies.

With regard to oppressed and enslaved peoples, Lenin brought about a turn in the history of poverty of their slave-like lives, and symbolized a bright future.

²⁵⁰ International Communist Youth. A non-party organ of world youth, functioning under the ideological and organizational guidance of the Communist International. It was a branch of International Communism. The International Communist Youth organization existed from 1919 to 1943.

Ladies' Column: on Injustice

April 4, 1926

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 40, April 4, 1926.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 512.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The great sage Confucius once said: the husband must govern the wife.

The wise Mencius made the following remark: women and children are difficult to educate—if you approach them, they will reject you; if you neglect them, they will hate you.²⁵¹

The Chinese frequently compare women to hens: “If the hen announces the sunrise, it is a bad omen for the family.”²⁵²

In Annam, we say: the woman must be confined to the kitchen.

In society and in the family, women are repressed to the lowest ranks and do not enjoy any rights. O my sisters! Why do you suffer this iniquitous oppression?

MONG LIEN

²⁵¹ This paraphrased quotation is also actually from Confucius. In *Analects* XVII, 25, it says: “Women and servants are most difficult to nurture. If one is close to them, they lose their reserve, while if one is distant, they feel resentful.” Mencius didn’t say anything about the question of women in his writing.

²⁵² “The hen shall not announce the morning; when the hen announces the morning, it means that the family will wane.” This saying comes from the *Shujing* (*Book of Documents*), one of the Five Classics that contains documents and speeches of different kings and rulers of the early Zhou dynasty. It’s part of the *Mu Shi* (*Oath at Muye*), the speech King Wu of Zhou made before the battle where he defeated Di Xin, bringing down the Shang dynasty. It was his justification for attacking the King, implying that the King was “listening to his wife,” which was jeopardizing the future of the entire country.

The Revolutionary Movement in Indochina

August 14, 1926

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VI, No. 91.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 243-249.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Indochina is under the economic domination of the Bank of Indochina, founded in 1875. In 1924, this bank had capital of 64,400,000 francs. At the same time, its operations amounted to 4,503,000,000 francs and its profits 34,000,000 francs. It directs the *Crédit industriel et commercial de l'Indochine* [Industrial and Commercial Credit Bank of Indochina], the *Société française des Charbonnages du Tonkin* [French Society for Tonkinese Coal Mining] (which exports 1,400,000 tons of coal annually at a cost of 12,000,000 piasters or 201,000,000 francs), and the *Compagnie des chemins de fer du Yunnan* [Railway Company of Yunnan].

The general trade of the colony amounts to more than 4,000 million francs. The sale of opium generates 215 million francs and the sale of alcohol yields a profit of about 1 billion. Of this billion the administration receives 200,000,000 francs. The remainder goes into the pockets of the monopolists. Thus, every year, French imperialism gets 415,000,000 francs just by poisoning the natives!

The general budget of the colony is 1,327,000,000 francs.

Each year, 15,000,000 quintals of rice are exported—representing 252,000,000 francs—as well as 80,000 quintals of rubber.

This makes Indochina a prosperous country. However, this prosperity is exclusively for the benefit of the French at the expense of the Annamites. A male miner earns only 33 cents a day, a female worker 28 cents and a young man 16 cents. Moreover, they are not paid regularly, nor are they paid consistently in cash. The company has set up stores to sell food and other products. The workers are forced to buy their most essential supplies from these stores, where they are sold for 10% more than on the market. Their pay often consists

of some of these stores' goods, and when the worker receives some money, the payment is always a fortnight or a month late. It is by this method that the company prevents the workers from running away.

The life of these workers is so miserable and the work so hard that—according to the governor general—none of the 15,907 miners registered in 1916 reached the age of 60. And it is this very argument that colonial capitalism has used as a reason for refusing to establish workers' pensions for the natives!

The life of the peasants is no better. The land is scarce, the method of cultivation is medieval; the production is consequently very low. While one hectare in Europe produces 4,670 kilos of cereals, 3,320 kilos in Japan, 2,150 in the "Settlements," it produces only 1,210 kilos in Indochina.

The natives use the "mau" and not the hectare to measure the land. One "mau" of good soil produces about 50 "thung," worth \$24.75. Of this amount, the government takes \$2.10 or about 10%. However, to cultivate a *mau*, the farmer must pay—for irrigation, manure, seed, renting a buffalo, labor, etc.—\$28.50. Hence there is a deficit of \$3.75.

The question is: "How can the farmer live and pay his taxes? The answer is very simple: by any means possible, for he has no choice other than to survive and pay his taxes. An Annamite proverb says, "If you work, you die of hunger; if you don't work, hunger kills you." The Annamites are attached to the land by a thousand-year-old tradition as well as by force of circumstance. They would gladly flee this ungrateful countryside if they knew where to go. Most of them feed themselves year-round with potatoes and vegetables. They eat their precious rice only very rarely—on holidays for instance.

In addition to crushing taxes, which have increased by 550% in 10 years, the natives suffer from countless forms of abuse.

One native newspaper—*Khai Hôa*, from Tonkin—recently wrote:

Many people are arrested in violation of the law. They remain imprisoned for many months... The soldiers force them to pay this or that, and beat them up... One person was beaten so badly that he had to go to hospital... In short, when someone has the bad luck to be arrested, if he is extremely poor, he will surrender to it, but if he has a more comfortable situation, he "simply" has to sell his wife and children to pay the fine, even if the accusation against him is false.

But there are much more serious cases than the one mentioned above. For example, there's the case of the Cambodian administrator who had his summer palace paid for by the unfortunate taxpayers from whom he had taken 57,600,000 francs, and who were then forced to build a road leading from his residence to the palace. More than 1,900 of them were killed during the construction of this road.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Last November, upon the arrival of the new Governor General, the "socialist" Alexandre Varenne, the natives presented him with a "cahier of Annamite wishes." They demanded freedom of press and speech, the right of association and assembly, etc. Like his predecessors, Varenne promised everything in order to concede nothing.

Around the same time, the French police arrested Phan Bội Châu in Shanghai, an old nationalist who had left the country twenty years earlier.²⁵³ He was brought back to Tonkin to be sentenced. Although the arrest was kept secret from the French administration, the Annamites knew about it and a protest movement was started.

On the occasion of Varenne's arrival in Tonkin, the students organized demonstrations in favor of the old arrested revolutionary. They marched with flags on which were inscribed the following words: "Amnesty for Phan Bội Châu! Down with brutal colonialism!"

It was the first time that such a thing was seen in Indochina. Varenne was obliged to grant amnesty to the old nationalist while putting him under close surveillance.

The student movement has continued since then, but the excitement has become much stronger since last March.

Upon the arrival of Bùi Quang Chiêu²⁵⁴—a nationalist who had returned from France where he had conducted a propaganda campaign against the corrupt colonial administrators—several thousand Annamites, convened by the students, gathered to meet him, offering him a triumphant reception. On

²⁵³ See footnote 317, p. 442.

²⁵⁴ Bùi Quang Chiêu (1873-1945), journalist and politician. He founded the legal Constitutional Party of Indochina in 1919, which upheld Indochina's autonomy rather than independence. In the 1930, as the communist movement grew stronger, he increasingly opposed the armed struggle, finally becoming an advocate for colonialism himself. He was executed during the revolution for collaborationism.

that day, the fascist Franciscans organized a counter-demonstration, and the troops, the police, and the gendarmes were all mobilized. The fascists opened fire and attacked Bùì. In spite of these despicable provocations, the natives kept a very calm attitude, which undermined the plan of the French, who wanted to organize a bloodbath to teach the Annamites to remain submissive!

At that time another nationalist died: Phan Châu Trinh,²⁵⁵ an old political convict. Thirty thousand Annamites of Cochinchina organized a national funeral in his honor. All over the country, ceremonies were organized to commemorate him. A collection was taken and brought in 100,000 dollars in a few days. The students all mourned him.

Faced with this national and patriotic movement, the horrified French launched a new offensive. They prohibited the students from mourning and raising money for the funeral. The students responded to this attack by leaving the schools. In Hanoi, Haiphong, Nam Định, Huế, Saigon, Phú Lâm, etc., the students went on strike. Even the young school children took part in the movement. One particular event reveals most clearly the nationalistic spirit of the students: at the Chasseloup-Laubat school in Saigon, someone wrote on the blackboard: “A.B.L.F.” (*à bas les français*).²⁵⁶ The French teachers then forced the students to erase this inscription, but all refused.

The “socialist” Varenne ordered the school principals “to act ruthlessly against all acts of indiscipline.” The administration then organized searches, arrests, and mass expulsions of students. In Saigon alone, more than 500 students were expelled from school.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

In Tonkin there is a secret organization called Phục Việt (reconquering Annam).²⁵⁷ Most recently, it has distributed leaflets of which the following are some excerpts:

France is subjugating Annam by force... it has oppressed our people for several years now... The shame and hatred we feel are pre-

²⁵⁵ See footnote 1, p. 1.

²⁵⁶ In English: “Down with the French.”

²⁵⁷ Hội Phục Việt (Vietnamese Restoration Association), a small organization founded in 1925 by students and political prisoners. In 1929 the left-wing of the organization eventually split to join the Revolutionary Youth League led by Hồ Chí Minh. The right-wing liquidated the organization soon after.

venting us, French and Annamites, from living under the same sky... But the tyranny is agonizing. All nations are answering the call of revolutionary Russia. India and Egypt are waking up to regain their freedom. Could it be that the Annamites are in a state of eternal sleep?... Oh! People of Annam! If we do not succeed in liberating ourselves by ordinary means, let us not hesitate to resort to more violent means, so as to reclaim our homes and our country, and to become more prominent on the world stage... People of Annam! Wake up...

In Cochinchina there is a group that calls itself the “constitutional party.” Composed of intellectuals educated in the French style, it is very moderate and advocates “cooperation between French and Annamites on an equal footing.” It has no real organization, no discipline, no framework as we understand it. It is only a moral association. As it often attacks the colonial misrule—while respecting “French sovereignty”—it has a fairly large influence on the native masses.

There is another group, which is called “Le Jeune Annam” [“Young Annam”].²⁵⁸ It is more advanced and more active. Its journal—directed by a naturalized Annamite—often republishes the articles of the Parisian newspaper *L’Humanité*. In the form of a serial, it published the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* as well as Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*.

Naturally, the French administration tries tirelessly to shut down the newspaper. It fails to do so, because there is no real party on which it relies. Therefore, the administration strikes individual militants. Here is how:

In March, “Jeune Annam” organized a meeting to protest the expulsion of a Tonkinese man. At this meeting, the following agenda was voted on:

Three thousand Annamites... after having heard the speakers... Considering that the expulsion from the territory of Cochinchina of Annamites born in Tonkin and Annam is an arbitrary act... Protest energetically against the abuse of authority of this kind... And insist on the respect in Indochina, by the French government, of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man and of the citizen, recognized by the republican constitution of France, in particular: 1) the freedom of the press in the native language; 2)

²⁵⁸ Jeune Annam was founded and dissolved in 1926, after its leadership was arrested. Many of its members later joined either the Nationalist Party or the Communist Party.

the abolition of corporal punishment in civil and commercial matters; 3) the freedom of education, of assembly, and of movement.

Before the meeting, leaflets were distributed which concluded with this sentence:

If the government persists in refusing to grant the Annamites these essential things (freedom of the press, etc...), we will no longer rely on its goodwill, and we will swear to work with all our might for the emancipation of the Annamite people.

For having written the words “emancipation of the Annamite people,” and for having published the first and final issue of *Jeune Annam*—entitled “Tribune de libération nationale” [“Tribune for National Liberation”], in which articles from *L’Humanité* and *Le Paria* were reprinted—the two authors of the tract, organizers of the meeting and both director and manager of the newspaper, were sentenced to two years in prison!

This double sentence provoked further student strikes, which were followed by further administrative reprisals.

The political situation of the colony can be summed up in this complaint by a French newspaper in Tonkin: “...this agitation transforms our country, once so quiet, into a hotbed of unrest and disorder...”

X. X.

The Revolutionary Character

September 18, 1926

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 61, September 18, 1927.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 513-515.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The revolutionary work is immense and difficult to achieve; it cannot be carried out by a single man or a single family. The revolution of the different races,²⁵⁹ which aims at the emancipation of the weaker nations, and which will precede the world revolution, liberating the whole of mankind from the yoke of imperialism and capitalism. To fulfill his role with dignity, the revolutionary type of person must:

- 1° Think night and day about revolutionary work and the salvation of humanity.
- 2° Sacrifice his money, his time, and even his blood in the interest of the oppressed peoples; in a word, be altruistic and not egoistic, and conform at all times and in all places to the dictum: "*the Motherland first.*"
- 3° Work relentlessly according to his means and abilities; if he acts in such a way that the rich contributes his money, the intellectual his knowledge, and the worker his work, nothing will stop the forward march of the revolutionary movement.
- 4° Brave death and taunt danger, because the revolution is a long and relentless war undertaken by the proletarians against their oppressors.
- 5° Conform to the circumstances of time and place and leave nothing to chance. He can either provoke strikes of schoolchildren and workers or incite the peasants to refuse the payment of taxes and their participation in compulsory labor, or kill his cruel enemies with a revolver, or seize military bases with the aid of riflemen. He must always speak and act wisely.

²⁵⁹ Term used at that time to describe both people of color as well as different nations and ethnicities.

- 6° Meditate deeply before taking action, because the execution of a plan depends on its preparation. For example, if between two militants one has matured his plan of action and the other neglected to do so, the first one will succeed and make himself useful to his party, while the other one will fail and harm the revolutionary cause.
- 7° Lead the people, whose forces are indispensable to the success of the revolutionary work. The people are ignorant, naive, unwilling to risk their lives, easy to deceive and to bribe. The revolutionary must therefore educate them, correct them, and gain their confidence so that he can use their forces in due course.
- 8° Form numerous and powerful associations that will hasten the triumph of the revolution.
- 9° Despise honors, superiority, and money, which are sources of rivalry and hatred and causes denunciations and betrayals that seriously damage the revolutionary work.
- 10° Avoid singling oneself out, because the revolution must be made in the interest of the people and not of an individual. Therefore, if a revolutionary were to seek to distinguish himself alone, his ambition would lead him to act for himself and not for the community.
- 11° Avoid pride. The proud person will lose the hearts of the crowd and make trouble for himself. The revolutionary type must be humble, accommodating, protective, courageous in misfortune, calm in good fortune, and never forget that his life and work belong to all mankind and not to himself.
- 12° Be tenacious and patient. Revolutionary work is long, difficult and dangerous to accomplish. If the revolutionary lacks patience and tenacity, the first setbacks will discourage him and he will desert in the middle of the battle.

French Civilization in Indochina

January 26, 1927

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VII, No. 17.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 253-255.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

A CIVILIZATION OF PLUNDERING

Here's how the colonial sharks have been stealing the land of the Annamites: the *Indochina* [a newspaper] reports that:

Of the 14,528 hectares offered for sale in Baclieu (Saigon), about three-quarters are already being cultivated. For years, poor Annamite and Cambodian peasants, the original occupants of this wild landscape, have spent all their resources, energy, health and money on clearing the land and making it fertile. Now, they are being dispossessed.

The *Annamite Echo*, another journal, relates on June 9 the following:

The most cynical fraud is manifested in the following manner: a group of Frenchmen from Saigon, about twenty in number, have agreed to ask for three hundred hectares each in free concession. But these requests for concessions concern juxtaposed lots, so that, if they all obtain satisfaction, they will only have to combine into a single company to found a large plantation of 60,000 hectares which will not have cost them anything.

Another example. With his family, Te-Sean had toiled for fifteen years in the Takeo forest. He cleared five hundred hectares. In 1920, M. Montazel, a French officer, came up with the idea of taking these lands. He talked about it to Mr. L., a friend of the resident-general Baudoin. The latter put the land of Te-Sean up for auction. The auction had no competitors, the population being very afraid of Mr. Montazel, of Mr. L. and of Baudoin.

The five hundred hectares of cultivated land—the *Echo Annamite* tells us—and five hundred hectares of wasteland were awarded

to Mr. L. for the derisory sum of 6,000 piastres. The first year, he collected, on the back of Te-Sean, 22,000 units of paddy worth about 18,000 piasters. An unfair judgment of the court of Takeo deprived Te-Sean of his harvest in favor of Mr. L. Thus, without having done anything, Mr. L. will recover three times his purchase price thanks to Te-Sean's harvest. A few months later, he would resell three hundred hectares to Montazel.

On August 14, 1926, the Societe Industrielle et Commerciale [The Society for Industry and Commerce] (of the vicious financier Homber, the public intoxicator Fontaine, the “resident-assassin” Darles and the “governer-forgery” Cognacq) applied for the “transfer of state-owned land against payment.” This land covers an area of thirty thousand (30,000) hectares, including six villages, which will be demolished to make room for the sharks.

So far, in Cochinchina alone, 115,000 hectares have been stolen from the natives, and it is expected that 200,000 will be stolen within the next ten years!

A COUNTERFEITING AND MURDEROUS CIVILIZATION

The Darles and the Baudoin are too well known for us to need to repeat here their high acts of brigandage. But there are many other representatives of France in Indochina—all of whom are, unsurprisingly, senior civil servants—who are no less thieves and murderers than these two more notorious bandits. Today, let's just name two of them.

M. le docteur Cognacq,²⁶⁰ governor of Cochinchina, has been publicly accused in the Colonial Council of having “distorted, falsified and stolen, for unavowable purposes, the records of the Council.” And this, since 1923!

We will talk later about his other deeds.

Another high official, Sabatier, a provincial resident, is even more “outstanding” than his superior. Here is what a French newspaper, *La Libre Cochinchine*, said about him. Under his rule...

²⁶⁰ Maurice Cognacq (1870-1949), governor of Cochinchina from 1922 to 1926. In 1923, he attempted to grab large tracts of land in Camau through judicial rigging. He was denounced in the press by the well-known journalist and novelist André Malraux. To cover up his fraud, Cognacq destroyed a large part of the archives of Cochinchina. The French government forced him into retirement for that action in 1926.

the prisons were filled with people whose crimes were unknown, apart from the fact that sometimes they had a wife, a daughter, or even a son from whom they had not consented to be separated in exchange for their employment as dancers, on whom the satrap devoted most of his time.

The death penalty, hitherto unknown among the Moïse people, is applied for all sorts of reasons and especially when there is no reason at all. And when, by chance, the condemned appeals to the court in Huế, the acquittal or the commutation of the sentence is granted only after the execution, which, in spite of the appeal, is carried out shortly after the condemnation.

Sabatier ordered “summary executions, preceded by a parody of justice,” of which he was both president and executor.

TERRORIST CIVILIZATION

On March 24, 1926, on the occasion of the arrival of Bùì Quang Chiêu—a well-known nationalist who has since become a notorious collaborationist²⁶¹—the Annamite riflemen were disarmed, while machine-gunners were kept ready to shoot down, in a disorganized manner, the Annamite crowd that was gathered to meet their fellow countryman.

In April, during the trial of two young Annamite journalists, the army, the gendarmerie, the militia, and the urban and secret police were all mobilized. Several parts of the city were closed to the natives. Cognacq wanted blood and terror! The French soldiers were no longer trusted, let alone the Annamese soldiers. As a result, Senegalese soldiers were brought into the colony. They were forbidden to associate with the Annamites, for fear that their friendships would make them understand that they are all slaves of the same master, and that their common enemy is French imperialism. Divisive propaganda was skillfully spread among the black soldiers and the yellow natives.

²⁶¹ See footnote 254, p. 361. The change from “a nationalist who had returned from France where he had conducted a propaganda campaign against the corrupt colonial administrators” to “a well-known nationalist who has since become a notorious collaborationist” can be explained by Bùì’s election to the colonial council in October 1926, marking the beginning of his slow transition from reformist nationalism to colonialism.

Since the arrival of socialist Varenne, arms and ammunition have been arriving continuously from France. So far, four ships carrying “civilizational” equipment have been destroyed by explosions.

Everywhere there are reports of arrests, of mass imprisonments. About two hundred Cochinchina students (who, it seems, were trying to pursue their studies abroad, since the schools in the colony have been closed since the strike) have been arrested and held in solitary confinement in Saigon. The same terror prevails in Tonkin and Annam. Here is the information published in a Cochinchinese newspaper (September 2):

For a week now, a state of terror has reigned in Hà Tĩnh: mass arrests have been ordered. People in the countryside, especially educated people, are brought to and held in the city prison without knowing why. Even today—August 26—the wave of arrests continues... although the prisons are already overcrowded.

A CIVILIZATION OF SLAVERY

Under the guidance of France, the colonies, such as Reunion, New Caledonia, etc.... have been rapidly depopulated by alcohol and the “*corvées*.” As a result, the colonialists found themselves without manpower for their plantations. They then turned to the government of Indochina, which served as a slave trader.

We often read information like this:

Indochina authorizes the departure of two thousand workers to Reunion; each contingent must include at least one third of women. The monthly wages are set at 10 piasters for a woman and 13 piasters for a man.

A detachment of 328 Annamite workers with 30 children left Haiphong yesterday for New Caledonia.

It seems that these workers have enlisted voluntarily. Let us remember that this colony, New Caledonia, had 62,000 inhabitants in 1875, and that, thanks to France, it had no more than 27,000 in 1924. One only has to remember the so-called voluntary service during the great imperialist slaughter from 1914 to 1918, to understand what “voluntary” means in colonial language. At that time, workers and peasants were arrested, chained up, and kept in prison while waiting for the ships. Then they were piled up in the cargo holds without any

air or light. If the German submarines let the transportation ships escape, they were unloaded in the hangars of Marseille. And there they were, the “native volunteers who came to the defense of the motherland!”

It is almost the same procedure that is used for the recruitment of workers for the depopulated colonies and “volunteers” for surveilling the Moroccan and Syrian protectorates. We often hear about these departures, but we have never heard of their return, for the simple reason that few “volunteers” (at present, there are more than 5,700 Tonkinese climbers exiled in Syria) come back from Morocco or from New Caledonia.

OBSCURANTIST CIVILIZATION

After more than sixty years of occupation, French education in Indochina has not produced any engineers, doctors, or writers worthy of the name among the Annamites. This is not because they lack ability, but because the colonial government, which has a monopoly on education, does everything possible to keep the natives in ignorance. It is content to give the Annamites a false education, sufficient at most to train scribes and subordinate employees for the French administration and commerce.

It has often been said that there are 12,000 alcohol and opium shops in Indochina whereas there are only 10 schools. Let us quote here exact and comparative statistics, which will give an idea of the obscurantist system imposed on the Indochinese.

In 1944, in the whole of Indochina (20 million inhabitants), there were 213,977 schoolchildren and 4,193 native teachers, while in the Philippines (10 million inhabitants) there were 1,128,977 schoolchildren and 25,451 native teachers.

Not only are there a lack of schools, but those that do exist are of a very questionable quality, both materially and intellectually. We have seen young boys and girls from who knows where appointed to the position of supervisors or teachers!

To be admitted to the normal school of teachers, a native is obliged to sign a commitment thus conceived:

I hereby commit myself to serve the administration for *at least ten years* after leaving school and if not, to reimburse the expenses of the studies and upkeep of which I will have benefited.

M. Thalmas, director of public instruction, has the nerve to distribute a moral program to the students of the educational institutions, in which we find the following:

What Indochina owes to France: 1) public security; 2) material prosperity; 3) the improvement of public health; 4) the spread of knowledge; 5) a sense of personal dignity.

In response to this program, an Annamite humorist published the following program in Annam:

What Indochina has suffered since its conquest by France: 1) enslavement...; 2) spoliation; 3) systematic poisoning by alcohol and opium...; 4) obscurantism...; 5) demoralization...

To conclude, it should be noted that students are forbidden to read “subversive” books and newspapers, that their correspondence is stolen and that informers are sent into the schools.

CORRUPT AND CRIMINAL CIVILIZATION

As for corruption, here is the confession of *L’Impartial*, the journal of Outrey and of French fascism in Indochina:

He [the counterfeiting governor Cognacq] will learn with disgust that this or that newspaper editor who, on a day of despair, on the eve of a difficult deadline, approached him as a humble solicitor, and to whom *he gave 5,000 piastres taken from the reserve funds*, complacently spread the slanders of his adversaries; that another, whom he showered with favors and to whom *he granted a well-paid stipend*, did not spare him either; that a third, *who sent him his wife to beg for help*, joined in with his accusers.

It is this corrupted and prostituted press—it is indeed fitting to speak of it as such—which has a monopoly on public opinion in Indochina, representing the ideal of France and defending its “prestige and sovereignty!”

The socialist Varenne himself, only a few months after his arrival, sent his friends in France seventy-four boxes of gifts weighing 4,910 kilos and measuring 30 cubic meters.

Although the Annamites were starving and crushed under the burden of taxes, although Tonkin was devastated by the flood (and let us note that this was due to the incapability and negligence of the Public Works Department,

which wasted money and left the dike without defense), the colonial government continued to invent new tricks to exploit the population even more: a new loan of 2,060,000 piasters, a “voluntary” contribution aimed at raising the value of the French franc, and a national lottery. And that’s not all. They are going to create baccarat clubs disguised under the name of casinos. Alcohol, opium, cheating, gambling—this is the true face of colonial civilization. Next time, we will talk about how the French murder pregnant women and children, and how high officials rape young Annamite girls in the bathroom of the General Residence of Tonkin.

At the same time the Red River was about to overflow. To avoid the flooding of Hanoi, where the French reside, the colonial administration sent a native firefighter to make a four hundred meter long cut on the opposite side of the dike, using dynamite.

The inhabitants of the villages protected by this dike, having received no prior warning, were all drowned. The number of victims is estimated at 20,000.

The Annamite firefighter drowned as well. The “protective” government (?) decorated his corpse, declared him to be a victim of his duty (?), and gave him a beautiful funeral! The press was forbidden to talk about this criminal affair.

Confucius²⁶²

February 20, 1927

Source: *Thanh Niên*, No. 80, February 2, 1927.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 561-563.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

On February 15, the Chinese Nationalist Government decreed that henceforth the ceremonies held in memory of Confucius were to be abolished and that the funds allocated for these ceremonies as well as all the Confucius temples were to be used for public instruction.

Confucius lived 2,478 years ago. For 2,400 years, he has been worshiped by the Chinese people. All Chinese emperors have called him the Prince of Sages and have bestowed honorary titles on his descendants.

The Annamites and their emperors have also worshiped the great sage since ancient times. But now the Chinese government has decreed that in the future no official worship will be made for Confucius. This is a truly revolutionary act!

But who was Confucius? Why was he worshiped by the kings? Why was his cult rejected by the Chinese government?

Confucius lived in the era of the Six Dynasties. His virtues, learning, and knowledge were admired by his contemporaries and posterity. He studied and taught without tiring, he was not ashamed to ask his inferiors for advice, and he did not mind being misunderstood by his fellow men. His famous saying was: “Look at the means which a man employs, consider his motives, observe his pleasures. A man simply cannot conceal himself!”²⁶³

But twenty centuries ago, capitalism and imperialism did not exist and people were not oppressed as they are nowadays; that is why Confucius’ brain was never troubled/disturbed by revolutionary doctrines. His morality is perfect, but it is incompatible with the modern trend of thinking. How can a round lid fit onto a square box?

²⁶² Kongzi (551-479 BC), commonly known as Confucius, was a philosopher and founder of Confucianism, one of the major Chinese schools of thought.

²⁶³ *Analects*, II, 2.

The monarchs revered Confucius not only because he was not a revolutionary, but also because he made intense propaganda for them. They exploited Confucianism as the imperialists exploit Christianity.

Confucianism is based on the three great subjugations—between subjects and rulers, between son and father, between wife and husband—as well as on the five cardinal virtues: humanity, justice, civility, prudence, and sincerity.

Confucius wrote the *Chunqiu*²⁶⁴ and *Zuo Zhuan*²⁶⁵ with the aim of condemning “rebellious subjects” and “depraved son,” but he did not write anything to stigmatize the crimes of “perverse fathers” and “narrow-minded princes.” In short, he spoke out in favor of the oppressors against the oppressed.

According to Confucianism, Russia, France, China, the United States and all democratic countries are nations where moral laws are lacking, and it views subjects revolting against their kings as mere rebels. If Confucius were alive today and persisted in his views, he would be anti-revolutionary. It is more likely that this great man would instead change with the circumstances and quickly become Lenin’s worthy successor.

By abolishing the ceremonies in memory of Confucius, the Chinese government has done away with an outdated institution that is contrary to the democratic spirit. But as far as we Annamites are concerned, let us improve ourselves intellectually by reading the works of Confucius, and revolutionarily by reading the works of Lenin.

²⁶⁴ *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, one of the Five Classics, is a historical text that chronicles the State of Lu between 722 to 481 BC. Mencius claimed its author was Confucius, a claim that is still debated.

²⁶⁵ *The Commentary of Zuo* is a narrative of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. It was written in the 4th century BC. It was not written by Confucius.

The Domination of French Imperialism in Indochina

October 15, 1927

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VII, No. 104.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 269-275.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

THE “SINO-ANNAMITE CONFLICT”

From August 19 to 22, bloody fights took place between Annamites and Chinese in Haiphong, a seaport in Tonkin. 8 Chinese were killed and 125 were wounded, while 8 factories and 32 Chinese houses were burned. The French press in Indochina and in France claimed that the conflict was solely between the Annamites and the Chinese, that it was caused by “hatred” between these two peoples, and that the French had nothing to do with it.

This statement is inaccurate. The Chinese have been in Indochina for centuries. And ever since they have been there, they have always occupied a very important place in the economic life of the country. But there has never been any conflict between the Annamites and their Chinese “uncles.”

The present conflict, as well as the boycott of Chinese goods in 1919, was fomented by the French colonialists for the following reasons:

For some time, there has been widespread turmoil among the Annamite population: nationalist demonstrations, university and workers’ strikes, peasant revolts, clandestine revolutionary organizations activity, elections of former political convicts to the native “parliament,” etc. All this has frightened the French colonialists who are trying by all means to divert this political activity.

During the past year, the Annamites have shown great sympathy for the Chinese revolution. When the French warship, the *Michelet*, on its way to China, stopped in Saigon for repairs, the workers of the arsenal in that port refused to repair it by going on strike. The same year, five Chinese from Saigon were expelled by the French authorities for revolutionary propaganda. Several thousand Annamites spontaneously gathered to accompany them on

their departure. This Sino-Annamite rapprochement greatly frightened the French.

The Chinese residing in Indochina are oppressed and exploited by the French. Taxes are crippling them. Like the Annamites, the Chinese are forced to have a passport to travel from one place to another, which involves great costs and wasted time and greatly hinders their trade. Chinese workers are not allowed to organize freely. All this and other abuses have provoked an anti-French sentiment among the Chinese, a sentiment which, if it were to unite with the revolutionary feelings of the Annamites, would constitute a great threat to imperialism.

For all these reasons, the French imperialists are seeking to sow division between the Chinese and Annamites, to set them up against each other.

However, the imperialist maneuver of August 19-22 was too obvious to avoid any serious examination. How, in a country where censorship exists permanently, where all the civil servants, including the directors and teachers of the schools, are engaged in espionage, where thirty piasters are paid each month to every schoolboy who agrees to be an informer, where all meetings and gatherings are forbidden—how, under these conditions, could these bloody fights have been organized? How is it that the French police and authorities—who are always informed of the slightest action of the natives and always ready for repression—did not intervene until very late, after men had been killed, after damage had been done? How could these fights have continued from August 19 to 22 without any measures being taken to prevent them?

The conclusion that the conflict was not only tolerated, but wanted, fomented, provoked by French imperialism, is therefore obvious.

THE ANNAMITE “DUMA”

Under the impulse of the indigenous masses, French imperialism is forced to make concessions, or rather a semblance of concessions. It sends a “socialist” as governor general. It launches the slogan of “Franco-Annamite cooperation.” The latter organizes the “representation of the people.” However, the result was completely contrary to what he had expected. After a moment of illusion, the Annamites are now beginning to see the true value of a representative of the Second International. They see that the much celebrated “cooperation” translates into scandalous exploitation and ruthless repression against any political manifestation of the natives.

The Annamite “duma” (elected not by universal suffrage, but only by prominent people, landlords and merchants), far from calming the Annamites, provided them with an opportunity to express their feelings of revolt.

During the last elections, candidates known for their nationalist activity and criticism of the French administration, as well as political prisoners who had returned from exile, were voted in. Despite the cunning and threats of the French authorities, none of the candidates presented by the government were elected.

All these “representatives” only have a consultative voice. Those of Annam meet only once a year and at a moment chosen by the senior resident. They do not even have a meeting room of their own, nor an office to work in. Each meeting is chaired by a French official. This does not prevent these poor Annamite elected officials from timidly raising their voices and making some rather interesting revelations.

In the August session, the “speaker” of the Annamite Chamber declared:

We have no office to work in, no budget, nothing. Last year, we did not even have the opportunity for discussion. Of our hundreds of demands, not one has been realized.

The representatives themselves do not have the right to speak; how, under these conditions, can they help others? But the people—believing that we have the right to participate in all matters concerning the country—expect a lot from us... We, whose dignity has been completely destroyed by the bulletin of the colonial government last February, cannot accomplish any work. What a shame and what a pity!

With the means of repression at the government’s disposal, which have been put into action at every occasion, peace and order should prevail. However, this is not the case and unrest continues unabated. Many Annamites are persecuted, searched, arrested, and imprisoned for having read newspapers authorized by the censors. The entire family of a man who has committed no other crime than to have spoken at a public meeting is being punished. Children, who were absent from school only once, were expelled and condemned to ignorance for the rest of their lives... For remaining faithful to the interests of the people, some representatives have been publicly insulted.

The Superior Resident gave an exquisite response. He outlined the program of the colonial government, a program that can be summarized as follows: “Annamites let yourselves be sheared like sheep!” and said:

Following the government’s clear and unambiguous declaration, if you are reluctant to approve it or if you oppose it without a fundamental reason, the government will be permitted to believe that you are not interested in the future of this country... You know that in order to achieve civilization and progress, it is necessary to have discipline and respect for the established authorities.

FAMINE, CHOLERA, TAXES, ETC....

Indochina is rapidly depopulated by famine, cholera and... French imperialism.

The number of deaths greatly exceeds the number of births. Infant mortality is frightening. Let’s quote as an example the city of Haiphong. The statistics of July 1927 tell us that there were 147 births in this city among Annamites, of which 81 were boys and 66 were girls. For the same period, there were 204 deaths, including 84 children. Out of 147 newborns, only 63 were alive!

To clearly prove that the high mortality among the Annamites is due to poverty, let us compare the statistics concerning births and deaths among foreigners and natives living in the same city. For the Europeans, there are 8 births against 3 deaths, including 1 child. For the Chinese, there are 22 births against 23 deaths, including 6 children.

The provinces of Quảng Bình, Quảng Trị, Huế, Quảng Nam and Quảng Ngãi (Central Annam) are all ravaged by cholera. The population is panic stricken. At the beginning of August, every day, hundreds of patients were transported to the hospital of Huế. In the same month, the province of Quảng Nam alone had already more than 7,000 victims.

And that’s not all. The scorching heat dried out the rice before its seeds had been able to form. At the same time as it threatened to bring famine, this violent heat intensified the plague. In addition, Tonkin was ravaged by starvation resulting from the flood. In order to protect the French in Hanoi from getting wet, when the Tonkin region was flooded, the colonial administration had the Gia Lâm dike on the opposite side of Hanoi destroyed to funnel the water in that direction. This was done without warning the natives, and about 20,000 Annamites were thus drowned by the French administration!

After the floods, the Annamites of the Center and the South organized collections to help their unfortunate compatriots. The French authority diverted most of this money and put it into the fund for the revaluation of the French franc! Although the donations in kind were very numerous, the authority distributed only two and a half kilograms of rice per head and per month to the victims!

In Tonkin alone, there are 155 large concessions, with more than 200 hectares belonging to the French. Of these concessions, 11 cover more than 500 hectares, 4 more than 600, 5 more than 700, 1 more than 800, 5 more than 900, 9 more than 1,100, 7 from 1,200 to 1,500, 2 from 1,500 to 2,500, 3 from 3,150 to 3-750, 1 more than 4,100, 1 more than 5,500, 1 more than 6,900, 1 more than 7,500, and 1 more than 8,515.

In addition, 34 mining concessions not only own the mines but also the land surrounding them, of which 7 cover 800 to 1,500 hectares, 8 cover 1,500 to 2,900 hectares, 1 covers more than 3,000 hectares, 2 cover 3,600 to 4,900 hectares, 1 covers more than 6,100 hectares, 3 cover 13,000 to 13,800 hectares, 1 covers more than 18,000 hectares, 1 covers more than 22,000 hectares, and 1 covers more than 25,000 hectares.

This leaves very little space for the Annamites. In spite of all this and in spite of the fact that the country is devastated by various calamities, the French continue to increase taxes. The budget of Tonkin will be increased from 18,017,180 to 18,200,670 piasters. Such is the regime of French imperialism in Indochina.

N. K.

Letter From India

March 17, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 28.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 350-352.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Prior to the arrival of the Simon Commission,²⁶⁶ the government of India enacted Section 144 of the Criminal Code prohibiting demonstrations, processions, leaflets, and posters aimed at organizing a hartal (a general strike and national mourning) and a boycott of the commission.

School principals announced that any student absent from school during the hartal would be severely punished.

All the military and police forces were mobilized; provocateurs were sent everywhere to praise the commission and discredit the hartal.

In response to these provocations, the All India Congress²⁶⁷ issued a call for students and employees to leave their schools and offices, for workers to stop working, for hotels, restaurants, theaters and cinemas to close their doors, for all citizens to attend the hartal's meetings carrying black flags, and for all houses to be decorated with the national flag.

Not only the more advanced organizations, but also the bourgeois organizations, such as the insurance companies, the merchants' guilds, the Chambers of Commerce, etc., responded to this call.

The women of Madras met in Gokhale and issued an appeal ending with the words: "We must show the world that the Nation is united, that only complete independence is capable of satisfying it."

²⁶⁶ The Simon Commission was composed of seven members of the British Parliament with the goal of introducing constitutional reforms to grant a form of self-governance to India. The Indian nationalist movement called to boycott and protest against it, as the British refused to allow any Indian to be part of the Commission. Moreover, the movement was struggling for independence; self-governance was therefor seen as insufficient.

²⁶⁷ The Indian National Congress—founded in 1885, it was one of the first organizations struggling for independence. Gandhi became its leader and main figure in 1924.

When the members of the commission disembarked on February 3, they were received by a huge crowd carrying black flags and red banners that said: “Simon, go home!” and “Down with British imperialism!”

In the city, the traffic came to a standstill and the workers deserted the factories to gather in the streets in protest. They all converged on Foras Road in an enormous meeting where the effigies of Baldwin, Simon, and Macdonald were burned.

Despite the principals’ threats, 10,000 students gathered and demonstrated. The police took action. More than 80 people were injured, several of them seriously, and about 100 protesters were arrested.

In Bombay, Madras, Ahmedabad, etc., all schools were closed and all work stopped. Rallies of up to 50,000 people took place in the major urban centers. Several defensive lines of military and armed police forces were set up to protect the strategic points in the cities, and armored cars patrolled the streets. In Madras, the police fired on the protesters, killing two and injuring twenty.

The judges of the Madras court were forced to suspend their sessions. The government’s advisor, who was traveling by car, was arrested, and his car was tipped over and then set on fire.

Never—even during the heyday of the Gandhi-led non-cooperation movement—has the national spirit of the country been so inflamed. Dr. Besant,²⁶⁸ a septuagenarian Englishwoman who had become an enthusiastic Hindu nationalist, very active in the nationalist movement and much beloved by Hindus, made a resounding appeal: “Children of India! Rise up and unite! Your motherland needs you all!”

This powerful movement forced Simon and his Labour Party colleagues to back down. As soon as he arrived, the chairman of the commission issued a manifesto, calling for a “Joint Free Conference.” But the Hindu leaders responded categorically: “We will have no part in the Simon Commission, at any time and in any form.” On the other hand, Mr. Kale, a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, passed a motion urging the governor to let the British government know that “the Council has no confidence in the Simon Commission and wishes to have no connection with it.”

At a major meeting, the general secretary of the Bombay provincial committee of the All Indian Congress, proposed as a program of action:

²⁶⁸ Annie Besant (1847-1933), a British socialist. She joined the Indian National Congress and was elected its president in 1917.

- a) Boycott of goods;
- b) Organization of the country's youth;
- c) Refusal to pay the increase in property taxes;
- d) Organizing the people's army and the volunteer corps;
- e) In case of war, not a man, not a penny for England!

WANG

The Labor Movement in India

April 14, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 37.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 356-358.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

According to the statistics of 1921, there were 105,510,858 men and women employed in agriculture in India. 346,349 were active in mining, 16,728,373 in industry and 5,819,375 in commerce. According to the “Factory Inspection Report” of 1923, there were at that time, 1,418,000 workers employed in the factories compared to 1,270,000 in 1921.

The bulk of the agricultural proletariat is employed in the industrial plantations (coffee, rubber, and indigo plantations: 382,300 workers; tea plantations: 695,100; cotton plantations: 2,875,122; other textile plantations: 15,672,372).

Wages are very low. A skilled worker in the textile industry earns 29 rupees (250 francs) per month. A female worker performing the same task receives only half that amount. The working day is very long. The miners work more than 12 hours a day.

The hygienic conditions, both in the factories and in the workers’ lodgings, are appalling. Often there were six families with a total of 30 people living in a single worker’s house measuring five meters long and four meters wide!

Of the 130 million workers, about 3,500,000 are organized. Most trade unions are controlled by the English Labour Party. Here are some recent examples of this harmful influence: at the annual meeting of the Indian Trades Union Congress,²⁶⁹ held in Cawnpore in December 1927, the question of affiliation of this Congress to the Anti-Imperialist League was put on the agenda. However, several English Labour leaders who were present at the congress managed to have the question postponed “to a later date.” Mr. Joshi,²⁷⁰ presi-

²⁶⁹ All India Trade Union Congress, founded in 1920, is the oldest trade-union in India. Since 1945, it has been officially affiliated to the Communist Party of India.

²⁷⁰ N. M. Joshi (1879-1955), one of the founder of the AITUC, and its general secretary from 1925 to 1929. In opposition to its line, he left the union in 1931, before joining it again few

dent of the Bombay Trade Union, refused to support the recent textile workers' strike on the grounds that these workers were not members of his union and that they had gone on strike without consulting him first.

In spite of the workers' inorganization and the cowardice of the reformists, poverty itself took care of radicalizing the Hindu proletariat. In 1926, 130 strikes were held involving 131,655 strikers. In 1927, there were 128 strikes with 186,811 strikers. Even though in 1927 there were fewer strikes than in 1926, the number of strikers was much higher (55,156 more) and the number of working days lost in 1927 was double the number of those lost in 1926.

The year 1928 began with a strong upsurge in the labor movement. Apart from the political strikes against the Simon Commission, these are the struggles of a purely economic nature that took place during the first six weeks of the year: January 10, a strike involving 22,000 textile workers in Bombay; January 22, a strike of 400 Nagpur railroad workers; January 24, a strike organized by the metal workers of Shalimar demanding a wage increase; January 31, a strike of 700 workers of the Calcutta railroads for the same reason; February 2, a strike of the Rangoon cab drivers against a new tax imposed by the British governor; February 14, a strike of 2,500 dock workers in Rangoon; February 16, a strike of 8,000 workers of the Koh-i-noor factory in Bombay; February 17, a strike of 1,700 factory workers in Dhariwal.

Here are some very interesting features of the Bombay textile workers' strike: the Tariff Board recommended the improvement of the workers' situation as an indispensable condition for the improvement of production. This recommendation was not motivated by humanitarian concerns, but by the fact that the Tariff Board wanted to paralyze the competition of the Bombay manufacturers to the benefit of the Manchester manufacturers. For their part, the employers wanted to make the workers believe that they were trying to increase national production out of patriotism so as to be able to compete with English imports, and that the workers should therefore also be patriotic and accept only 32 rupees a month instead of the 38 rupees they had been asking for.

Just like the English Labour Party, the Hindu Labour Party betrayed the strikers by preaching "industrial peace." But the workers mocked both the self-interested "patriotism" of the employers and the "peace" advocated by the reformists. They refused to submit to the rationalization program because it

years later and again becoming the general secretary from 1940 to 1948.

would throw 15,000 of their own people onto the street. Only the workers' and peasants' party energetically supported the strikers and, through its propaganda for the general strike, won over more and more workers as they understood it to be the only way to defeat the employers.

WANG

The Peasants of India

April 18, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 38.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 359-362.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

More than 230 million Hindus, i.e. 75% of the population, belong to the peasantry living in the 685,000 villages of India. 70% of the cultivable land belongs to large and medium-sized landowners, who constitute less than one third of the peasantry, while 90 million peasants own absolutely nothing.

The largest landowners are the Maharajahs or feudal lords. Next in line are the Talukdars (hereditary high officials), the Sardars (military leaders), and the Zamindars (large agrarians). In order to be able to exploit and oppress the peasantry more efficiently, they embraced English imperialism, which gave them the most extensive economic rights.

Immensely rich and profoundly reactionary, these landowners form a bloc whose leadership is in the hands of the Maharajahs. They are a faithful ally and a strong supporter of imperialism. Recently, one of the agrarian leaders issued an appeal advising the landlords to unite more closely in order to conquer the whole political apparatus of the country while remaining under the “protection” of England. At the Bengal, Assam, and Orissa Landlords’ Conference (January 2, 1928), it was decided to support the Simon Commission, to call for the formation of two legislative assemblies instead of the present one, and that the upper house should be composed of landlords only. In his speech, the president of the conference complained that the political rights that had been granted to the Hindus were too extensive and that they “allowed landless individuals to introduce socialist and communist elements into the legislation.”

In 1919, Mrs. Annie Besant²⁷¹ wrote that “half of the peasant population of India has only one meal a day; a meal which, on top of that, is insufficient.” The state of affairs has not changed since then, as the economic situation of the Hindus, instead of improving, is getting worse every day. In May 1927, Dr.

²⁷¹ See footnote 268, p. 382.

Hardikar²⁷² presented the following comparative table of per capita income: United States, 1,116 rupees; England, 696; France, 546; Germany, 468; India, 15.

This extreme poverty of the peasants is due to the lack of land, to the heavy taxes that strip the peasants of up to 75% of what they produce, and to the expansion of industrial crops at the expense of cereal crops. In 1925, there were only 32,968,000 hectares of rice as opposed to 10,645,000 hectares of cotton, 287,000 hectares of tea, and 1,025,000 hectares of sugarcane. It can be seen that one third of the land is devoted exclusively to crops relevant only to British industry and commerce.

Besides the exploitation by the English and native owners, the Hindu peasants are cruelly exploited by the Sahukars, or usurers, who demand up to 146 rupees for a loan of 30 rupees made before the harvest.

Famine is permanent. From 1854 to 1901, more than 28,825,000 peasants died of hunger! In the last three months of 1918 alone, over 7 million Hindus died of influenza. Those who did not die of hunger migrated to the cities where they formed the “ragged proletariat” who try to survive by begging. In 1927, more than 250 beggars were found starving to death in the streets of Bombay. In the same year, Mr. Humanthro, a Hindu philanthropist, reported the following figures on the villages he visited: Of the 79 families in Sagam, only 3 people remained in the village. Of the 811 inhabitants of the village of Madras, only 413 remained. In Onankanmaldini, out of 60 inhabitants, only 3 remained; in Kengal, out of 200, only 40; in Katagur, out of 500, only 125; in Vuradji, out of 450, only 200 and in Khajal, out of 50, only 5.

These unfortunate people had deserted their villages not only because of famine, but also to escape the pressure of the Sahukars, landlords, and tax collectors.

Although scantily or not organized, the peasants—crushed by their poverty—often revolt against their exploiters. From 1792 to 1921, in Malabar alone, 36 peasant revolts took place. The revolts of 1841, 1844, 1849, 1896, and 1921 were particularly resounding.

²⁷² N. S. Hardikar (1889-1975), member of the Indian National Congress and founder of the Seva Dal, the militant wing of the Congress. The Dal was described as a “peaceful militia,” as it was organized militaristically but was also committed to the civil disobedience line of the Congress.

The peasants of Prome (Burma) organized themselves into Wunthanu Rakkhita, or peasant associations, whose stated purpose was to fight against alcohol, gambling, and crime. Following the anti-tax movement of 1925, the Wunthanu were banned. But despite the ban, they continued to exist clandestinely, and at the end of 1927 the Wunthanu of Padinbin District began to refuse to pay taxes. The government sent military forces against the resistance fighters. Two peasants were killed and several injured.

After the events in Padinbin, the government dissolved 11 other peasant associations and secret societies. Despite the repression, the agitation against the state tax continues in Burma and extends throughout India proper. The peasants of Alibag (Maharashtra District) simply refused to pay. On January 10, 500 delegates to the Yubulpote sharecroppers' conference voted for a resolution against the Simon Commission and the recent tax increase. On February 4, the Surat Conference of small landowners adopted the same resolution.

The *Malvatta*, a very influential weekly newspaper published in Poona, has recommended general resistance. In its issue of February 12, 1928, it wrote: "If all the oppressed peasants of all the districts gather in a united front against the government, it will be possible to bring the latter to reason about its agrarian policy."

Let us add that the Peasant and Workers Party includes the following demands in its agrarian program: the right of the peasants to use the land and the nationalization of the land!

WANG

The Exploitation of Women and Children in India

April 21, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 39.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

According to 1921 statistics, the economy employs 33,410,903 women, of whom 11,692 are active in mining, 3,043,001 in industry, and 242,406 in commerce.

The Factory Inspection Report indicates that there are only 221,000 women working in the factories themselves, while the rest work at home. In the industrial plantations, women workers are grouped as follows: tea plantations, 310,100; rubber and indigo, 602,775; textiles, 5,040,000; cotton, 1,172,168.

To be hired, the female worker is often obliged to offer three months of her salary to the recruiting agent. The rules of the factories are very strict. If, for example, she is absent for one day, two days' wages are withheld. If she does not collect her salary on the day set by the management, it is reduced by 5%. In Ahmedabad, the bosses offer advance payments at a rate of 150% interest!

An unskilled worker, even if she works deep in the mines, gets only 6 pence a day. The 1923 labor laws set the working day for women at 11 hours a day in the factories and 60 hours a week in the mines (54 hours for those at the bottom of the mine). According to the reports of the Inspection, only 43% of the companies respected this legislation. In order to "save on the time spent getting in and out of the mine," women are often left for 30 consecutive hours at the bottom of the mines. In the plantations, women work 14 to 16 hours a day. Some members of the House of Representatives had proposed to ban the employment of women in the mines, but the owners protested, saying that it was "more egalitarian to have a mixed staff than to have only men!" In the cities, the proportion of the proletariat in relation to the total population is very large.

Imperialist capitalism not only exploits Hindu women as mere working flesh, but also as meat for pleasure, and this in a most despicable way. The English imperialists impose *forced prostitution* in the colony. We will limit

ourselves to what was written on this subject in the *Lansbury Labour Weekly* (June 1926):

We call upon our readers, whether priests or moralists, to pay attention to the revolting conditions imposed upon the women of India by the Christian and civilized whites governing that country. In order for our white men to enjoy what is known in this country (England) as a vice, there are in Bombay, semi-prisons guarded by the police and operated by the British, in which 900 non-English women are kept for the use of the whites. This is done in broad daylight... This state of affairs is known to our pastors and teachers, to all who are in the India Office. And this is not only tolerated, but also protected by them.

This is the state of “western civilization!”

Because of the poor material, moral, and physical conditions of the mother, the Hindu child suffers before being born. As soon as he is given birth, he tastes the “benefits” of the capitalist-imperialist regime. Before going to the factory or to the plantation and in order to “tranquilize” the babies left alone in the filthy houses, the workers administer opium to them. According to the newspaper, 98% of the children are poisoned in this way! Because of the lack of maternal care and food, the absorption of opium, and the poisoned air of the slums, the infants die as quickly as flies. The infant mortality rate is frightening. The Bombay Health Office reports that for every 1000 children born, about 666 die before the age of one. But in the working-class neighborhoods, the mortality rate is even higher.

The children who survive this painful selection process are forced to work from the age of 6 or 7. They work in the mines, factories and plantations for 8 to 10 hours a day. Their daily wage is 4 pence. The cotton plantations alone employ 18,087 children. Although the 1923 legislation sets a 30-hour work week for children, 57% of the companies force them to work much longer. Needless to say, these poor kids have no fun and receive no education.

WANG

The Recent Labor and Peasant Movement in India

May 5, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 43.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 363-366.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In India, as in the other colonies, English imperialism seeks to divide the proletariat by constantly stoking up racial prejudices. Thus, lucrative jobs are reserved for Englishmen and Anglo-Hindu Creoles. In the electricity factories, the latter earn 15 rupees a day; they have luxurious and free housing, while the Hindu workers receive only 14 annas to 1.5 rupees a day and do not enjoy free housing. In the railroad sector, an Englishman or Creole gets up to 7 rupees a day, while a Hindu laborer earns only 8 annas and a craftsman 13 annas a day. The English and Creole employees, apart from their high salaries, have schools, gardens, and cooperatives provided by the government and companies, which Hindus are not allowed to enter, while Hindu office workers are paid only 10 to 20 rupees per month.

In exchange for these privileges, the English and Anglo-Hindu employees collaborate with the employers against the native workers. The bloody events of last March vividly illustrate the anti-proletarian attitude of this labor aristocracy: the English and Creole employees of the Liluah Railway actively cooperated with the armed police in murdering five strikers who were quietly picketing.

But the Hindu workers are fighting tirelessly against imperialist intrigues and racial prejudices. Their battle front is growing stronger every day, as the numerous struggles of the last few days reveal.

On February 21, 400 electrician workers of the Jamshedpur ironworks went on strike to demand a wage increase. They demanded 5 rupees per day instead of the 14 to 25 annas they currently earn.

On March 5, following the dismissal of six workers for trade union activity, 14,000 workers of the Lilloah railway went on a slowdown strike which, on the 8th, turned into an effective strike. The strikers demanded the reemployment of their former comrades, a 25% wage increase and trade union freedom. It

should be remembered that the Union of Railway Workers, which had existed for ten years, has yet to be recognized by the government and the companies. On March 7, 10,000 municipal workers went on strike demanding 30 rupees per month instead of the 14 rupees they were currently earning.

On March 9, 2,500 workers of the Ludlog cotton factories went on strike because one of their workers had been beaten up by a superintendent.

On March 15, 900 workers of the Parel factory (Bombay) went on strike for a wage increase.

On March 10, there was a conference of postal workers in Madras. At present these workers earn only 16 to 20 rupees per month. Their housing conditions are terrible, while the privileged employees, the English and Creoles, receive princely salaries and have comfortable housing. The Madras postal workers demand that their wages be raised to 30 and 40 rupees per month. It should be noted that a rural mailman who covers up to 60 villages and who walks 30 km every day, receives only 16 rupees per month.

On March 19, the tramway workers of Madras, meeting at a dedicated conference, demanded an increase in wages and protested against the companies who, in dismissing the workers, do not refund the deposit of money which the worker is obliged to pay in order to be hired.

On March 22, the Bombay Provincial Trade-Union Congress, representing 30,000 organized workers, met in Damodar. Several resolutions were adopted. They demanded: the eight-hour day, the introduction of a minimum wage, weekly payments, social security for unemployment, sickness, maternity and old age, improvement of workers' housing, abolition of the system of fines and wage deductions for causing damage to tools and equipment, and the release of workers arrested for trade union activity. The Congress discussed the possibility of replacing the trade unions with industrial unions. From the political point of view, the congress declared itself to be against the war and against the repressive laws. The Congress also considered organizing a labor party to defend the political rights of the workers.

Such workers' struggles are all too natural if one thinks about the extremely miserable situation of the Hindu proletariat. Here is a comparative table showing the per capita income in different countries, drawn up by Dr. Hardikar in May 1927: United States, 1,116 rupees; England, 696; France, 546; Germany, 468; India, 15.

One of the most serious ailments of the Hindu proletariat is the housing problem.

According to the report of the president of the Union of Municipal Workers of Madras, more than 10,000 workers of this city spend their nights in stables or sheds, and the same is true for other cities. This economic misery is what makes the Hindus' lifespan so short. Here is the average comparative lifespan among different countries: England, 51.50; United States, 50; France, 48.5; Germany, 47.4; India 24.7. Mortality in India is greater than anywhere else: in the United States it is 12.9 per 1000; in England, 14.6; in Germany, 16.2 and in India 30!

The countryside is also becoming more and more outraged by this state of affairs. On February 15, in the Burmese House of Representatives, the colonial government proposed to send "special representatives" to those districts that were particularly vocal against the imposition of taxes. This proposal was rejected by 24 votes to 18. This defeat of the government caused a stir in the country, especially since the government was forced to admit that this measure had become necessary because 22 tax collectors had been assaulted by peasants in recent weeks.

In retaliation, the government banned 25 peasant and religious organizations and increased police presence in 44 districts.

On March 19, following the harsh treatment of one of their own, the coolies from the large tea plantation of Digguhargh revolted and beat up the overseers. This small event carries a great significance; the farm workers, who have been very docile and passive until now, are waking up and defending themselves. A sign of the times!

The movement against the imposition of taxes in Bardoli continues. Groups of volunteers are organized to defend the peasants threatened by foreclosure. The district police itself sympathizes with the peasants and has announced that it will not obey the government's orders for repression.

WANG

Imperialism Kills Native Races

May 19, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 47.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 367-371.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Since the end of the war, imperialism—in order to rebuild from its ruins—has doubled down on its colonial exploitation. Even small Belgium successfully follows the “glorious” example of its English, French, and other neighbors. *L’Essor Colonial et Maritime Belge* (14-7-27)²⁷³ writes about it with honesty: “Without Congo... what would have become of Belgium... no political horizon, no economic hope!” Indeed, Belgium has only one colony, and it’s Congo. But it knows how to take advantage of it to make appreciable profits for its economic, industrial, and commercial expansion: in 1924, the Belgian trade in Congo was 552 million francs. In 1925, it rose to more than 981 million.

Yet, Belgian imperialism is insignificant compared to French imperialism. According to Mr. Francois Marsal,²⁷⁴ in 1927 French trade in the colonies reached a figure four times higher than that of 1913! This figure is not exaggerated, since French colonial exploitation is expanding very rapidly from year to year, as the following figures prove:

Special trade in French West Africa (in millions of francs):

921	556
1922	500
1923	917
1924	1,347
1925	1,912

²⁷³ *L’Essor colonial et maritime* was a weekly magazine about Belgian Congo and French African colonies.

²⁷⁴ Frédéric François-Marsal (1874-1958) was a military man who rose to the rank of captain in Indochina and became a politician following the end of the First World War. He served briefly as the Minister of Finances in 1924. In the 1930s, he was convicted of tax fraud and forced to retire from political life.

Special trade with other colonies
(first 10 months, in millions)

	1925	1926
Algeria	3,153	4,804
Tunisia	761	1,244
Morocco	825	1,270
Madagascar	471	372
Indochina	1,162	1,934
Other colonies	1,152	1,300

England, Italy, and the other colonizing countries act in the same way toward their colonies.

In addition to this prosperity acquired at their expense, the natives are crushed by innumerable taxes, by forced labor, and by other means of exploitation (land grabbing, forced consumption of alcohol and opium), which depopulate entire colonies.

It is a known fact that forced labor is practiced in all French, Belgian, English and other colonies. The French call it “*corvée*”; the Belgians “*forced labor*”; the English “*prestation*”; etc....

The Belgian newspaper quoted above admits itself that “in all colonies, forced labor is still seen and used as one of the necessary requirements of colonization. To say the contrary is either ignorance, hypocrisy or to be blind... as you prefer.”

In the House of Commons, Mr. Ormsby-Gore,²⁷⁵ Vice-Secretary of State in charge of the Colonies, declared that “native labor is required in Kenya, up to a maximum of 60 days a year, and that in English West Africa compulsory labor has been introduced for the construction of railroads.”

Mr. Léon Perrier,²⁷⁶ minister of the French Colonies, issues decrees to “accustom the natives to regular work... through education, encouragement, as well as *disciplinary sanctions!*”

²⁷⁵ William Ormsby-Gore, 4th Baron Harlech (1885-1964), was a British conservative and was the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (1922-1929). He was the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1936 to 1938.

²⁷⁶ Léon Perrier (1873-1948), French Minister of Colonies from 1925 to 1928.

This is not all. Colonel Olsen and General Huyghe, two Belgian military heroes, propose to supervise 10,000 Congolese workers under the military command of white leaders!

For the sake of accuracy, let us recall that the League of Nations also approves the practice of forced labor. Here is the press release of the International Labor Office (June 1927):

A committee of experts on indigenous labor is currently convened at the International Labor Office to examine the problem of forced Native labor. It has made a study of the principles set forth in a preliminary report prepared by the ILO *for the regulation of forced labor in cases where it cannot be eliminated.*

How are the indigenous people treated when forced to work?

Let us listen to the confessions of the Europeans themselves: In a letter addressed to the Association of Colonial Interests (October, 1928), the Belgian Minister of the Colonies writes:

You know that much remains to be done as regards the treatment of blacks employed by private individuals; many companies have not yet done what is necessary to ensure a minimum of material well-being for their workforce; wages are unfortunately insufficient, food, housing, hygiene, etc. leave much to be desired.

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Pastor Owen states that a system of outright slavery has been imposed in Kenya; that the natives have been forced to walk hundreds of miles to carry out their forced labor. He provides facts and figures.

In October 1922, [he writes] I met 471 Natives—421 of whom were women (many of them pregnant), small boys, and girls. They are forced to walk 30 miles a day to provide the Administration with grass. They receive half a penny to two pence a day.

In August 1924, he met other natives forced to carry out the same chores, but this time without receiving any pay.

The forced labor and the consequences that result from it cause a frightening mortality rate in all the colonies. In the French colonies, such as St. Pierre and Miquelon, the New Hebrides, etc., the native race is at the point of extinction.

The *Times* admits that since 1874, when Fiji came under English rule, the decrease of the native population is considerable. The same newspaper (December 17, 1927) writes that the native population of Northern Australia is threatened with rapid extinction and that formerly populous tribes have totally disappeared, decimated by opium.

Prince Leopold of Belgium²⁷⁷ has also admitted that the Congolese race is threatened with extinction. And probably without intending to, has blamed Belgian colonization for this.

Before our arrival, [he wrote to the Colonial Congress] the Negro almost never migrated. Diseases such as sleeping sickness, were local phenomena and exercised their ravages only in restricted areas.

By necessity, we have forced the native to move... contagious diseases, once found within a localized area, have spread throughout the entire colony causing devastation that is all the more violent because there is no means to provide immunization... To these diseases, the Negro, being naturally poorly nourished, was able to offer only a weak resistance, and *the whole race suffered from it*. Moreover, collective work has led to the concentration of the natives in conditions of hygiene that... the employers have not always been able to make very favorable.

The prince ends his letter with this advice:

Let us not lose sight of the fact that the history of certain colonizations shows us that *entire native populations have died out upon contact with white civilization*.

We can conclude that all imperialist forms of colonization are destructive to the indigenous races and that in order to save the latter, imperialism must be brought down!

WANG

²⁷⁷ Leopold II of Belgium (1835-1909), colonized and personally owned the Congo Free State. When founded in 1876, Congo's population was estimated at 20 million. At his death, it was estimated at 8 million. In 1890 George Washington Williams, an American historian, described Leopold II's policies as crimes against humanity, marking one of the first uses of the term in history.

French Colonialism and Indochina

May 26, 1928

Source: *La Correspondence Internationale*, Vol. VIII, No. 49.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 2, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 374-376.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Of all the French colonies, Indochina is the largest and richest, with 710,000 square kilometers, its population of 20 million and its 4 billion in annual trade.

The Indochinese are also the most exploited and crushed by taxes that increase every year:

1913:	57,000,000	piastres (rounded numbers)
1915:	62,000,000	—
1917:	70,000,000	—
1920:	84,000,000	—
1922:	87,000,000	—
1924:	89,000,000	—
1926:	91,500,000	—

Aside from these taxes, the Indochinese are also forced to pay various contributions: 32,300,000 francs for mining expenses, 700,000 francs for aeronautics (1927), etc....

French imperialism claims that by exploiting us brings us education and democracy.

For 20 million inhabitants, in 1926 Indochina had only 3,395 schools with fewer than 214,000 students. Meanwhile, the Indochinese—on their own initiative—have organized 6,751 schools with 99,800 students. However, the colonial government does everything possible to hinder this educational movement: it often closes down these private schools or forbids the Native people to organize new ones. So much for education.

And here's its "democracy": a Native primary school teacher gets 555 francs and a native secondary teacher 1,200 francs per month, while a French primary

school teacher gets 3,750 francs and a French secondary teacher 6,000 francs per month, and that without including all the various allowances granted only to French teachers.

Some more figures: a French second lieutenant earns 62,244 francs; a lieutenant, 77,844 francs; a captain, 93,444 francs; and a Resident of Tonkin, 234,000 francs per year (without allowances). A native agricultural worker earns from 400 to 500 francs per year.

Imperialist domination does not only bring obscurantism, inequality and exploitation, but also terror and espionage. In France, it is said that Indochina has never been so prosperous and calm. However, the prisons of Indochina are overpopulated and censorship is permanent.

Here is an extract of two official orders concerning censorship:

I order you... to work with the post receivers to set up the surveillance of all correspondences or writings, in view of their possible interception.

This order, given to the police, was signed by the superior Resident of Cambodia and dates from July 24, 1925.

Another order, sent on October 17, 1926, invites the provincial chiefs or their delegates to cooperate with the police in this same task and gives them authority to “enter mail sorting rooms to assist in the opening of the mail.”

Deprived of freedom to organize and travel, to speak and write, the Indochinese are gagged and watched, yet French imperialism still trembles to maintain its domination. It is afraid that the revolution will come from the outside, and entrusted the socialist Varenne²⁷⁸ with the task of “warding off evil.” And, oh my god! This member of the Second International did his best to deserve the confidence of his masters. Let us listen to his confession, published under his signature in the *Capital* of February 21, 1928:

The way to ward off danger is to anticipate it. That is what I did. I put the border in a state of defense. When I arrived, our manpower was half of what it was before the war, our supplies were notoriously inadequate, the borders were poorly equipped. In agreement with the government, I did everything I could to improve, in the shortest possible time, this precarious situation. Even before I left for Indochina, ammunition was already leaving

²⁷⁸ Alexandre Varenne (1870-1947), a social-democrat of the SFIO.

France, followed soon by equipment, and later, reinforcements. As soon as I arrived, we worked in a hurry to equip the Chinese border. Thanks to that, we can today methodically prepare for a definitive military organization under the shelter of a solid cover.

Mr. Varenne forgot to add that he also sold some of this ammunition to the Chinese militarists of Yunnan, his allies.²⁷⁹

In spite of these socialist-imperialist precautions, misery and exploitation will inevitably push the Indochinese to revolution, in order to shake off the abominable yoke of French imperialism.

WANG

²⁷⁹ Varenne sold 7,000 rifles and 7 million rounds of ammunition to Long Yun, a warlord who led the Yunnan clique. Of this \$350,000 sale, Varenne received 30%. Anthony B. Chan documented the history of this trade in *Arming the Chinese: The Western Armaments Trade in Warlord China, 1920-28*.

Vow in Honor of Trần Hưng Đạo²⁸⁰

1928

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 93.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

To the soul of Diên Hồng,²⁸¹ we swear faithfully
To drive our united people
to fight with self-abnegation!
Whoever tries to dominate our Vietnamese lands
will attempt to exterminate its inhabitants.
Let him be sure that as long as a single Vietnamese remains,
With him subsists
the Vietnamese mountains and waters...

²⁸⁰ Trần Hưng Đạo (1228–1300), an illustrious Vietnamese general of the 13th century, defeated the Mongol invaders, descendants of Genghis Khan. Later he became a national hero among the Vietnamese community in Siam.

²⁸¹ Diên Hồng Conference: popular assembly convened by King Trần Nhân Tông in 1284 to galvanize national unity in the war of resistance against the Mongols. Diên Hồng spirit: spirit of national unity, of struggle for the salvation of the fatherland.

Appeal Made on the Occasion of the Founding of the Communist Party of Indochina²⁸²

February 18, 1930

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 20-22.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 145-148.

Workers, peasants, soldiers, youth and students!
Oppressed and exploited compatriots!
Sisters and brothers! Comrades!

Imperialist contradictions were the cause of the 1914-1918 World War. After this horrible slaughter, the world was divided into two camps: One is the revolutionary camp, including the oppressed colonies and the exploited working class throughout the world. The vanguard force of this camp is the Soviet Union. The other is the counter-revolutionary camp of international capitalism and imperialism whose general staff is the League of Nations.

During this World War, various nations suffered untold losses in property and human lives. The French imperialists were the hardest hit. Therefore, in order to restore the capitalist forces in France, the French imperialists have resorted to every underhand scheme to intensify their capitalist exploitation in Indochina. They set up new factories to exploit the workers with low wages. They plundered the peasants' land to establish plantations and drive them to utter poverty. They levied many heavy taxes. They imposed public loans upon our people. In short, they reduced us to wretchedness. They increased their military forces, firstly to strangle the Vietnamese revolution, secondly to

²⁸² The Communist Party of Indochina founded on February 3, 1930, was the outcome of the unified conference convened in Hong Kong by the Communist International. This historic Conference merged the three communist groups in the three parts of Việt Nam (North, Center and South) into a single Communist Party. Hồ Chí Minh was charged by the Communist International to attend the Conference. Basing itself on Hồ Chí Minh's proposals, the Conference approved of the general political thesis on the revolutionary line in Việt Nam at that stage and decided: To unify the Party, to name the Communist Party of Indochina, to draft the Party's political program and constitution, and the statutes of various mass organizations, and appoint the Party's Provisional Central Committee.

prepare for a new imperialist war in the Pacific aimed at capturing new colonies, thirdly to suppress the Chinese revolution, fourthly to attack the Soviet Union because the latter helps the revolution of the oppressed nations and the exploited working class. World War Two will break out. When it breaks, the French imperialists certainly drive our people to a more horrible slaughter. If we give them a free hand to prepare for this war, suppress the Chinese revolution and attack the Soviet Union, if we give them a free hand to stifle the Vietnamese revolution, it is tantamount to giving them a free hand to wipe our race off the earth and drown our nation in the Pacific.

However the French imperialists' barbarous oppression and ruthless exploitation have awakened our compatriots, who have all realized that revolution is the only road to life, without it they will die out piecemeal. This is the reason why the Vietnamese revolutionary movement has grown ever stronger with each passing day: The workers refuse to work, the peasants demand land, the pupils strike, the traders boycott. Everywhere the masses have risen to oppose the French imperialists.

The Vietnamese revolution has made the French imperialists tremble with fear. On the one hand, they utilize the feudalists and comprador bourgeois in our country to oppress and exploit our people. On the other, they terrorize, arrest, jail, deport and kill a great number of Vietnamese revolutionaries. If the French imperialists think that they can suppress the Vietnamese revolution by means of terrorist acts, they are utterly mistaken. Firstly, it is because the Vietnamese revolution is not isolated but enjoys the assistance of the world proletarian class in general and of the French working class in particular. Secondly, while the French imperialists are frenziedly carrying out terrorist acts, the Vietnamese Communists, formerly working separately, have now united into a single party, the Communist Party of Indochina, to lead our entire people in their revolution.

Workers, peasants, soldiers, youth, pupils!

Oppressed and exploited compatriots!

The Communist Party of Indochina is founded. It is the Party of the working class. It will help the proletarian class to lead the revolution in order to struggle for all the oppressed and exploited people. From now on we must join the Party, help it and follow it in order to implement the following slogans:

- 1— To overthrow French imperialism, feudalism and the reactionary Vietnamese capitalist class.

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- 2— To make Indochina completely independent.
 - 3— To establish a worker-peasant and soldier government.
 - 4— To confiscate the banks and other enterprises belonging to the imperialists and put them under the control of the worker-peasant and soldier government.
 - 5— To confiscate the whole of the plantations and property belonging to the imperialists and the Vietnamese reactionary capitalist class and distribute them to poor peasants.
 - 6— To implement the 8 hours working day.
 - 7— To abolish public loans and poll-tax. To waive unjust taxes hitting the poor people.
 - 8— To bring back all freedoms to the masses.
 - 9— To carry out universal education.
 - 10— To implement equality between man and woman.

NGUYEN AI QUOC

Letter to the Far Eastern Bureau²⁸³

February 12, 1931

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 73.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Dear Sir,

Three times, I sent you the sample of native goods,²⁸⁴ thru your Chinese correspondent. The last time was on Feb. 8th. I hope you received all of them.

My brothers²⁸⁵ from Saigon had many announced their arrival, but somehow or other, they did not come. This time, they assured me they will come to pass the New Year with us. My Nephews from Tonkin promised me the same thing. So, you see, we shall have quite a big New Year holidaying party,²⁸⁶ at least 9 or 10 people, at home. They may take the same opportunity to go to Shanghai.²⁸⁷ My wife is busy preparing to receive them.²⁸⁸

Did you inquire about the American Express Co.? I think that is the best way to send money to travelers.

Today, I am sending you some more sample from the Malay & Cochinchina firms, thru your Chinese friend also. Please, see that you get it.

With best greetings,

Your very sincerely,

VICTOR

²⁸³ This and the following letters are written with coded words. While an intelligence agent would have no difficulty reading between the lines, the phrasing here was chosen to pass through the censorship of regular police officers working in post offices.

²⁸⁴ Native goods, meaning reports of party activities.

²⁸⁵ Brothers, nephews, meaning comrades.

²⁸⁶ This possibly refers to the Second Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Việt Nam, which was held on March 12, 1931 in Saigon. At that time, the Central Committee had six members.

²⁸⁷ When writing this letter, Hồ Chí Minh was in Hong Kong. He left the following day for Shanghai.

²⁸⁸ Despite rumors, Hồ Chí Minh was never married and liked to joke that he was married to the revolution, thus calling his organization his “wife.”

Letter to the Far Eastern Bureau

February 16, 1931

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 74.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Dear Sir,

I hope you received all my letters and all the sample I sent thru your Chinese agent. This time I send some more sample thru my friend in Shanghai. Please, ask him.

I just received 2 copies of catalog in English from the Inprec & Co.²⁸⁹ I will receive more of that (in French) from my friend in Shanghai, and will send it to the Firms in Indochina.

I take this opportunity to tell you why the new directors of the Firm in Indochina are being so anxious to receive the letters promised? That is because they are new-comers to that country, they have not yet any influence upon the employees older in the house than them; furthermore, they have to reorganise every thing. Without directives and official backing from the Directory of our Principal Firm, it is difficult for them to influence the different branches. For the sake of the firms, I hope they should get these letters as soon as possible.²⁹⁰

Don't you think so too?

With best greetings,

Yours very sincerely

VICTOR²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Inprec & Co. refers to International Press Correspondence (Inprecor), the newspapers of the Communist International. It was published in English, French, and German.

²⁹⁰ This refers to the line struggle in the CPI between the younger generation of revolutionary and the older, of which Hồ Chí Minh was a part. Hồ Chí Minh is asking here for more intervention from the Comintern to settle the dispute.

²⁹¹ The pseudonym "Victor" is possibly a reference to Victor Hugo, who was one of Hồ Chí Minh's favorite novelists. In a 1946 interview, he joked that his love for Victor Hugo was a proof of how evil colonialism was if it could make him love a French author so much.

Letter to the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party

April 20, 1931

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 87-91.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The following contains my criticism of the regional assemblies of Annam and Tonkin.

- (A) **Convocation of the assemblies.** Prior to the opening of the assemblies, from the party members to the responsible leaders, no one has studied the questions to be dealt with. It was only when the assemblies were opened that the questions were addressed and as a result it has been impossible to discuss them clearly. The duration of the meetings was too long (in Annam 18 half-day sessions; in Tonkin 13 days!). In addition, the schedule of the meetings had not been properly prepared, which is why a lot of time was lost and everything could not be discussed. For the regional assembly of Tonkin, centers as important as Haiphong were not represented.
- (B) **Sessions.** In Tonkin, the discussions were not conducted in a concrete manner, but time was wasted on useless words. For example, the central committee was asked why it sometimes states “to” prepare the insurrection, and other times indicates “and” prepare the insurrection, etc. Because the party members had not previously studied these questions, the ideas discussed during the Assembly did not correspond to that of the majority of the party members. Moreover, at the time of the opening of the sessions, many comrades were tired or still absorbed by preoccupations. Few were active. That is why the opinions expressed in the sessions were only those of a minority within a minority.
- (C) **Ways of working.** In both assemblies the proposals were formulated in vague terms. As such, one does not understand how the resolutions of the Central Committee are to be implemented; one cannot see any proposal for a concrete plan directed to each region.

- (D) **Title of the Party.** The Annamese propose to wait until Cambodia and Laos are organized before incorporating them into the Party and changing the name of the Party. This shows that the comrades of Annam do not understand the directives of the Third International, which state that the Party must be composed of all the Indochinese proletarians, and do not understand that the task of the Party is to make it organize in Laos and Cambodia. Did the Central Committee print and distribute the directives of the Third International to the party members? Then why was the following question asked during the Tonkin Assembly: “the Central Committee told us to discuss the ‘directives’ but what directive are we talking about?”
- (E) **Power of the Party.** To understand the strength and weakness of the Party in Tonkin and Annam, we must refer to the following table:

	ICP Member- ship	ICP Cells	Communist Youth Member- ship	Trade- union Member- ship	Peasant Org. Mem- bership	Womens Org. Mem- bership
Nam Đán	170	21	341	“	10.040	452
Thanh Chương	273	27	78	“	10.077	232
Anh Sơn	123	18	35	“	4.35	62
Yên Dũng	11	15	“	“	3.022	“
Diễn Châu	54	2	“	“	345	“
Quỳnh Lưu	33	4	“	“	278	“
Vinh	185	8	“	312	“	“
Hưng Nguyên	55	9	“	“	2.032	70
Nghi Lộc	58	15	“	“	1.574	“
Hà Tĩnh	370	“	122	“	2	48
Quảng Trị	42	“	“	“	“	“
Quảng Nghĩa	69	“	“	“	1.2	“
Bình Định	40	“	“	“	100	“
Hải Phòng	37	9	8	101	“	“
Hạ Long	8	“	“	10	“	“
Nam Định	115	“	31	293	100	“
Phủ Lý	82	“	13	“	300	“
Thái Bình	40	8	14	“	270	“

Hải Dương	9	“	“	“	31	“
Hà Đông	13	“	“	“	51	“
Bắc Ninh	6	“	“	“	“	“
Hà Nội	36	“	“	“	“	“

It is clear from this table that:

In Annam:

- (1) The party organization exists in 13 Huyện²⁹² and Provinces. But the Communist Youth organization exists in only three Huyện. In one of the Huyện, it only accounts for 1/3 of that of the Party. In another Huyện it accounts for only 1/4.
- (2) Women are organized only in 5 Huyện: in one of the Huyện their number is 1/2 and in another, 1/9 of the number of party members.
- (3) Of these 13 Huyện or provinces in question five have very weak peasant organizations. In one of these localities, the number of organized peasants is two times the number of party members.
- (4) Trade unions exist in only one of these localities, but the agricultural workers are not organized anywhere.
- (5) In the region (in Annam), there are 16 provinces, but the organization exists in only 5 of them.
- (6) In the reports about Annam, it is not indicated how many women are members of the Party and how many are members of the peasant organizations.

The organization is extremely weak in Tonkin. In an industrial region like Tonkin, there are only two provinces with trade unions, 4 localities have youth organizations and 5 have peasant organizations; but all in all this is not nearly as much as the level of organization of a 4th class Huyện in Annam. In such an important political and economic center as Hanoi, there are no activists except a few leading comrades.

As for the “Anti-Imperialist League,” the “International Red Aid” and organizations for the unemployed, there are still no such organizations in either country (in Annam, there is a small section of International Red Aid).

²⁹² A Huyện is a rural district. Each province has an average of 9 to 10 Huyện.

I propose the following:

(A) The Party must:

- 1) Rectify the errors indicated above.
- 2) Establish a concrete plan of action for each Huyện and each province.
- 3) Dispatch party members (like the military dispatches its soldiers). Let those who are responsible for a region, or for any other work, be further required to draw up an action plan for each comrade of each grouping.
- 4) Committees must carefully supervise and monitor the implementation of these action plans.
- 5) It is of utmost importance to unify the “Communist Youth” and the unions and to ensure their independent development.

(B) The directives of the Third International and the resolutions of the Central Committee must be discussed by all party members and all party groups who are required to adopt resolutions based on the above-mentioned directives and decisions. These resolutions must be submitted to the Central Committee, which will forward them to the Third International. By doing this, the level of party experience of all members will be raised, all directives and resolutions will be efficiently implemented, the ideology and action of our party members will be unified, the Third International will get to know the revolutionary level of these party members, and the connection between the party groups and the Central Committee, and between the latter and the Third International will be firmly realized.

(1) Remember to send:

- 1) Reports from Cochinchina
- 2) Reports of the Central Committee Assembly
- 3) Reports on organization and labor unrest. I covered these three topics in my previous letter.

- (2) Our contact (Ducrot)²⁹³ has not yet returned by boat.
- (3) What ships navigating between Saigon and Singapore do you know of? Which people? Please provide details—it is of great importance.
- (4) I have heard that you know a Frenchman aboard a Maritime Communications ship, if that is indeed the case, let me know.
- (5) When you see a boat arriving, get on board; it is possible that one of our comrades is on the ship. Also: how are boats entering the port being reported up to now?
- (6) There is someone from “over there” (?) who has to return shortly. When you find a boat that sets sail for this destination (in the beginning of May) he will have to be taken on board. On board of the “General Metzinger” [one of the ships] there is Nghĩa, a launderer. It is possible that he has something for you. Don’t forget to ask him.

NGUYỄN ÁI QUỐC

²⁹³ Joseph Ducroux (1904-1980), a special envoy of the Comintern in Asia. Following Hồ Chí Minh’s request in his letter of February 16 (see p. 407), Ducroux met with Hồ Chí Minh in Hong Kong and was charged to meet with the leadership of the ICP. Subsequently, he returned to Hong Kong and left for Singapore. There, he was arrested and documents containing the address of Hồ Chí Minh were found on him, which led to Ho’s arrest on June 6, 1931.

Letter to the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party

April 23, 1931

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 92-95.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

1. In the last letter it was stated that the recently returned comrade has been Captain in the Chinese Red Army, in the area of “Đông Giang,” that he is a Party delegate, speaks the Chinese language well and is very well known (on matters of agitation) among the soldiers and the farmers.
2. Our comrade has not yet returned by boat; it is necessary to brief him (beforehand) on the Saigon-Singapore connection.
3. On the subject of the “Wong Shek Kung” it seems appropriate for me not to ask for Ly Pan anymore. I should only have relations with Tran Thiem. The ship stayed (in Saigon) for only one day. It is therefore necessary to be careful not to miss (the connection).
 - b. On board of the “Haldis” there is comrade Tong Pi Hung, second-deck crew member.²⁹⁴
 - c. The “Borneo” is no longer on duty (between Hong Kong and Saigon). Fu Sanh refuses to give his name. It is thus necessary to wait (to be in contact with him).
 - d. Do not forget to ask Nghía, the laundryman on board the “General Metzinger” [one of the ships] if there are letters and packages waiting for you.
4. For shipments (from Saigon to Hong Kong), tell the contact person to write clearly (the address) so that I can also ask him if he has received anything. The rest of us here will do the same thing.

²⁹⁴ There is no item a. in the original letter.

5. Vladimirof has arrived (in Hong Kong). If he does not arrive (in Indochina) by the same ship, he will get there later. You have to look for him on all the ships on which we have a contact. Blokof, Bourof, and Lianin moved to Singapore. We have written to them to invite them to return (to Indochina). Maizen, on arriving in Singapore, became frightened and ran away.
6. Don't all workplaces have conventional signs (that allow those on the inside to know if the police are about to enter)? Why do comrades continue to go to the workplaces that have been exposed, which got them arrested, such as print shops, "Vachza," Cho Map, etc.... Have you not been betrayed? Have the secret documents and the connection been discovered?
7. When there is money, each comrade should carefully keep part of it to avoid the loss of the entire treasury (for instance, when there's a police raid). Moreover, those who manage to escape will have something to live on.
8. We must find some way to put the important partisans out of reach, because if we let the better ones be taken, it will be disastrous for our work. In Thái Bình and Phủ Lý, "they" only had to consult the lists (of party members) to arrest the comrades. All this shows that the party is still not very advanced in the art of clandestine activity. In order to try to remedy this state of affairs, I am often asked this question: why these failures? Why these arrests? But from the inside, I have not been given any clear report (on this subject). I am therefore unable to answer these questions myself.
8. Bis. About my personal role.
 - a. Since the October assembly, I think that the Central Committee is constituted on the inside and that the Oriental office is located on the outside, so my role is to act as a mailbox in between. I asked the Oriental office to relocate me, because the role of a mailbox can be played by another (comrade). The Orient office wrote to me to determine my new task. A copy of this letter was sent by me to the Central Committee.

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- b. If the Central Committee reports were regular, detailed and clear, we would not need to ask for reports from the local committees. But since the time of the Assembly, the Central Committee has not sent any detailed report. For example: in the case (KY) against the directives issued by the Communist International, I have only now been informed, firstly by someone I know and secondly by the Central Committee itself. I know that the circumstances are difficult and that the Central Committee has a lot of work to do. But “they” need to know our situation clearly and that is why we had to ask for reports from the local committees. It is thanks to the two reports submitted by the assemblies of the local committees that we have a clear picture of the situation in Annam and Tonkin prior to December 1930. Since that date, we’ve known nothing (since we have not received any more reports) and we are asking for the local committee reports of Cochinchina. Moreover, we had previously (in October) decided that all local committees would submit their reports in the form of two copies: one for the Central Committee, the other for the outside (the Oriental office). This relieves the Central Committee of its task and the Communist International is kept informed of the situation. The Oriental office approves of this method. It is thanks to this way of proceeding that nothing unreasonable and untidy has happened so far.
- c. I did not give any particular instruction in Annam and Tonkin, except for the cases of the emergency bulletins concerning May 1 and August 1, general directives similar to the present one, and the documentation that I had translated, of which I sent triplicate copies to the Central Committee and to the local committees in Annam and Tonkin. By proceeding in this way, it was possible to do things quickly, conveniently, and safely. (If the messages did arrive at one point, they would be received at another).
- d. In the present letter, the Central Committee states: “With the exception of sending newspapers and mails to contacts, with which we (are qualified to) communicate with the local committees, it would be illogical and impractical to send us its reports.” Contrary to what is stated here, by sending the local committees’ reports, not only would things *not* be happening in an “illogical and impractical” way, but,

on the contrary, business could actually be settled more quickly [our emphasis]. However, if we do not operate according to this method, my direct relations with Annam and Tonkin would be of no further use .

- e. I transmit (to the Oriental Office) the letters of the Central Committee as soon as they reach me. My role has been determined by the Oriental Office. That is why when something important happens, the Oriental Office informs me, and if I have suggestions, such as the recent criticism of (the work in) Annam and Tonkin, I have the approval of the Oriental Office to do so. That is why, when the Party has decided to do something or to present certain proposals, it is necessary that I be informed; if I know nothing at all how would I be able to answer the questions put before me? If my mission consisted of transmitting the correspondences, if I could not express my views to the Oriental Office and to the Central Committee, my presence here would be of little interest, because the work of transmitting the correspondences could be done by another comrade.

In summary: the Trung ương will have to resolve the question of Wang's²⁹⁵ responsibility.

- (I) What is Trung ương's opinion on the recent letter (a copy of which was sent by the preceding shipment)?
- (II) Should the local committees send their reports, etc....? Let me know your resolution, because if this question is not decided, it will be criticized and this will create chaos and harm the work.

P.S. Vladimirof can't come back this time. He has to wait for the "Wang Shek Kung" or the "Haldis" before he can leave.

Two limographs and 200 sheets of paper were sent with this letter.

APRIL 24, 1931

Inform me about the preparations and the results of the May Day demonstration. The small piece of paper written in English is sent by the representative of the Communist Youth International.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Meaning his own responsibility. Hồ Chí Minh used Wang as a pseudonym at that time.

²⁹⁶ This is the last known document written by Hồ Chí Minh before his arrest.

Letter to Comrade André Marty

October 12, 1937²⁹⁷

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 115-116.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Dear Comrade Marty,²⁹⁸

We have received news of our comrade Paul Vaillant-Couturier²⁹⁹ recent death with deep sadness. This is a great loss for the French Communists, for the French proletariat, for the colonial proletariat and for the world proletariat.

I cried when I heard that Comrade Vaillant-Couturier had passed away. He was to me a comrade, a close friend and a brother. We have known each other since the memorable Congress of Tours. Until 1934, we worked together on the colonial question for which he had shown great interest. During his trip to the Far East as representative and organizer of the Conference for Peace and Against War, we met again in China. There, he did a great job to help me get out of a very difficult situation I was in.³⁰⁰

We met again this summer, and discussed the colonial issue together, especially regarding the question of Indochina.

²⁹⁷ Hồ Chí Minh was arrested on June 6, 1931. His whereabouts became unknown, which caused the French press to announce his death in June 1932 based on a rumor. His “death” — followed by his “rebirth” when he was freed in January 1933—played an important role in creating a mythology around him. From 1933 to 1937, he stayed in Moscow where he attended the International Lenin School. Eager to go back in the forefront of the struggle, he asked to be deployed to fight in China. From 1938 to 1940, he fought as a simple soldier in the Eighth Route Army under the pseudonym of Hu Kuan.

²⁹⁸ André Marty (1886-1956) was a politburo member of the PCF.

²⁹⁹ Paul Vaillant-Couturier (1892-1937) was a founder of the PCF and one of its important intellectuals. He was the chief editor of *L'Humanité* between 1926-1929 and 1935-1937 and a close friend of Hồ Chí Minh. One testament to this closeness is that this letter was the first document (aside from one internal report to the Comintern in 1935) that Hồ Chí Minh wrote after he was released from jail. Apart from this letter, Hồ Chí Minh didn't write anything for another year, after he arrived in China.

³⁰⁰ In August 1933, Hồ Chí Minh met with Vaillant-Couturier in Shanghai, who helped him escape to Vladivostok.

The colonial proletariat has lost a good soldier and a sincere friend. Vailant-Couturier has passed away, but his example of dedication and courage remains. We cry your death, and we promise to follow your noble example, fight more persistently, to the best of our capabilities.

In my own name and in the name of the Indochinese communists and the Indochinese working classes, I ask you, dear comrade, to pass to all French Communists, to his family and to his close friends, our deep condolences.

NGUYỄN ÁI QUỐC

Letters to China - About Trotskyists

May 10, 1939

Source: *Notre Voix*, June 23, 1939

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 153-155.

Translation: Communist League (Australia), *Vietnam & Trotskyism*, 1986-1987.

Dearly beloved comrades,

In the past, in my eyes and those of a good number of comrades, Trotskyism seemed a matter of a struggle between tendencies within the Chinese Communist Party. That's why we hardly paid it any attention. But a little before the outbreak of war, more exactly since the end of the year 1936 and notably during the war, the criminal propaganda of the Trotskyists opened our eyes. Since then, we have set ourselves to study the problem.

And our study has led us to the following conclusions:

1. The problem of Trotskyism is not a struggle between tendencies within the Chinese Communist Party, for between communists and Trotskyists there is no link, absolutely not one link: It is a question that concerns the entire people: the struggle against the Fatherland.
2. The Japanese fascists and foreigners now it. That's why they seek to create divisions to deceive public opinion and damage the reputation of the Communists, making people believe that Communists and Trotskyists are in the same camp.
3. The Chinese Trotskyists (like the Trotskyists of other countries) do not represent a political group, much less a political party. They are nothing but a band of evil-doers, the running dogs of Japanese fascism (and of international fascism).
4. In all countries, the Trotskyists give themselves fine names in order to mask their dirty work and banditry. For example: in Spain they call themselves the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). Do you know that it's they who constitute the nests of spies in Madrid in Barcelona and in other places in the service of Franco? It is they who

are organizing the infamous ‘fifth column,’³⁰¹ the espionage body of the army of the Italian and German fascists. In Japan, they call themselves the Marx-Engels-Lenin League (MEL). The Japanese Trotskyists lure youth into their league, then they denounce them to the police. They seek to penetrate the Japanese Communist Party with the aim of destroying it from within. To my mind, the French Trotskyists now organized around the Proletarian Revolution Group have settled on the aim of sabotaging the Popular Front. On this subject, I think you are surely better informed than I. Here in China, the Trotskyists are regrouping around formations such as The Struggle Against the Japanese, Culture and Red Flag.

5. The Trotskyists are not only the enemies of Communism, they are also the enemies of democracy and of progress. They are the most infamous traitors and spies.

Perhaps you have read the charges in the proceedings against the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union? If you have not read them, I advise you to read them and to get your friends to read them. This reading is very useful. It will help you to see the true repugnant face of Trotskyism and Trotskyists. Here, I have taken the liberty of extracting some passages directly concerning China.

Before the tribunal, the Trotskyist Rakovsky has sworn that, in 1930, when he was in Tokyo (as representative of the Soviet Red Cross) a person highly placed in the Japanese government said to him: “We are now expecting a change of strategy from the Trotskyists. I won’t enter into the details. I only want to tell you that we expect from the Trotskyists actions which favor our intervention in the affairs of China.”

Replying to the Japanese, Rakovsky said: “I will write to Trotsky on this subject.” In December 1935, Trotsky sent his followers in China instructions in which he underlined several times this phrase: “Do not create obstacles to the Japanese invasion of China.”

³⁰¹ During the Spanish Civil War, Franco’s forces had a network of supporters in republican cities working clandestinely that they called the “fifth column.” The POUM passed out strategic information to them and carried out sabotage with the hope that weakening the republicans (who were stronger than the Francoists at that time) would create a situation where both Francoist and republican forces would destroy each other, so that they could carry out a successful insurrection. POUM actions played an important role in Franco’s victory.

Thus, the Russian Trotskyists wished to sell to the Japanese part of their Fatherland—Siberia and the Maritime Provinces—they now wish to sell to the latter our Fatherland, China!

And the Chinese Trotskyists, how have they acted? That is what you are in a hurry to know, isn't it?

But, beloved comrades, I cannot reply to you till my next letter. Haven't you recommended that I write short letters?

I hope to see you again soon.

P. C. LIN³⁰²

³⁰² During his stay in China, Hồ Chí Minh used Hu Kuan as a pseudonym in the army, but signed his writings P. C. Lin. In his biography, Võ Nguyên Giáp said that this pseudonym was known to the leadership of the Party to be Hồ Chí Minh.

Letters to China - The Activities of Trotskyists in China (1)

July 7, 1939

Source: *Notre Voix*, July 7, 1939

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 156-158.

Translation: Communist League (Australia), *Vietnam & Trotskyism*, 1986-1987.

Dearly beloved comrades,

Before I reply to you on the activities of the Trotskyists in China, permit me to introduce half a dozen of their ring-leaders, known traitors, who have written on behalf of the Fourth International. Chen Duxiu, Peng Shuzhi, Luo Han, Ye Qing, Zhang Mutao, Huang Gongdu.³⁰³

Chronologically, here are the acts they have committed:

In September 1931, at the time of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Japanese Security made contact with the first three. The two parties signed a pact: the Trotskyist group agreed not to advance any propaganda against the Japanese invasion. Japanese Security agreed to make over to the Trotskyists a sum of three hundred dollars monthly as well as other supplementary sums, according to the “results of the services rendered.”

From this moment, Chen Duxiu and his accomplices immediately set to work. With the Japanese funds, they published magazines and satirical pamphlets to propagate ideas such as: “In occupying Manchuria, the Japanese wanted to rapidly settle the conflict and suspend it, they did not aim to make themselves masters of China.”

Scarcely had these ideas been propagated in the columns of their publications than Shanghai was attacked in turn in January 1932 by Japanese troops.

At this moment, what do the Trotskyists say? Do they recognise that they were wrong? Do they cease collaborating with the occupier? Absolutely not! While the soldiers of the 19th army spill their blood to defend the Fatherland,

³⁰³ All the Chinese names were written here in Vietnamese. We tried, as much as possible to replace them with their *pinyin* form.

the Trotskyists, in acts as in words, continue to commit crime upon crime. On one side, they write: "The war for Shanghai doesn't concern the people at all. It is not a case of a national revolutionary war. It is a case of imperialist war." On the other side, they spread false rumors, put forward slogans of a defeatist character, gave away defence secrets, etc.

But that's not all. Trotskyists such as Hoa Văn Khôi and Cung Tân Thư, in secret liaison with the police and the Japanese bosses, infiltrated into the workers' strike at Shanghai and employed all means to sabotage the movement. To the point where they managed to have the most talented activists in the strike arrested.

In 1933, Generalissimo Feng Yuxiang and General Ji Hongchang, members of the Communist Party, organized an anti-Japanese resistance force at Kalgan. At this time, the CCP being underground, liaison between the center and the North was proving difficult. Profiting by this situation, the Trotskyist Zhang Mutaο, calling himself a "representative of the Communist Party," tried to transform the anti-Japanese war into a civil war with the slogan: "March with the Japanese, struggle against Chiang Kai-shek." In the end, he was unmasked and expelled by General Ji. A short time later, in the course of a journey of the latter to Tianjin, Zhang Mutaο had him assassinated by his followers.

In my next letter, I shall tell you how the Trotskyists of China have pursued their activities as traitors to the Fatherland.

Fraternal greetings

P. C. LIN

Letters to China - The Activities of Trotskyists in China (2)

July 28, 1939

Source: *Notre Voix*, July 28, 1939

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 163-166.

Translation: Communist League (Australia), *Vietnam & Trotskyism*, 1986-1987.

Beloved Comrades,

In my last letters, I told you how the Trotskyists received their salary from the Japanese and how they sought to sabotage our heroic struggle at Shanghai and our patriotic movement at Kalgan. Today, I will tell you the rest of their crimes.

Having fallen back to Fukien, the 19th Army again took up its struggle. It formed an anti-Japanese Government and led the propaganda for the united front thanks to the signing of a pact with the Chinese Red Army. Shortly before this, the 19th army was one of the most anti-communist forces. But confronted by the danger which menaced the Fatherland, it agreed to forget the quarrels and hatred in order to aim at one single end: the struggle against the invaders.

Obeying the orders of the Japanese, the Trotskyists immediately went into action: on one side, they fomented regionalist sentiments amongst the population—the 19th army having come from Guangdong—to combat the new government. On the other side, they sought to enfeeble the Red Army. The way in which they accomplished the second task is the following: among the many revolutionary militants, they applied to join the Red Army. In the beginning, in order to win over confidence, they led very positive actions. Once placed in more or less important posts of responsibility, they began to commit criminal acts. I will cite you some examples: In battle, when it was necessary to retreat, they gave the order to advance. When it was necessary to advance, they gave the order to retreat. They sent reinforcements and arms to places where they were not needed. But where they were needed, they didn't send them. They painted with poison the wounds of combatants, above all of the cadres of the

army, with the aim of making them have their arms and legs etc. amputated. These criminal acts were luckily discovered in time. What luck for the Communists!

Since 1935, the Communists have led a campaign of great scope for the formation of a national Front against the Japanese. The people, and particularly the workers and peasants, have actively taken up this program. In the Kuomintang, the idea of a national Front is making progress. During this time, it has been proved that the Trotskyists are playing a double game, having recourse at the same time to lies and to treachery. They say to the masses: "You see, the Communists have sold out to the bourgeoisie. The Kuomintang would not fight against the Japanese!" Addressing the Kuomintang, they say: "The National Front! It's nothing but a ruse of the Communists. To fight the Japanese you must destroy the Communists."

Towards the end of 1936, the politics of uniting against the Japanese triumphed in the events of Tay An. Faced with the defeat of their politics of civil war, the Trotskyists Zhang Mutaο and Tạ Duy Liệt decided to organize the assassination of Vương Di Triết, one of the most convinced followers of the National Front.

Now, I am talking to you about 1937, the period that preceded the war. Everyone united to fight the Japanese except the Trotskyists. These traitors met clandestinely and adopted the "resolution" of which here are some extracts: "In the war against the Japanese, our position is clear: those who wanted the war and have illusions about the Kuomintang government, those concretely have committed treason. The union between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang is nothing but conscious treason." And other ignominies of this kind.

When the war approaches, the Japanese promises materialize. The Trotskyists of Shanghai receive 100,000 dollars each month for their activities in the center and south of the country. Those of Tianjin and Beijing 50,000 each month for their activities in North China against the 8th army and against patriotic organizations.

Towards the middle of 1937, the Trotskyists were discovered and arrested in the "special zone."³⁰⁴ According to the confession of Tôn Nghĩa Hải, they had settled on these objectives: 1. To destroy the 8th army. 2. To hinder the

³⁰⁴ Meaning an area controlled temporarily by the Eighth Rotue Army.

development of the National Front. 3. To spy. 4. To organize the assassination of activists.

Before the popular tribunal of the “special zone,” the Trotskyist Hoàng Phật Hải, amongst other confessions, declared that in the course of the fourth interview with Zhang Mutaο, the latter had given him the following instructions:

You must actively study the methods and the system of organization of the Red Army. After that, you will organize brigades of youth to carry out the tasks of sabotage. Our aim is to provoke disorder within the Red Army and to liquidate its activists.

Zhang Mutaο added:

We must persuade a section of the cadres of the base to follow us, raise their nostalgia for their native land, encourage their desertion and furnish them with a little money. That’s one of the means of causing the disintegration of this army.

The Trotskyist Quách Uẩn Kinh has sworn that Tôn Nghĩa Hải charged him with advancing defeatist propaganda amongst the combatants by demonstrating to them that “China cannot win” for “even if we end up driving out the Japanese, the Americans and the English will still be there to oppress us”; that “not only can we not win, but our land will be destroyed if we continue the war”; that “China is too weak to struggle against Japan, England and America at the same time.” Zhang Mutaο finished his instructions with these words: “We must exploit the policies of the National Front to denounce the Communists and say that they have sold out the working class. Our aim is to foment discontent amongst the combatants.” Under the pretext of educating them, the Trotskyists organized the most backward elements of the army in small groups, then, profiting by the harsh conditions of life in the army, they encouraged them to desert with arms and ammunition. In liaison with the bandits, they created disorder behind the lines of the 8th army while it was in full combat.

This is the background of the Trotskyists in their struggle against the 8th national revolutionary army. In my next letter, I will talk to you about the ignoble methods that these traitors have employed in attempting to destroy the other anti-Japanese forces.

P. C. LIN

The Party's Line in the Period of the Democratic Front (1936-1939)³⁰⁵

July 1939

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 167-168.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 149-150.

- 1— For the time being the Party cannot put forth too high a demand (national independence, parliament, etc.) To do so is to enter the Japanese fascists' scheme.

It should only claim for democratic rights, freedom of organization, freedom of assembly, freedom of press and freedom of speech, general amnesty for all political detainees, and struggle for the legalization of the Party.

- 2— To reach this goal, the Party must strive to organize a broad Democratic National Front.

This Front does not embrace only Indochinese people but also progressive French residing in Indochina, not only toiling people but also the national bourgeoisie.

- 3— The Party must assume a wise, flexible attitude with the bourgeoisie, strive to draw it into the Front, win over the elements that can be won over and neutralize those who can be neutralized. We must by all means avoid leaving them outside the Front, lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy of the revolution and increase the strength of the reactionaries.

- 4— There cannot be any alliance with or any concession to the Trotskyite group. We must do everything possible to lay bare their faces as henchmen of the fascists and annihilate them politically.

³⁰⁵ This is an excerpt from the report made by Hồ Chí Minh to the Communist International in July 1939.

- 5— To increase and consolidate its forces, to widen its influence and to work effectively, the Indochinese Democratic Front must keep close contact with the French Popular Front because the latter also struggles for freedom, democracy and can give us great help.
- 6— The Party cannot demand that the Front recognizes its leadership. It must instead show itself as the organ which makes the greatest sacrifices, the most active and loyal organ. It is only through daily struggle and work that the masses of the people acknowledge the correct policies and leading capacity of the Party, that it can win the leading position.
- 7— To be able to carry out this task the Party must uncompromisingly fight sectarianism, narrow-mindedness and organize systematic study of Marxism-Leninism in order to raise the cultural and political level of the Party members and help the non-Party cadres raise their level. We must maintain close contact with the French Communist Party.
- 8— The Central Executive Committee must supervise the Party press to avoid technical and political mistakes (e.g. in publishing comrade R's biography, the *Lao Động*³⁰⁶ revealed his address and his origin, etc. It also published without comment his letter saying that Trotskyism is a product of boastfulness, etc.)

³⁰⁶ The *Lao Động* was established in 1929 as the newspaper of the ICP trade-union organization.

Pác Bó's Cave³⁰⁷

February 1941

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1990, p. 99.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 228.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

In the morning by the stream, at night in the cave,
 Corn soup, bamboo sprouts, this is our daily meal.
 A wobbly stone as a desk upon which I translate the history of the Party.³⁰⁸
 Indeed, the life of a revolutionary is not without its own delights.

³⁰⁷ Hồ Chí Minh returned to Việt Nam in January 1941 after being away from his motherland for over 30 years. To cross the border, he forged a fake press card with the name “Hồ Chí Minh,” meaning “Ho, the Enlightened One.” He stayed for seven weeks in Pác Bó, a small village, where he lived in a cave.

³⁰⁸ Hồ Chí Minh was translating from the Chinese edition of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*.

Letter from Abroad³⁰⁹

June 6, 1941

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 229-231.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 151-154.

Elders!

Prominent personalities!

Intellectuals, peasants, workers, traders and soldiers!

Dear compatriots!

Since the French were defeated by the Germans, their forces have been completely disintegrated. However, with regard to our people, they continue to plunder us pitilessly, suck all our blood, and carry out a barbarous policy of all-out terrorism and massacre. Concerning their foreign policy, they bow their heads and kneel down, shamelessly cutting our land for Siam; without a single word of protest, they heartlessly offer our interests to Japan. As a result our people suffer under a double yoke: they serve not only as buffaloes and horses to the French invaders but also as slaves to the Japanese plunderers. Alas! What sin have our people committed to be doomed to such a wretched plight!

Living in such painful and lamentable conditions, can our people bind their own hands to doom themselves to death! No! Certainly not! More than twenty million sons and daughters of Lạc and Hồng³¹⁰ are resolute to do away with slavery. For nearly eighty years under the French invaders' iron heels we have unceasingly sacrificed ourselves and struggled for national independence and freedom. The loyal and heroic spirit of our predecessors such as Phan Đình Phùng, Hoàng Hoa Thám and Lương Ngọc Quyến is still alive, the heroic feats

³⁰⁹ After the Eight Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indochina held at Pác Bó from May 10 to 19, 1941, decided on the new line and policy, highlighting the slogan of national liberation, establishing the Việt Minh Front, changing the names of various mass organizations into Associations for National Salvation and speeding up the preparations for the armed uprising, on June 6, 1941, Hồ Chí Minh wrote this letter calling on the revolutionary fighters at home together with the compatriots throughout the country to rise up and overthrow the Japanese and the French.

³¹⁰ See footnote 186, p. 246.

of our revolutionaries in Thái Nguyên, Yên Bái, Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh provinces remain forever in our memory. The recent uprising in the South and at Đô Lương and Bắc Sơn have testified to the determination of our compatriots to shed their blood as their glorious predecessors did, heroically to annihilate the enemy. If we did not succeed, it was not because the French invaders were strong, but only because the situation was not yet ripe and our compatriots throughout the country did not yet have the same heart and mind.

Now, the opportunity has come for our liberation. France itself is unable to dominate our country. As to the Japanese, on the one hand they are bogged in China, on the other, they are hamstrung by the British and American forces, and certainly cannot use all their forces to contend with us. If our entire people are united and single-minded, we are certainly able to smash the picked French and Japanese armies.

Compatriots throughout the country! Rise up quickly! Let us follow the heroic example of the Chinese people! Rise up quickly to organize the Association for National Salvation to fight the French and the Japanese.

Elders!

Prominent personalities!

Some hundreds of years ago, when our country was endangered by the Mongolian invasion, our elders under the Tran dynasty rose up indignantly and called on their sons and daughters throughout the country to rise as one in order to kill the enemy. Finally they saved their people from danger and their good name will be carried into posterity for all time. The elders and prominent personalities of our country should follow the example set by our forefathers in the glorious task of national salvation.

Rich people, soldiers, workers, peasants, intellectuals, employees, traders, youth and women who warmly love your country! At the present time national liberation is the most important problem. Let us unite together! As one in mind and strength we shall overthrow the Japanese and French and their jackals in order to save people from the situation between boiling water and burning heat.

Dear compatriots!

National salvation is the common cause of the whole of our people. Every Vietnamese must take a part in it. He who has money will contribute his money, he who has strength will contribute his strength, he who has talent will

contribute his talent. I pledge to use all my modest abilities to follow you and am ready for the last sacrifice.

Revolutionary fighters!

The hour has struck! Raise aloft the insurrectionary banner and guide the people throughout the country to overthrow the Japanese and French! The sacred call of the Fatherland is resounding in your ears; the blood of our heroic predecessors who sacrificed their lives is stirring in your hearts! The fighting spirit of the people is displayed everywhere before you! Let us rise up quickly! Compatriots throughout the country rise up quickly! Unite with each other, unify your action to overthrow the Japanese and the French.

Victory to Việt Nam's Revolution!

Victory to the World's Revolution!

NGUEYN AI QUOC

Ten Point Program of the Việt Minh Front

1941

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh, Textes 1914-1969*, Alain Ruscio, pp. 100-101.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 242-243.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

The League for the Independence of Việt Nam
 And its anti-Japanese, anti-colonialist line,
 Work with strength so that everywhere on our lands
 The flag of independence flies high and with equality:
 So that—oh, offspring of fierce ancestors—
 Our people have in our hands our legitimate rights.
 Faithful to the interests of our Motherland and all its people,
 Ten policies of the Việt Minh Front are mapped out:
 Will be abolished, for the sake of our people,
 Personal taxes, taxes on rice fields,
 Will be enacted: freedom of the press, of assembly
 of education, of movement, of religion.
 A peasant will have his share of land, his buffaloes,
 And won't anymore have to worry about hunger or cold.
 A worker, who works so painfully,
 Will have an eight-hour day, and a fair salary;
 In the event of an unexpected, regrettable accident,
 Will receive essential medical attention.
 Those who's labor is trade,
 By the commercial taxes will no longer be tormented.
 With regard to employees, civil servants,
 Their condition will be better; let them be reassured!
 Dedicated soldiers, defending our country,
 Will be deeply loved and honored.
 The youth will have schools in large numbers;
 Pupils, poor students will get scholarships.
 Between men and women, there will be no more discrimination;

They also will be free.
The disabled and those falling into old age
Will benefit from subsidies, assistance.
Parents will worry less about their children;
These will be fed, educated by the State.
To achieve these goals, our common work,
Let's forge our union: it is essential!
Let us ensure that everywhere from North to South,
The Việt Minh Front has very many members!
May those who can, raise funds!
Money, our material strength, is needed.
Let everything be for the Motherland and for real happiness:
May this be our task, our great honor!
We have the Việt Minh, a Revolutionary Front,
Talented, able to lead us in the fight;
Our work shall soon be completed;
Soon Việt Nam will be famous and its people, glorious!
A great and broad union: this is our motto;
Spirits, hearts, united forces, let us swear this oath!

Happy New Year

January 1, 1942

Source: *Việt Nam độc lập*, No. 114, January 1, 1942.³¹¹

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 249.

Translation: Edward C. O'Dowd, Hồ Chí Minh and the origins of the Vietnamese doctrine of guerrilla tactics, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Volume 24, 2013.

Time is flying so quickly,
 The old years gone, the new (year) comes and wishes:
 Wishing the invader ruin!
 Wishing the democrats victory;
 Wishing our fellow citizen unity!
 Wishing the Việt Minh (organization) progress,
 Wishing our nation, this year,
 So many reds, colored flags with the golden star fluttering everywhere. This
 year so great,
 Revolution succeeds throughout the world.

³¹¹ *Việt Nam độc lập* (Independent Việt Nam) was a newspaper published between 1941 and 1945 and edited by Hồ Chí Minh and Phạm Văn Đồng.

Ten Mandatory Activities

January 21, 1942

Source: *Việt Nam độc lập*, No. 116, January 21, 1942.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 252.

Translation: Edward C. O'Dowd, Hồ Chí Minh and the origins of the Vietnamese doctrine of guerrilla tactics, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Volume 24, 2013.

Each member of the Việt Minh organization should implement the following policies:

- (1) To keep secret about the organization.
- (2) To become a loyalist of the organization.
- (3) To propagate the purposes and objectives of the organization.
- (4) To develop new members of the organization.
- (5) To actively work for the organization.
- (6) To pay dues on schedule.
- (7) To help one another.
- (8) To study with assiduity.
- (9) To read the newspapers and books of the organization.
- (10) To support the newspapers of the organization.

The Stone

April 21, 1942

Source: *Việt Nam độc lập*, No. 123, April 21, 1942.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 270-271.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

A large stone
A heavy stone
That a single man
Cannot move.

A heavy stone
A solid stone
That several men
Cannot lift.

A large stone
A heavy stone
With many men
Uniting their strength

It can be lifted.
Uniting our hearts
We can overcome
All troublesome tasks.

Driving out the French and the Japanese
And win back our freedom
Is a tough thing to do
A great undertaking.

If we all
Can unite,
This noble task
Will be carried out successfully.

To Marshal Pétain³¹²

July 11, 1942

Source: *Việt Nam độc lập*, No. 131, July 11, 1942.

Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, p. 275.

Translation: Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

Unfortunate is the fate of France;

Pétain, old marshal, you are rotten.³¹³

On your knees, head down in front of the Germans;

Frowning, your eyes full of hate towards the English.

You have sold your country, but you boast about being its “Savior”;

You are covered in disgrace, but you think you are famous.

You are such an old fool.

Leaving forever behind you in history, a blemished name.

³¹² Philippe Pétain (1856-1951) was chief of the French state during World War II and organized the state collaboration with the Nazi occupiers. Under the direction of Admiral Decoux, a vigorous Petainist propaganda was carried out in Indochina.

³¹³ A pun: Pétain, in Vietnamese, is written Pê-Tanh. “Tanh” means “nauseant..” Here, the author has opted for “putrid” in the original French translation (according to Hoàng Xuân Nhị’s note).

Instruction to Establish the Việt Nam Propaganda Unit for National Liberation³¹⁴

December 1944

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 539-540.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 155-156

1—The Việt Nam Propaganda Unit for National Liberation³¹⁵ shows by its name that greater importance should be attached to the political side than to the military side. It is a propaganda unit. To act successfully, in the military field, the main principle is concentration of forces, therefore in accordance with the new instruction of the Organization,³¹⁶ most resolute and energetic officers and men will be picked out of the ranks of the guerilla units in the provinces of Cao Bằng, Bắc Cạn and Lạng Sơn and a great amount of weapons will be concentrated to establish our main force.

Because ours is a national resistance by the whole people, we must mobilize and arm the whole people, therefore, when concentrating our forces to set up the first unit, we must maintain the local armed forces, co-ordinate their operations and assist each other in all aspects. On its part, the main unit has the duty to guide the cadres of the local armed units, assist them in drilling

³¹⁴ In August 1942, Hồ Chí Minh was jailed in China, where he had gone to organize support from the Vietnamese diaspora. The Kuomintang believe him to be a common undocumented Vietnamese migrant. His comrades asked Sun Fo, the daughter of Sun Yat-sen, to intervene to free him. He was freed in September 1943, but this unusual request resulted in his house arrest. He managed to return to Việt Nam only a year later, in September 1944.

³¹⁵ The Việt Nam Propaganda Unit for National Liberation was set up on December 27, 1944 within small guerilla units that had formerly operated in the provinces of Cao Bằng and Lạng Sơn. In the beginning, it comprised of 34 men and officers and a few rudimentary weapons. Nevertheless, it highlighted the spirit of sacrifice and heroic combativeness for national independence and democracy and launched a movement for armed struggle in many localities throughout the country to advance toward the August 1945 general uprising. It is the predecessor of the present Việt Nam People's Army.

³¹⁶ Meaning here the Party.

and supply them with weapons if possible, thus helping these units to grow unceasingly.

2—With regard to local armed units, we will gather their cadres for training, send trained cadres to various localities to exchange experience, maintain liaison, and coordinate military operations.

3—Concerning tactics, we will apply guerrilla warfare, which consists of being secret, rapid, active, now in the East now in the West, arriving unexpectedly and leaving unnoticed.

The Việt Nam Propaganda Unit for National Liberation is the first born unit. It is hoped that other units will soon come into being.

At first its size is small, however, its prospect is brilliant. It is the embryo of the Liberation Army and can move from North to South, throughout Việt Nam.

Guerrilla Tactics

1944

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 497-536.

Translation: Edward C. O'Dowd, Hồ Chí Minh and the origins of the Vietnamese doctrine of guerrilla tactics, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Volume 24, 2013.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS A GUERRILLA?

The guerrilla's way of combat is cunning and stealthy fighting against the enemy when he is not taking precautions. Guerrilla warfare is the combat method of oppressed nations fighting against empires that have strong military forces and modern weapons.

Guerrilla forces do not have modern weapons. Although their units are not fully organized, the people support them. Guerrillas have extensive knowledge of the terrain conditions in their area. They are very clever in using night and different kinds of weather to their advantage in their operations. For these reasons, the guerrilla can defeat the forces of the empire.

We are now rising up against the French and Japanese troops. To do this, we will use guerrilla warfare. We will be the winner if we know how to conduct guerrilla warfare.

There are four requirements for success in guerrilla warfare:

- (1) **A correct political line.** Our purpose is to regain our national independence from the French and the Japanese. To defeat those enemies we have to use guerrilla warfare. We cannot gain victory over French and Japanese troops if we do not use guerrilla warfare. Our cause is not a just one if we use guerrilla warfare for purposes that do not include fighting against the French and Japanese troops.
- (2) **Rely on the people.** We must have the people join us and help to fight the guerrilla war. "Guerrilla men are the fish, people are the water. The fish will die if it tries to live without water. Guerrillas will die if they are not supported by their people." The guerrilla forces and people should have close ties because the guerrillas fight the French and Japanese

troops to protect the people. Therefore, the people have to do their best to help the guerrillas.

- (3) **Have strong, secret, and restrictive organizations.** If guerrilla units are not well organized, they will not be a revolutionary army and cannot fight against French and Japanese troops. Well-organized and sound units are necessary for guerrilla forces. The guerrilla's discipline must be as strict as iron. Every action of a guerrilla must obey the discipline of the unit. No one has the right to do the opposite or behave wrongly.
- (4) **Use clever methods of fighting.** The guerilla forces are able to defeat their enemies because they use clever ways of fighting. Guerrilla forces have many forms. They are like magicians. If we are good at implementing the ways of guerrilla warfare, we can be ever-victorious.

CHAPTER 2: THE STRUCTURE OF GUERRILLA UNITS

- (1) **Small groups of guerrillas.** These groups consist of bands that have from two or three men up to 20 or 30 people in a small guerrilla team. This group has its own team leader (and a deputy team leader when necessary). A joint command needs to be set up when there is more than one group of guerrillas.

The members of the small guerrilla group do not give up their productive labor (this means that they do not give up their jobs/livelihood). They set up group meetings when they have a mission. When they have no guerrilla missions they do their normal work. Small guerrilla groups are armed with weapons adapted from their own conditions and livelihood (e.g. guns, knives, sticks, and so forth).

- (2) **The guerrilla unit.** A guerrilla unit is armed. Its members can completely give up their livelihood or not. Some guerrilla units will give up work completely. Others can do productive labor and fight the enemy at the same time. The number of men can range from tens to hundreds or thousands. A guerrilla unit can be known by any name. For example, it can be called the “National Salvation Unit Phan Bội Châu,” the “Guerrilla Unit Phan Châu Trinh,” the “Mán trắng Guerrilla Unit,” or the “National Salvation Unit of Bắc Sơn,” etc...³¹⁷

³¹⁷ Phan Bội Châu and Phan Châu Trinh were both nationalist heroes (see footnote 1, p. 1). Mán trắng refers to the H'Mông, a national minority present in Southwest China. Bắc Sơn is

The structure of guerrilla units is based on the organization of basic military units such as squads, platoons, and companies. Each larger unit has three, four, or five smaller units. For example, a platoon can have three, four, or five squads. The same structure is applicable for the companies.

- (3) **The status of guerilla unit members.** Every Vietnamese citizen who is in good health, unafraid of difficulties and risks, and wants to fight against the French and Japanese troops can be a guerrilla unit member. People who are brave, can work fast, and are experienced fighters should be identified and encouraged to become guerrillas. Battle-tested men should be especially encouraged to become guerrilla unit members.
- (4) **Command structure.** Every guerrilla unit—from the small group, the squad, the platoon, the company, to the larger guerrilla units—has its own leader and deputy leader. Politically, every level of guerilla unit has one political representative who has been chosen by the revolutionary organization in that unit or from the others.

If there are many members in a guerrilla unit, they need to organize special departments that are responsible for things such as unit management, reconnaissance, and sabotage. On the political side, the larger guerrilla unit has sections for those involved in education, explaining news from the newspaper, mobilizing the masses, or demoralizing the soldiers of the empire.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

Guerrilla warfare has four fundamental principles:

- (1) **Gain the initiative in combat.** Gaining the initiative is the key to knowing how to cleverly control the enemy. We need to be able to draw the enemy to where we can beat him. We need to lure the enemy into our trap. If the enemy is stronger than us and it is not to our advantage to fight, we can retreat. Retreating on our own initiative is a way to gain the initiative. If we take the initiative, we can achieve great and small victories. If we are on the defensive and cannot hold the initiative, we can be controlled and easily defeated by the enemy.

a district of Lạng Sơn Province.

- (2) **Fast action is essential.** In guerrilla warfare fast action is essential. If we cannot act quickly, we cannot use guerrilla warfare. In every situation, whether we are attacking the enemy or retreating, we must move quickly. Guerrilla units must carry out their missions as quickly as the wind and lightning. We must gain victory in a wink and leave the battlefield before the enemy recognizes us.
- (3) **Always maintain the offensive.** Maintaining the offensive means we have the lead in attacking the enemy. Guerrilla units have to take the initiative in order to hold the offensive. By seizing the offensive, guerrillas can attack the enemy in battles of different scales. It is always good if we grind down the enemy's strength. Guerrilla units that are constantly on the defensive will be failures.
- (4) **Have a good campaign plan.** Guerrillas use the above three principles when they are preparing to fight. Without having a suitable and thoughtful plan, even with the above three principles, is not good enough to obtain victory. Guerrillas should emphasize their ability to make a plan so they can benefit from the above three principles. The plan must be "multiform" so the enemy cannot defend himself.

In addition to the four fundamental principles, there are four tactical principles in guerrilla operations:

- (1) **Avoid attacking the enemy's strong point.** Always attack the enemy's weak point; pretend to attack one point but attack another one. We have to know as much as possible about the adversary. We cannot make silly attacks on the enemy's strong points. We must attack the enemy's weak point. When we trick the enemy into defending one place, we attack another place. Fighting means pretending to attack one point, then attacking another point.
- (2) **Dodge any fight that the enemy can win.** Do not try to hold the battlefield at any cost. Guerrilla forces should choose the enemy target that is easiest for them to attack with minimum casualties. Guerrilla units must avoid battles in which it is too difficult to assess casualties and foresee the final outcome. When guerrilla forces have been attacked by the enemy and are at a disadvantage compared to the enemy, the guerrilla unit

should find escape from the battlefield to maintain their strength intact. Do not try to hold the battlefield at any cost.

- (3) **Scatter the forces (*hoá chình vi linh*); gather the forces (*hoá linh vi chình*).** Guerrilla forces should be scattered in case the enemy attacks them or in case of the entire force being pushed into inconvenient conditions. In those circumstances, guerrilla forces must “*hoá chình vi linh*,” meaning *scatter the forces*. After that, when it is necessary, guerrilla men gather again (*hoá linh vi chình*) to do their mission. “*Chình*” means the entire guerrilla unit. “*Linh*” means part of the guerrilla unit or individual guerrillas.
- (4) **When we are still, we attack the enemy who is moving.** We fight the enemy when we are strong and our enemy is tired. We have to gain the initiative in guerrilla warfare. We must choose good opportunities to hit the enemy. We pay attention to the following actions: when the enemy is doing something, especially when he is moving on the road; when the enemy is not vigilant, we set an ambush at a secret place and then suddenly attack the enemy. That means when we are still, we attack the moving enemy. We choose the attack time because we want to attack when we are strong but the enemy is tired. We will be the winner if we make a surprise attack when we are strong and appear to be still. The best time to attack is when the enemy is moving and tired.

To fight the French and Japanese, guerrilla units need to do the following things:

- (1) **Deceive the enemy.** Let them know nothing about us, or give them wrong information.
- (2) **Make a reconnaissance.** A great military man said, “If we know clearly about the enemy and ourselves, we can fight and win every battle.”³¹⁸ It is very important to conduct reconnaissance to understand the enemy’s condition.

³¹⁸ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Chap. 3, Paragraph 18: “Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

- (3) **Make the enemy feel miserable.** When the guerrilla units cannot defeat the enemy in a single combat, the guerrillas should try their best to push the enemy into difficult and uncomfortable situations.
- (4) **Push the enemy into areas without food.** Guerrilla forces should conduct a scorched-earth policy; attack the enemy to destroy his food convoys while destroying the enemy's food depots. These are the ways of pushing the enemy into a foodless situation.
- (5) **Prevent the enemy from attacking our people.** Do not let the enemy attack our people and guerrilla units freely. The best ways to stop the enemy from acting against us with no restraint are to destroy bridges, roads, and enemy vehicles.
- (6) **Kidnap enemy men.** Guerrilla forces can kidnap enemy men such as the soldiers who convey an order, army postmen, or the ones who are plundering food items from our people. Interrogate prisoners after we have confiscated their weapons.
- (7) **Make the enemy worry and misjudge us.** For example, although we have few men, units, and guns, we manage to create signs of having many men, units, and guns. We can make the enemy panic. Then we can take advantage of his actions to attack his movements.
- (8) **Lure the enemy into our trap and kill him.** We hide somewhere then draw up a scheme to lure the enemy into a place that is to our advantage. We make the enemy leave his base. When he moves out, we can attack him. We can pretend to have lost the battle, let the enemy pursue us, then we hide, we wait for the enemy to pass, and we suddenly open fire on him.
- (9) **Ambush and harass enemy troops.** An ambush is a fight against the enemy's army in a single place. It means to hide and wait until an enemy approaches to suddenly emerge and attack. To harass the enemy means to continue to chase him after the fight.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS USED FOR SURPRISE ATTACKS AND AMBUSHES

Guerrilla forces have often used two methods to attack the enemy: ambushes and surprise attacks (raids).

RAIDS

The secrecy and thoroughness in preparation as well as quickness and resolution in assault are necessary conditions to conduct a successful raid. Therefore, we should take the following steps in preparing and conducting raids: scout, arrange the plan, start occupying raid area, settle in the raid place, assault, actions to take after the assault.

1. Scouting

The guerrilla should know: A) the enemy's situation; B) the terrain; C) the political situation in the battle area. We should know precise information about these situations before making plans. Due to the importance of this information, the scout has an important role in determining the winning or losing of these battles.

A. Scouting the enemy's situation.

- a) The scout needs to determine the strength, services, weapons, ruses of fighting, combat efficiency, defensive measures, guard pattern, and officers of the enemy unit.
- b) The scout needs to assess the enemy's other units, particularly those that adjoin the unit we intend to attack. The assessment should include the number of men in those units, their increasing strength, how they contact each other, and their means of contact. We have to know about these things to avoid bad and surprise situations.

Example: Chinese guerrillas in North China have successfully scouted to get information relating to the enemy because they got help from the people. They knew exactly what Japanese troops were doing. The guerrillas always win because they are not afraid of being defeated. If they are afraid of losing, they cannot fight the enemy.

There were 200 Japanese troops in the village of Binh Định.³¹⁹ They had posted numerous sentries around their area to prevent a surprise attack. But guerrillas scouted the area with the help of the people. They paid special attention to the time the Japanese changed their sentries. At night, when the Japanese sentries were tired, the clever and aggressive guerrillas killed them while other guerrillas attacked the Japanese troops sleeping in the village.

³¹⁹ Possibly Pingding district, Henan Province.

B. Scouting terrain.

- a) What is the condition of traffic along the narrow or wide streets from the guerrilla's area to the enemy's area?
- b) Where are the places to hide guerrilla forces along the roads? What good terrain is available for guerrillas? What places are near the enemy to hide guerrilla forces? What are the routes for guerrillas to advance and retreat from battlefield?

C. Scouting the political situation of the battle area.

- a) How does the enemy behave toward the people and vice versa? Has the enemy killed people for robbery? How do the people behave toward the revolution?
- b) How are the enemy's accommodations? What is the fighting spirit of the enemy? How do the enemy's men behave toward their officers, the people, and the revolution? What people can help guerrillas? How is guerrilla contact with the people?

2. Making plans and preparations for fighting.

After carefully scouting, the leaders and political commissar should make an attack plan. In case there is no opportunity for a raid, we should divert the enemy from an intended direction. We should pretend to attack in one place to divert him from another place. By doing this we can create the conditions for a successful raid. We should follow these principles when making attack plans:

A. Choosing the time for the attack.

There are four good times for raids:

- a) *At night.* Night ambushes are easy to keep secret, and it is easy to move our forces at night. It is also easy to get tired and lose the way at night, but the night raid is not difficult for the skilled and strictly disciplined guerrillas.
- b) *At dawn.* After marching a long way at night, the guerrillas can attack the enemy in the early morning while the enemy is sleeping. The battle can be finished right after dawn. This is the good time for a raid.

- c) *At sunset.* The enemies often guard their bases carelessly at sunset. The guerrilla can hide along the way during daytime and easily surprise the enemy at sunset. If our attack is not successful, we can retreat at night.
- d) *During the day.* It is very difficult to attack the enemy during the day. To win a daytime battle, the guerrilla should have all these following conditions: 1. The enemy's fighting ability is not good. He does not have his own stronghold. The enemy's ability to move is bad; 2. The enemy is lonely; 3. The enemy disregards the guerrillas; 4. The guerrilla is able to hide and move closer to the enemy because of bad weather conditions such as heavy rain, strong winds, or fog.

B. The preparation for ambush.

Before conducting a raid, the guerrilla units need to do a good job of preparation. The guerrillas must do the following:

- a) Establish the time and signal to attack and assault.
- b) Establish the way to retreat and to assemble in case the attack fails.
- c) The guerrilla should carry rafts, lifebuoys, and rope in case he has to retreat across rivers or across mountains. He should take equipment to destroy or set fire to enemy blockhouses and billets.
- d) The guerrilla should carefully announce and distribute information about the raid to ensure success.

C. Keeping the plan at the top-secret level.

Although we may have a very good plan, it is very dangerous if we let the enemy know about it. We have to keep the raid plan secret. It is not necessary to explain all aspects of the plan to everybody in the unit. We should just explain the relevant part of the plan to each person who has a specific duty in that part of the plan. The entire plan information should only be explained to the entire unit when it is necessary. To keep our activities secret and deceive the enemy in a raid, we should start moving in a diversionary direction, and then, when we approach the attack site, we turn to the right direction.

3. Start deploying forces to the attack area.

- a) Guerrillas should travel on a new road. Do not use a wide or narrow one. Be careful of getting lost on the way because this leads to guerrillas being tired and late for the raid.

- b) Keep absolutely quiet during the operation. No one is allowed to use any kind of light or to cock their rifle. The only exceptions are when conducting reconnaissance or to avoid surprise fire.
- c) Guerrillas should conduct reconnaissance in mufti.³²⁰
- d) Guerrillas should avoid enemy sentries when marching. If we encounter enemy sentries, we should catch them alive or kill them quietly. We should not shoot them or make noise. If the guerrilla clashes with the enemy during an approach march, we should attack quickly to seize the most advantageous terrain.

4. Occupying attack positions.

- a) We should secretly occupy the places from which to launch the raid. Those places should not be too far or too near the enemy's location.
- b) We should summon our commanders quickly to assign their duties and explain the enemy's condition just before the fighting breaks out. It is best to capture the enemy sentries alive.
- c) We should observe the following principles when attacking: our force should be divided into two parts. The smaller part restrains the enemy and the larger part attacks him. We should have some small groups of guerrillas hiding along the enemy's route of retreat to attack him or prevent his combining with other forces. The guerrillas' duties are to ruin bridges and roads and to cut telephone wires. Guerrillas should be prepared to signal the attack when everything is ready.

5. Assault.

- a) The guerrillas should surprise the enemy with a broadsword attack right after getting the signal to attack. We should not shoot because it makes noise and it is less effective. It is better to use broadswords to kill the enemy.
- b) For example, in Trieu's ambush in Dương Phòng,³²¹ near Beijing in North China, the Japanese sentry was surprised and killed by the guerrillas. The other Japanese troops did not know anything until the guerrillas had closed on them. The guerrillas mainly used the broadsword to kill

³²⁰ Meaning in plain or ordinary clothes.

³²¹ Unknown location.

them. Some Japanese troops tried to resist the guerrillas but they were killed in the end. In that battle a small number of guerrillas killed a large number of Japanese troops. Also, more than a hundred Japanese troops were taken prisoner. We achieved victory by using the broadsword. If we had used guns, we could not have obtained such a complete victory. When asked, the Japanese troops always said that they were afraid of the guerrillas' broadswords.

- c) When the enemy retreats into blockhouses, we should burn the blockhouses and continue fighting.
- d) Although most of the guerrillas should withdraw after a raid, a few should remain to collect war booty and take care of prisoners of war. We should pursue and kill the fleeing enemy troops. But we should not follow them too far to avoid being attacked by their relief forces.
- e) If the raid has failed because the enemy is too strong—he has the benefit of good positions or he is supported by other enemy units—the guerrillas should quietly retreat. We should let a small number of guerrillas remain to cover the retreat. The destination of the retreating forces should be decided in advance.

6. Actions to take after the assault.

- a) After the raid, the company should withdraw to a place that is far from the attack location. The guerrillas that stayed at the battlefield collect war booty, take care of prisoners of war, and withdraw to a previously determined location. The wounded soldiers should be taken away quickly and safely.
- b) If the raid has been successful or the enemy's reinforcements cannot move to the raid site, the guerrillas can stay for a brief period of time to proselytize the people and kill reactionaries. At the same time, the guerrillas should stay far enough from the village to avoid being attacked by the enemy's air force. Prisoners of war should be questioned and proselytized and then released if we cannot take them with us. The guerrillas must be careful not to let released prisoners learn any secrets.

BASTION RAIDS

We have to plan carefully and cleverly.

- a) We should have spies living with the enemy to get information. The spies can be enemy soldiers. The spies must be able to coordinate closely with the guerrillas.

For example, a guerrilla unit that belonged to the Eighth Route Army killed more than 200 Japanese soldiers with the help of a large number of Chinese spies in Trú Châu rampart.

- b) The guerrillas should choose the place where the enemy is off his guard, break in to the bastion, and then silently attack.

For example, the Japanese troops occupied an airport in Yangmingbu³²² rampart that had four sides. But they had only built fortifications on three sides carefully. They did not reinforce the last side because it bordered a dangerous river. The commander of the guerrilla unit conducted a reconnaissance and knew that his troops could not be stalled by the mud if they ran across the river quickly. So the guerrillas attacked the rampart from the weak side and burned 20 Japanese airplanes and withdrew secretly.

- c) Dress like the enemy to attack them.

For example, a guerrilla unit that belonged to the Eighth Route Army dressed like Japanese soldiers to attack a small rampart in Xiyang. When they went to the Japanese bastion, the sentry could not recognize them, welcomed them, and let them enter. After they entered, the guerrillas suddenly attacked and then withdrew immediately.

- d) When the enemy goes out of his bastion, the guerrilla ambushes him and attacks his bastion.

³²² A reference to a surprise attack by the Eighth Route Army on the Japanese airport in Yangmingbu, Daixian County, Shanxi Province. On the night of October 19, 1937, the 3rd Battalion of the 769th Regiment of the Eighth Route Army's 129th Division, supported by the 1st and 2nd Battalions and the local people, secretly crossed the Hutuo River and slipped into the Japanese airport in Yangmingbu. They mounted a sudden attack and, during one hour of fierce fighting, burned down 24 airplanes and killed over 100 Japanese aggressors.

THE WAY TO COPE WITH ENEMY RAIDS.

The guerrillas always conduct raids to kill the enemy. The guerrillas should not allow themselves to be attacked by the enemy. Therefore, they must take precautions to win in case our forces are attacked by the enemy.

When living in a place for a long period of time, especially in a village, the guerrilla units must carefully organize their guards. People should not be allowed to enter or leave the village. The guerrilla units should have plans to respond to enemy raids. If the guerrilla is attacked, the main guerrilla force should immediately retreat and then conduct a surprise attack to help the troops who have been left behind. It is easier to attack the enemy if he thinks that our guerrilla force has run away without any attempt to conduct a defense.

CHAPTER 5: AMBUSH

An ambush means hiding in a place, waiting for an enemy force to pass, and then making a surprise attack on the enemy force. It is easier to succeed at an ambush than a raid. Therefore, guerrilla units, especially the new, less experienced, and less well-trained units, should pay more attention to the ways of conducting ambushes.

We must pay attention to the following when laying an ambush: reconnaissance and choosing the best ambush location, and after the ambush has been executed, wiping out the remaining enemy soldiers, transportation convoys, cavalry units, vehicles, and trains.

1. Reconnoitering the enemy situation.

To assure the success of an ambush, we must reconnoiter the enemy situation. If we do not do this, we will face danger. When reconnoitering, the commander must accurately assess the following:

- a) Departure times, routes, and destinations of enemy convoys.
- b) The number of enemy troops, type of service, equipment, capabilities, vehicles, and operation targets.
- c) The enemy's methods of communication, speed of march, and methods of reinforcement.

All reconnaissance information must be kept secret. Only the commander responsible for the ambush is allowed to know it.

2. Choosing an ambush site.

When choosing an ambush site, take notice of the following:

- a) Choose a good hiding place from where we can clearly observe the enemy, but the enemy cannot see us.
- b) Choose the place with advantageous terrain from where we can easily attack the enemy, but the enemy, especially with heavy equipment, cannot attack us.
- c) Choose a location with good terrain that allows us to easily withdraw, but where it is difficult for the enemy to attack us.
- d) Choose a place that is not under enemy control. If we find a good place for an ambush, but in range of enemy forces, we must leave it to choose another site.
- e) Choose one or two observation posts that allow us to easily observe the enemy and communicate quickly among ourselves.

Here are some prominent ambushes made by the Eighth Route Army guerrilla units at Đông Dương³²³ road, an important enemy transportation route in North China. The Chinese guerrilla units have conducted many ambushes against Japanese forces along this road. After being ambushed, the Japanese forces adopted an interesting tactic. They spread a rumor about the time when a Japanese transportation unit would pass on the road and, at the same time, they secretly sent troops to occupy vulnerable places on the road. Their objective was to wait for the guerrilla unit to come to the site to lay an ambush. Unfortunately for them, with the people's help, the guerrillas discovered this plan, but kept silent about it. The Japanese waited for two days, but the guerrillas did not come, so the Japanese had to withdraw. Later, when Japanese troops attempted to use the same tactics, the guerrilla unit had already sent troops to hide before the Japanese troops arrived. When the Japanese troops arrived they found that they had fallen into an ambush and were routed by the guerrillas.

³²³ Unknown Chinese location.

3. Moving to the ambush site.

- a) We must carefully plan the route to the ambush site. The route must be kept secret. It is better to choose a completely new route and to avoid a muddy road.
- b) We should send armed reconnaissance groups in civilian clothes ahead of the main body of troops. When troops pass through populated areas, they must wear civilian clothing.
- c) At the ambush site, troops must be silent. They may not smoke, chat, or make noise.

4. Conducting an ambush.

- a) Our ambush force must divide into two parts. The first part, normally one-third, is used to stop the enemy, while the second part of the ambush force is used to fight the enemy. The commander must stay in a convenient place from where he can clearly observe the enemy situation. From this position he can signal our troops to attack the enemy.
- b) Each unit and each guerrilla must thoroughly understand the mission, and the commander must correctly execute the plan to lead the troops in battle.
- c) If the enemy is few in number, we can block his advance and withdrawal routes and wipe him out. But if the enemy has a larger number of troops, we must divide them into two parts or three groups. Then we must attack the second or third groups to ensure success.
- d) When attacking the rear part of the enemy convoy, we must have some guerrillas harass the front and both sides of the convoy. If it is possible, we can destroy the roads and bridges to create disorder for the enemy and interrupt the mutual support between the front and rear groups.
- e) To begin the attack, we must do so in a consistent, rapid, and lightning manner. This is done so the enemy cannot respond. First, ignite a series of explosives or open strong small arms fire on the enemy convoy, then attack with knives and falchions (swords). This attack will cause the enemy to panic and he will not be able to resist. The commander must have a detailed, specific, and careful plan for the operation in order to reduce

our human losses to the minimum. It is of no value if we win but lose many human lives.

5. After the ambush succeeds.

After the ambush has succeeded, we must collect all our wounded men, war booty (and help the military prisoners), and quickly withdraw to avoid the enemy's reinforcements, especially if we were not able to wipe out the entire convoy.

The guerrilla unit not only waits for the enemy to come, but it also actively finds ways to attract and trap the enemy in its ambush.

For example, Japanese forces, garrisoned in Lưu Trang village, Xiyang County, North China, were harassed by the Uông's guerrilla unit squad, which fired a few bullets then withdrew to the ambush position. The Japanese forces ran after them and quickly fell into the trap. Almost all were killed. After receiving a report of this defeat, the Japanese sent 400 reinforcements to relieve the unit; again, they were caught in a snare on the way from Xiyang to Lưu Trang. The guerrillas had anticipated the Japanese actions.

If it is impossible to execute the ambush—for example, we may be ready to attack but find that the enemy is larger in number and has already taken strong positions—then, after opening heavy fire at the enemy, we must withdraw quickly and steadily without wavering. We should not finish the ambush if it will cause valued losses. In this case, the commander must be decisive to deliver quick and clever orders.

6. Ambush the enemy's isolated troops.

Permanently stationed enemy forces usually send out their communicators and suppliers who can easily be caught or killed by our ambushes. Sometimes we can gather valuable information from them. In some cases, we can use traps to attract them to secret and vulnerable places to be ambushed.

7. Ambush the enemy's transportation and food-collection convoys.

Ambushing enemy transportation convoys usually achieves success easily because these convoys are always heavy and slow. When conducting an ambush against these convoys, we must pay attention to the following:

- a) Choose places where the convoy will be vulnerable because it must climb or descend a slope, cross a river, pass through a curve, or drive blind alley roads.

- b) The object of ambushing the transportation convoy is to gain the supplies, not to wipe out enemy troops, so we must separate the transportation group from the escorts in order to easily wipe out the escorts.
- c) While attacking, we must direct heavy fire at the front and rear parts of the convoy in order to cause panic and disorder. Then we must wipe out all the enemy escort troops and gain war materiel.
- d) In case our troops are fewer in number than those of the enemy, we must cleverly disperse the enemy forces by shooting from everywhere in order to spread the enemy out, then we move to wipe them out individually.
- e) After the successful ambush, and if we assess that enemy reinforcements cannot come immediately, we can stay longer to collect war booty, take what we can, and destroy what we cannot take.

Utilizing this method of conducting ambushes, guerrilla units can deprive the enemy of lots of war materiel.

For example, one Japanese report stated, “Near the district of Dương Truyền at Bảo An and Quách villages,³²⁴ Red Army troops (called by the Japanese “The Eighth Route Army”) secretly contacted the local people and made several surprise attacks on our forces. They [the guerrillas] wiped out the escort and seized all the food, munitions, clothing, and military equipment. Such events have happened everywhere. It has created a real concern for us.”

There are three ways of ambushing the enemy’s food-collection convoys:

- a) Ambush the convoy on the road before they load the food.
- b) Wait for the food-collection convoy to stop at a village and for the troops to disperse to the houses to collect food, and then attack the weakest enemy group. Before assaulting the food-collection convoy, wipe out or arrest all escorts.
- c) If we are fewer in number, the best thing to do is to wait until the food-collection convoy has finished its work and then ambush on its way back to base. This type of ambush is the easiest way to win a victory because when the trucks have been heavily loaded, the enemy cannot pay attention to everything.

³²⁴ Unknown Chinese locations.

8. Ways to ambush cavalry, vehicles, trains, and ships.

Ambushing cavalry.

When ambushing cavalry, one must pay attention to the following three issues:

- a) Choose the narrow and vulnerable paths in order to make it difficult for the enemy to react.
- b) First, shoot the horses. Then wipe out the dismounted soldiers.
- c) The best time to attack is when the enemy cavalry has halted in a village. At that time, the soldiers are separated from horses and we can execute a surprise attack. To select the best time, we must send someone in civilian clothes to the village to decide the best time to make the attack and give the attack force a signal.

Ambushing vehicles.

When ambushing vehicles, one must pay attention to the following issues:

- a) Choose the up and down slopes, the curves, and the paths with potholes or river crossings for the attack site.
- b) Place obstacles: make holes or lay explosives to disrupt the enemy's travel.
- c) Attack the vehicles and escorts in the middle of the convoy. Then launch attacks against the front and the rear parts of the convoy. We can imprison or free enemy soldiers, but we must burn all vehicles.

This method has been used to gain success in vehicle ambushes. In North China, Japanese transportation convoys are ambushed every day.

The following is the example of the Dương guerrilla battalion's ambush on the way from Quảng Linh to Linh Nhạc.³²⁵ Before laying the ambush, the guerrillas had destroyed a segment of the road at a vulnerable place. They then organized the ambush. First, about 30 transportation vehicles on the way from Linh Nhạc to Quảng Linh got stuck at that place. Then about 40 other transportation vehicles, 10 armored cars, and 78 tanks on the way from Quảng Linh to Linh Nhạc got stuck. At that moment, after a careful assessment of the

³²⁵ Unknown locations, presumably places in China.

situation, the guerrillas began their attack and caused many losses among the Japanese troops. After that, the Japanese sent a unit of reinforcements, including a cavalry unit and five guns, but because the guerrillas had chosen a good place and used effective techniques, the guerrillas had killed several hundreds of Japanese soldiers and destroyed several dozen vehicles. In exchange the ambush cost the guerrillas only a few dozen wounded.

Ambushing trains.

While ambushing trains, one must pay attention to the following:

- a) Choose the entrances and exits of tunnels, the up and down slopes, the curves, the sides of up and down slopes, railways, and bridges.
- b) Before the ambush, we must disassemble the ties and screws of the railway or set up obstacles like trees or stones on the railway.
- c) When the train goes off the rails, it is time to assault. The guerrilla unit should be divided in three parts: the first one is to attack the escorts, the second part is to clear both sides of the train, and the third one is to clear the inside of the train. Our goal is to deprive the enemy of armament and equipment and to capture his troops.
- d) Secretly contact our agents who work inside the train to determine the moment to carry out the outside attacks with internal support.

Ambushing wood vessels.

Attack the bow and stern when the vessels are close to banks or curves of the river in order to force the vessel to a harbor or to sink it. When the attack has been completed, collect everything and free the enemy or imprison him.

When attacking vessels, we must have a large number of troops and be careful. Specifically, we must have strong gunfire to destroy the vessel's engine.

Assault enemy on the march.

- a) While marching, a guerrilla unit must have an advanced reconnaissance group under civil cover. This group must move at a convenient distance in the daytime. At nighttime, the distance must be shorter. If they discover strange events or the enemy, they must return to report to the unit commander who must go ahead of the column in order to give quick orders in certain situations.

- b) When meeting with the enemy, the commander must decide attack or withdraw without wavering. Because wavering at that moment is very dangerous.
- c) If the enemy number is fewer than ours and they are weaker than us, we must decide to attack and quickly find hiding places to wait for the enemy to pass, then open fire strongly and go out to storm them. When the enemy runs away, we can pursue them for short distances.
- d) If the enemy is greater in number and stronger or if we cannot determine the enemy's real strength, we must decide to withdraw without wavering. In case the enemy sees us when we are withdrawing, we must strongly open fire at them, force them to hide, and then rapidly withdraw.

For example, one guerrilla cavalry unit was marching on the western route near Baoding District in North China; they suddenly received information that several hundred Japanese troops were approaching from the opposite direction. The guerrilla unit hid along one of the roadsides and waited for the Japanese to pass. When the Japanese arrived the guerrilla cavalry attacked them. Within about ten minutes, Japanese troops had been routed leaving behind a lot of weapons and munitions.

Harass the enemy.

Guerrilla units can send some guerrillas to harass the enemy by shooting at enemy garrisons in order to disturb the enemy.

For example, one guerrilla unit, which operated along the railway from Beijing to Wuhan, one day, exploiting the dark night, moved close to Tứ district³²⁶ and killed two Japanese guards. The guerrillas then moved to Quang Lạc town³²⁷ to destroy the railroad. When the Japanese found out about the attacks, the Japanese forces from both Tu district and Quang Lạc town sent troops to hit the guerrilla unit, but, because of the darkness, the two units became confused and each thinking the other was the guerrilla unit, fired on each other all night. This mistake led to the deaths of several hundred Japanese soldiers.

One of the methods used to harass enemy troops is called “sparrow.” It means guerrillas hide in scattered places in the mountains and fire at enemy

³²⁶ Unknown Chinese location.

³²⁷ Unknown Chinese location.

soldiers when they pass vulnerable points. This pushes the enemy into the dilemma of trying to determine from where we are firing and where they can go. Although this method cannot destroy all the enemy troops, it can cause them to panic.

CHAPTER 6: DEFENSIVE MEASURES

Defense means “hold out.” We stay in a fixed place; when the enemy comes, we “hold out.” As has been said previously, guerrilla tactics are to attack the enemy before the enemy attacks us. If we let the enemy attack us before we can attack him and we assume a defensive posture, we are at a disadvantage. But this can happen in some special cases, such as when our guerrilla unit is operating in enemy territory and it is attacked by surprise. Or, after executing a surprise attack, we must conduct a defense in order to withdraw our main force. Additionally, we may need to conduct defensive operations to defend one of our revolutionary bases. These defense measures are conducted according to the principles of active defense. This means we are in a defensive posture but we conduct offensive operations so that enemy cannot freely attack us.

A. Defensive measures outside the guerrilla base.

1. The guerrilla unit must maintain strict and secret reconnaissance and guard operations.

The guerrilla unit that operates in areas outside the guerrilla base where the enemy is constantly present must be very careful to ensure that the enemy cannot discover and attack it. To do this, guerrillas must have close relations with the local people in order to recruit good people into the reconnaissance groups located around the enemy garrison and along the roads that the enemy frequently uses. The duty of these groups is to report any enemy moves to the guerrilla unit. At the same time, the guerrilla unit must organize a strict guard at all times around the garrison and its approach roads consisting of two or three layers.

2. Do not deploy troops in disadvantaged places.

Guerrilla units should not deploy troops in uncertain places that are difficult to defend. In specific cases we may deploy troops in those places, but we should generally position troops in conveniently situated houses where they can be organized in a strict guard operation. If there are reactionary and unpatriotic Vietnamese in those places, we must stop them from going in and out,

and we may imprison them. But remember that the best way to guard a place is to base our actions on the help of the local people.

3. Be ready and dig trenches.

Reconnaissance defensive positions are not enough; guerrilla units should prepare to be attacked by surprise. Regardless of their location, guerrilla units must be ready to concentrate to deal with the enemy. The commander and communicator of the unit must stay together at a reserve concentration place. Weapons must be ready. Signals for attack and withdrawal must be agreed upon in advance.

On the route to the assembly site, the guerrillas must have portable obstacles that are easy to store. We must dig trenches along both sides of withdrawal routes. Unused roads must be blocked. The guerrilla unit should organize two defensive lines of trenches.

4. Surprise attacks.

When the unit has been attacked by surprise, we must immediately make a decision to counterattack or withdraw. When withdrawing, we must deploy one group to delay the enemy. If we have been attacked while we are in garrison, we must quickly organize a counterattack and withdraw.

B. Measures to defend a guerrilla base.

The guerrilla base has important facilities such as stores, schools, and clinics. Don't let the enemy easily invade our bases, but don't die to defend these things either. To defend a guerrilla base, pay attention to the following:

1. Conduct an active defense with the active employment of our forces.

When the enemy carries out the attack on our guerrilla base, if we have enough force, we can send a small part to occupy vulnerable places and dig trenches in order to constrain the enemy. In this way our main force units can organize a surprise attack on the enemy.

When the enemy attacks our guerrilla bases, he usually comes along several roads and reunifies to conduct the attack. If our guerrilla unit is strong enough, we can send our troops to attack the enemy on different roads, and our main force can wipe out the isolated enemy. If they can assemble their forces, then our main force must choose the enemy's weakest point to attack, attack from both sides, and divide the enemy forces into segments to wipe them out. This method can only be applied when we have enough troops. If we do not have enough troops, we must elude the enemy. If the enemy cannot find us, he can-

not attack us. And, when the enemy is not alert, we can make a surprise attack on him, thereby destroying as many as possible.

2. Do all the best things to impede the enemy.

We must try our best to impede enemy movement. We must especially impede mechanized infantry and cavalry forces by destroying roads, bridges, and dams.

3. Apply the scorched-earth policy.

We must apply the scorched-earth policy in order to destroy the enemy's food supply lines, holdings, and service troops.

4. Call upon the people to take part in the fight against the enemy.

To fight the enemy, the guerrilla unit not only carries out its own attacks, it also should call upon the people to take an active part in the fight. The people can destroy roads and bridges, cut barbed wire, execute the scorched-earth policy, reconnoiter the enemy situation, keep watch on enemy forces, and transport goods and wounded persons. In the next step, the people can organize their armed groups to help the guerrilla unit fight the enemy.

5. While the enemy is attacking our guerrilla base, we attack him at the rear.

This method aims to break off the connection of the forward deployed troops with the rear ones. We have to destroy roads and bridges, cut barbed wire, and conduct surprise attacks on enemy transportation convoys and reinforcements.

6. Apply the "sparrow" or "Mán" methods³²⁸

While the enemy is moving toward our guerrilla base, we disperse our force in different places like sparrows in mountains. They open fire at the enemy force, especially at their officers. This method cannot defeat the enemy, but it can cause them a lot of casualties and create disorder in their ranks. As a result, they will withdraw.

For example, in northern China a Japanese force divided into six columns to attack the Chinese guerrillas located to the south of Chính Thái;³²⁹ from six different directions. This force was attacked by the Chinese guerrillas using the "sparrow" method. Many Japanese were killed and they were forced to withdraw.

³²⁸ The Mán are an ethnic people of Northern Việt Nam. See footnote 317, p. 442.

³²⁹ Unknown Chinese location.

CHAPTER 7: PURSUIT TACTICS

When the enemy realizes he is losing and has to withdraw, the guerrilla must take advantage of the enemy's difficulties in pursuing him and to wipe him out. However, do not pursue him for so long that you meet his reinforcements.

When the enemy has withdrawn, the guerrilla unit has to send some guerrillas to clean up the battlefield by collecting all booty, aiding our wounded guerrillas, and dealing with the enemy prisoners. The main force of the guerrilla company must withdraw rapidly to prevent enemy bombardment. We can stay longer to carry out propaganda only when we are sure that the enemy reinforcements cannot come.

If the enemy is defeated near our guerrilla base, we must pursue him to wipe out his forces while urging help from the people.

CHAPTER 8: WITHDRAWAL

It should be acknowledged that the method of withdrawal is important in guerrilla warfare because a guerrilla unit must withdraw immediately after fighting whether it has succeeded or failed to accomplish its mission. Sometimes, it should withdraw at once and stop fighting because it is clear that the enemy is too strong.

Usually, there is no difficulty if our attacks against the enemy have been successful. Moreover, the guerrilla unit should be prepared to withdraw in order to avoid being defeated by the enemy. After it has withdrawn, the guerrilla unit can launch an offensive if it calculates carefully and realizes with 100% certainty that its attacks can succeed. In contrast, it shouldn't fight if there is even a little doubt or hesitation that it may not succeed. This will avoid the problem of failing in an operation and then needing to conduct a withdrawal operation. However, in some cases, such as an unlucky defeat followed by a forced withdrawal, or confronting a strong enemy and being unable to succeed, then having to withdraw and being chased by the enemy, the guerrilla leader should pay attention to the five following measures:

- (1) First and foremost, it is necessary to choose some brave and smart pioneers in the guerrilla unit to fight against the enemy in order to support the withdrawal of the majority of the guerrillas. While withdrawing, the unit shouldn't divide into small groups, because by doing so, the guerrilla soldiers can easily lose their will and, perhaps, they may lose their way

as well. In some unavoidable situations, it may be necessary to divide into small groups; however, the unit must have a plan to move to an assembly area.

- (2) The chief and vice chief for political affairs of the unit must strongly show their will, attitude, and leadership ability. The more difficulty and danger there is, the more these two people must volunteer and go ahead in order to lead their troops.
- (3) Even if being chased or run after by the enemy, guerrilla units still have to maintain contact with the local people (or populace) and encourage them to support the guerrillas' cause. They can help by supplying food, securing road guides, maintaining security, assisting in surveillance, safeguarding people and places, and even fighting against the enemy.
- (4) An appropriate plan should be made when withdrawing. Withdrawing troops (guerrilla men) must identify the way (or road) to be used, and they must calculate carefully and thoughtfully how they will withdraw. It is especially important to avoid attacks from the machine (mechanized) and cavalry forces of the enemy. When troops cross a road, the traces should be swept away. The route of withdrawal should follow the shortcut (road) and the operation should be conducted at night. Or the unit can go publicly one way then secretly make a U- turn and go another way. The unit can find a new way to go, or make up and dress in clothes as the normal civilians or soldiers of the enemy while withdrawing. The withdrawing guerrillas may need to travel very fast and cover more than 50 km per day.
- (5) When staying far away from the enemy, the guerrilla unit should find a good place and begin training for local people in order to make that place become a steady troop station (stop site). At the same time, the guerrillas must reorganize their unit for the next operations.

All the measures mentioned above are applied in case the enemy is so strong that it is impossible to fight against him, thus forcing a withdrawal. If the enemy is weak, the guerrilla units can find a good place, hide, and ambush the enemy when he goes across the area, then withdraw. However, the guerrillas should be careful and never take risks.

The guerrillas should pay attention to the problem of withdrawing in a force that has some support people such as medical staff, engineers, etc., who

support the guerrilla units; defending these people and helping them withdraw safely should always be a high priority. However, in peacetime, these people should be trained on how to respond to such a difficult situation as withdrawal. In particular, they must learn to maintain order, to keep calm, and to follow the predetermined plan.

CHAPTER 9: SABOTAGE

Sabotage is a vital part of guerrilla warfare. Sabotage may prevent the enemy's machine (mechanized) and cavalry forces from conducting offensive operations, and it may delay his infantry forces.

Sabotage operations need the support and assistance of the local people. At the same time, only when the local people create a situation of “no-man's-land” can the destruction be most effective. Wherever the enemy moves, all roads and bridges should be destroyed. The enemy will fall into a miserable situation of hunger and thirst (no food, no water).

A. The essential principles of sabotage:

- (1) Before carrying out sabotage activities, the plan should be examined to determine how much damage or loss it will cause the enemy and what damage will affect our operations (against the enemy).
- (2) Before conducting sabotage operations, it is essential to understand the local enemy situation. The roads and bridges that are to be the target of the sabotage operation should be examined and studied carefully in terms of their locations, their shapes, and their natures.
- (3) During the sabotage process, a support group should be organized. This support group has the responsibility to protect the people who perform the actual sabotage mission. This support group must be located at the places where the enemy may come and go. If the enemy is weak, this group can resolve the situation itself. Or, if that is impossible, it can avoid the enemy who are not near the target location. This group must protect and help the people who do the sabotage mission to withdraw safely.
- (4) Some factors of time, opportunity, and place should be considered:
 - a. **Time:** Sabotage operations should be conducted at night because it is easiest to keep the movements of the sabotage group secret.

b. Opportunity: When planning a sabotage operation, pay attention to the time when the action is to be carried out to ensure it occurs when it will create the most damage to the enemy while it provides the greatest benefits for us.

For example: We know the time and date enemy vehicles use a certain road. We organize an operation to destroy this road and its bridges before the next time and date the enemy will use it; therefore, we cause the damage to the enemy. On the other hand, if we know which road that the enemy will take to attack us, we destroy that road and hide nearby; when the enemy comes to the destroyed section of road, they will encounter trouble and difficulties. At that time, we suddenly ambush the enemy force.

c. Place: The place we choose for a sabotage operation should fulfill two requirements. First, the enemy does not patrol it vigorously; therefore it can be easily destroyed. Second, the place must be important and very difficult of access. This will ensure that the damage will not be easy to correct or repair.

B. The sabotage methods:

1. For destroying iron wires (communications wire for telephone or telegraph systems).

The iron wires across a river, mountain, or T-junction crossroads should be selected for destruction because damage at these places is difficult to repair. When the sabotage action attracts the enemy and he comes and repairs it, we can launch a surprise attack (on the repair party). When we are conducting this operation it is important to choose a good place to hide.

After the destruction process has been completed, all the remains, such as telegraph poles and iron wire nets, must be removed in order to prevent the enemy from reusing these materials. The iron wires that we can take for salvage we should take; the ones that cannot be salvaged should be destroyed.

If we do not want the enemy to find out that we have sabotaged his wire in a certain place, we can connect the fuse-wire with the iron wire, then put the fuse-wire down to the land. If there is an iron pole, we can use the fuse-wire to connect the iron wire with the iron pole, thus creating an electric current that goes through the iron pole down to the land. If the iron wire has a rubber or plastic coating, we can cut it open and take a piece of the iron wire out, then

cover the rubber or plastic to make it appear to be a piece of undamaged wire. By doing so, the enemy will find it difficult to determine the exact location of the break. Caution must be taken to avoid being electrocuted while engaged in the act of destroying the iron wire. Leather gloves should be worn and the work should be stopped immediately if there is a storm and thunder.

2. For destroying the bridges.

There are all kinds of bridges such as wooden bridges, bamboo bridges, or float bridges (multi-boat linkage), and there are many ways of sabotage. These include burning, disassembling the wood or bamboo into separate pieces, and disconnecting the boats. If the bridge is built of rock, destruction can be executed by digging or demolishing it with dynamite or other explosives. Similarly, if a bridge is made of iron, an engineer is needed to destroy it with explosives.

3. For destroying the railway.

The place chosen for destruction must be difficult to repair. The method of destruction is to pull out the screws or bolts (that hold the rails to the railroad ties). This will make the railway unusable. There are other ways that can be used to destroy a railroad if the sabotage party has an engineer and enough tools to do so.

4. For destroying roads.

There are several ways to destroy roads: First, select a place where it is easy to hide and organize a surprise attack or ambush to conduct the sabotage of the road. Second, if there is no need for hiding, a place that is difficult to repair should be chosen. A bend in the road, a place where the road goes uphill, a downhill grade on the road, or a place where the road crosses a river should be considered. Third, to deceive and harm the enemy, after the sabotage party has finished destroying the road section, boards can be used to pave the road. After the road has been “paved” soil can be spread over the boards to hide the damage from the enemy. When enemy vehicles reach this section of the road, they will be damaged immediately. Fourth, if the road goes between two mountains, it is possible to fill the roadway up with rocks. Fifth, if the road is located at low terrain, it may be possible to flood the road with water from a nearby dam.

5. For destroying a bastion, citadel, rampart, or other type of fortification.

Fortifications are the good places for the enemy to occupy to protect or fight against us, because they have high-quality guns. When we take over for-

tifications such as bastions or citadels, sabotage should be carried out immediately because we cannot use these places to fight against the enemy who has high-quality guns.

For example: In North China, guerrilla units under the Eighth Military Division³³⁰ usually organized the local people to destroy roads, railways, bridges, and all iron wires [communications wire] of the Japanese troops. In only one night, dozens of kilometers of road and railways have been destroyed; the Japanese had to spend large sums of money and assign many troops to repair the damage and overcome the problems. However, these facilities have been destroyed again and again.

CHAPTER 10: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

In guerrilla warfare, information and communications should be arranged and organized quickly, firmly, and carefully. Without connecting information and communications with other units, the guerrilla unit would be isolated and thus not capable of doing anything.

Most of the information and communications of the guerrilla unit rely on local people. Guerrilla leaders should choose the people who are responsible for information and communications. They should choose people with nimble, reliable, and clever characters and qualities. These people should be able to walk through the shortcut, ride a horse, drive a personal vehicle, or travel by boat to deliver information. In some urgent cases, the information delivery should be carried out by many people, and they should use many different ways in order to ensure the information goes through because if one courier gets in trouble, the others can complete the task. Similarly, location and time of rendezvous should also be varied. The signal for a rendezvous should be predetermined. Here are some examples: Sound of a bird (if the *rendez-vous* place is located near a mountain); the sound of a dog barking (if the *rendez-vous* place is near a village). On the way to an operation, if marking a sign is needed, it is possible to mark the trunk of a tree if the unit is operating in the mountains. It is possible to mark a special sign on a wall if the operation is in a village. Communications with each other can be implemented by different signals at different points of time; for instance, at night it can be by lighting a fire, and during the day it can be by letting smoke out. When the guerrilla unit

³³⁰ Probably the Chinese Communist Party's Eighth Route Army.

has grown, information and communication can be transmitted by the iron wire [telephone or telegraph] or wireless [radio].

CHAPTER 11: OPERATIONS

While operating, the guerrillas should ensure they understand the following factors: Light “luggage”: everything taken along with the guerrillas is very light; therefore, only necessary things can be taken; Quickness or Rapidity: guerrilla units must ensure that they move as quickly as possible.; Secrecy: operations must be kept secret from the enemy and the country people.

While operating, it is necessary to send a disguised scout ahead. This person must pay attention to:

- (1) Reconnoitering the defenses and dispositions of the enemy in the area of operations.
- (2) Examining and detaining suspected people who have been met on the route of the operation.
- (3) Informing the guerrilla unit of the best way to avoid or secretly settle [neutralize] enemy sentries.
- (4) Reporting immediately to the chief of the guerrilla unit information to decide whether to fight or not when making contact with enemy troops.
- (5) Marking signs on the way to the operation to announce news and information needed for the upcoming operation. The last person must thoroughly erase all the signs.

While operating, if there are enemy troops in front of the guerrilla unit, the chief of the unit must go ahead and the vice chief for political affairs must go last. On the other hand, if there are enemy troops behind the unit, the chief of the unit must go last. If the enemy troops are on the left and right flanks of the unit, the chief of the unit must position himself in the middle of the unit.

CHAPTER 12: GARRISON OPERATIONS (BIVOUACS)

When establishing garrisons, the guerrilla unit should be careful to choose favorable places for rest and defense. If the site is far away from the enemy and it is located in difficult terrain, it is possible to establish a garrison in a village where the guerrillas will not need to worry about a surprise attack by the enemy. If this is not the case, the guerrilla unit should be very careful while garrisoning these locations.

- (1) The guerrillas should not establish a garrison in a village; instead, they should move into the mountains and establish their garrison in the mountainous areas.
- (2) It would be better to garrison one place for one night. If there is an urgent need, it is possible to change the garrison location several times in one night. When approaching the site of the garrison, the entry and exit of all people must be strictly controlled.
- (3) Guards need to be cautious at all times.

Terrain study. Although garrisons can be established anywhere, the head of the unit has to study the terrain carefully. This includes finding the ways for moving forward or withdrawing, the way to respond if the unit is suddenly attacked by the enemy. At the same time, the head of the unit must decide the location for an assembly area and to have the place guarded.

During rest time. All guerrillas must gather in one place. They should not scatter the force in many places. Weapons and equipment must be close at hand; if needed, guns must be ready to fire.

CHAPTER 13: GUERRILLA BASE

While operating and fighting the enemy, the guerrilla unit should have some stopping places as bases. The guerrilla unit stores food, medicine, and ammunition in these places as reserves for its activities. Sometimes the unit goes there for rest and training. These places must be protected by difficult terrain with many obstacles and it should be hard to access these bases. Additionally, the guerrilla unit must be supported or helped by the sympathetic local people.

When the guerrilla unit grows strong and large, the first and initial base of the unit may become a permanent guerrilla base, particularly after the guerrilla unit sweeps the enemy away and establishes a revolutionary government in the area. If the regional (guerrilla) government is not established, the guerrilla base is hard to set up and can never be reinforced.

When there is a revolutionary government in the region and a permanent base, the guerrilla unit can develop its forces and become a regular army. A regular army is organized with certain standards for staff, discipline, uniform, equipment, and living.

Appeal for General Insurrection³³¹

August 1945

Source: *Hồ Chí Minh toàn tập*, Tập 3, Chính trị Quốc gia - Sự thật, Hanoi, 2011, pp. 595-596.

Translation: Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1961, pp. 157-159.

Dear compatriots,

Four years ago in one of my letters I called on you to unite together. Because unity is strength, only strength, enables us to win back independence and freedom.

At present, the Japanese army is crushed. The National Salvation movement has spread to the whole country. The Revolutionary Front for the Independence of Việt Nam (Việt Minh) has millions of members from all social strata: intellectuals, peasants, workers, businessmen, soldiers, and from all nationalities in the country: Kinh, Thổ, Nùng, Mường, Mán, etc. In the Front our compatriots march side by side without discrimination as to age, sex, religion or fortune.

Recently, the Việt Minh Front convened the Việt Nam People's Congress and appointed the National Liberation Committee to lead the entire people in the resolute struggle until national independence is won.

This is a great advance in the history of the struggle waged for nearly a century by our people for their liberation.

This is a fact that enraptures our compatriots and fills me with great joy.

However, we cannot consider this as good enough. Our struggle will be a long and hard one. Because the Japanese are defeated, we shall not be liberated

³³¹ The National Congress held on August 16, 1945, at Tân Trào (Tuyên Quang province) was convened by the Việt Minh General Committee. Present at the Congress were 60 representatives of various political parties, mass organizations, and nationalities. The Congress approved the ten policies and the order of general insurrection issued by the Việt Minh Front, and appointed the Việt Nam National Liberation Committee which was the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Việt Nam presided by Comrade Hồ Chí Minh. After the closing of the Congress, President Hồ Chí Minh wrote this letter calling on the people throughout the country to rise up and reconquer independence.

overnight. We still have to make further efforts and carry on the struggle. Only a united struggle will bring us independence.

The Việt Minh Front is at present the basis of the struggle and solidarity of our people. Join the Việt Minh Front, support it, make it greater and stronger!

At present, the National Liberation Committee is, so to speak, in itself our provisional government. Unite around it and see to it that its policies and orders are carried out throughout the country!

In this way, our Fatherland will certainly win independence and our people will certainly win freedom soon.

Dear compatriots,

The decisive hour in the destiny of our people has struck. Let us stand up with all our strength to free ourselves!

Many oppressed peoples the world over are vying with each other in the march to win back their independence. We cannot allow ourselves to lag behind.

Forward! Forward! Under the banner of the Việt Minh Front, move forward courageously!

APPENDIX

THE PRISON DIARY

August 28, 1942 - September 16, 1943

Foreword

July 1946, Paris.

In the reception-room of that palace on the right bank of the river, for a quarter of an hour, a hale and hearty journalist heckled a thin man with deep marks of suffering and privation on his face, who had in front of him a small vase of pink roses.

Roundabout were nearly one hundred reporters and observers from all countries.

“Mr. President, you are a communist, aren’t you?” the journalist asked.

“Yes,” the man replied sedately.

“Have you been in the Resistance?”

“Yes.”

“How long?”

“About forty years.”

“Have you been in prison, too?” It was clear what the journalist was driving at.

“Yes.”

“What prison?”

“Many, sir.”

“Long?”

The thin man looked at the hale and hearty journalist with a faint smile and said, “In prison, time is always long, you know.”

The reply given in French was prompt, clear and unexpected.

Was it said as a reproach, as irony, or as humor?

What is certain is that at that instant Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Americans in the room were astonished to notice that the goatee-bearded scholar could smile in Paris or in London as well as in Hanoi; it was the inscrutable smile of a wise man whose vision stretched far beyond today.

Have you any further questions, journalist?

“In prison, time is always long.”

August 1942, Asia.

The second year of the war was drawing to a close. The Japanese took possession of Indochina. But new forces emerged. In Việt Nam a resistance base was firmly established in the uplands.

One day, near the Sino-Vietnamese border, Chiang Kai-shek's police arrested a man about whom they knew nothing except that he was called Hồ Chí Minh, that he wanted to go to Chongqing and that he claimed to be a representative of the Vietnamese patriots.

Who was this Hồ Chí Minh? Around 1926 or 1927, there existed a Vietnamese patriot by the name of Nguyễn Ái Quốc—known to all the police in the Far East—who used to travel about this seething region of the world. But Nguyễn the Patriot was dead.

This man looked the same age. His clothes were very simple, but small details about him revealed that he was not an ordinary man, and, strange to say, he wanted to see the Chinese authorities in Chongqing. This was enough to clap a man in prison.

First he was put in Qingxi jail; then without any plausible reason, he was taken to Nanning; from Nanning he was sent to Guilin and from Guilin to Liuzhou, where he retraced his steps...

Before dawn, when the stars faded away, he was sent on his way on a lead, with hands bound, behind a pig carried by two guards. At nightfall, when the birds returned to their nests, he was cooped up in some makeshift jail near a rubbish heap, happy to have one leg shackled so as to avoid a night's sleep on the edge of the latrine.

Transferred here and there by circuitous routes, he crossed thirteen districts of Guangxi province, was confined in thirty prefecture and district prisons for fourteen months in all and kept in custody at Liuzhou from where he later took the road back to the frontier, which he had crossed two years before.

Despite the days of fifty-kilometer walks, despite sleepless nights, hunger, cold, fever, the cangues, the prisoner kept his smile, which testified to his inexhaustible confidence in life, in its victory over evil and death.

Arms and legs bound, who can prevent you from listening to a bird's song, from enjoying the fragrance of flowers? Do solitude and inaction weigh heavily on you? The autumn moon is bright in the sky. Does the languor of the evening twilight stupefy your will? Look at that light in the distance:

To the wood seeking shelter a bird flies, forlorn.

Leisurely a lone cloud floats across the expanse of heaven.

In yonder mountain hamlet a girl is grinding corn.

The grain ground, a hot fire glows red in the oven.

The police watch every detail of your deeds and gestures. Who can forbid you to jot down the uniqueness of a moment, an ineffable situation, the drama behind a smile. The poetry of things is in the heart of life. And if poetry could be of any use in life, it should be in the circumstances described above.

Chinese prisons at that time were much more like a Court of Miracles than the Santé cells.³³² They were atrocious spots full of misery, filth, corruption, disease, and alive with gamblers, bugs, opium addicts, itch-mites, and syphilitics. Apart from that, you lived a family-like life, preparing your tea on a personal stove and eating with gusto, when there was something to eat, after a good hunt for lice.

Sometimes in the evening, sitting in the dark, our prisoner watched all those people asleep and awake, innocent-faced men on the ground, bugs on the walls crawling like “tanks on maneuvers,” and mosquitoes “attacking in squadrons.” The world was at war, while he suffered in a prison cell, far from his country, far from his comrades. It was at such moments that he took out a worn note-book and jotted down his impressions of the day. He wrote in the language of his jailers, who would have found suspicious anything written in Vietnamese.

That was the origin of a hundred-odd quatrains and Tang poems written in classical Chinese adorned here with a newly coined word, there with a popular expression. All were sketches taken from life and they made up what might be called the prisoner’s diary.

We have translated that diary for our friends abroad. And the prisoner, as you have guessed, was none other than Nguyễn the Patriot, the man who received pressmen in the reception-room of the Royal Monceau hotel one afternoon in July 19461. the year that should have seen the beginning of Franco-Vietnamese reconciliation.

Within the framework of this collection of translated poems, we do not wish to expatiate on the political life of the author. Besides, this would be unnecessary, for Hồ Chí Minh’s name has since long been well known to the public in the West.

Neither will we make a critical study of his poetry in this modest collection of texts. We refrain from taking the place of the reader, who is to make his own assessment.

Nevertheless we deem it necessary to make the following little remark:

³³² Prison de la Santé—a well-known jail in Paris. During the Nazi occupation, eighteen communists were executed there.

Nowadays there are many memoirs of great statesmen. Memoirs are part of history, and history, as you know, can be told as one likes.

The public, especially in Europe, is rarely given the opportunity to read poems by those men. This for many reasons, of which one is worth noting, however impertinent it may seem: Great statesmen are great chiefly because of their work, their thought and their character, not always because of their sensibility. Now, poetry is something most intimate to man. It can hardly tell lies or else the poet is not a poet. So that they don't necessarily gain by revealing their inner selves.

In such men as Hồ Chí Minh intelligence and sensibility are one. There is no secret door between his public and private lives. For him the sight of suffering is a call both to action and to poetical expression.

A rose blossoms, and then fades.
It blooms and withers—listless.
But its scent the cells invades
And arouses the prisoners' bitterness.

This small notebook should enable us to understand its author much better than lengthy memoirs could do.

PHAN NHUAN

Prison Diary

Thy body is in jail.
But thy spirit, never.
For the great cause to prevail,
Let thy spirit soar, higher!



Beginning the Diary

I've never been fond of chanting poetry;
But what else can I do in thralldom?
These long days I'll spend composing poesy:
Singing poems may help in the wait for freedom.



Arrested in Glory Street

In Glory Street, cruel irony! shame was brought on me
Deliberately, so as to retard my journey.
Groundlessly I was accused of the crime of spying.
And a man's honor, for no reason, was reduced to nothing.



Entering Zingxi District Prison

In jail veteran inmates greet the newcomer;
High above white clouds are chasing black ones away.
In the sky both white clouds and black freely have gone their way;
On earth a free man is to stay a prisoner.

Hard Is the Road of Life

I

Having traveled o'er steep mount and deep vale,
How could I expect in the plain to meet even greater danger?
In the mountain I suffered no harm when meeting a tiger;
In the plain I ran into men and was thrown in jail.

II

I am a delegate of the Vietnamese people
On his way to China to meet an important official.
Why should a storm break out o'er a serene scenery
And I be flung into prison by way of hospitality?

III

A loyal man, with my heart torn by no remorse,
I'm suspected of being a Chinese traitor somehow.
It has ne'er been easy in life to steer one's course,
But how difficult it all has become now!



Morning

I

Every morning the sun, emerging o'er the wall,
Beams on the gate, but the gate is not yet open.
Inside the prison lingers a gloomy pall,
But we know outside the sun has risen.

II

Once awake everyone starts louse-hunting.
At eight the gong sounds for the morning meal.
Come on, let's go and our stomachs try to fill:
After such long misery happier days must be coming.

Noon

In the cells how nice it is to have a doze!
For hours we lie about in deep repose.
I dream of riding a dragon up to heaven.
Waking, I find myself still pining in prison.



Afternoon

Two o'clock: the doors open to make the cells airy.
Everyone lifts his eyes for a look at the heavens.
O free spirits roaming the sky of liberty!
Know you, one of your peers is languishing in irons?



Evening

The meal over, the sun sinks below the western horizon.
From all corners rise folk tune and popular ditty:
Suddenly this dismal, gloomy Qingxi prison
Is turned into a little music academy.



Prison Meals

For each meal only one bowl of rice reddish brown;
No vegetables, no salt, even no broth to wash it down.
If you get food sent in you may soothe your hunger;
Failing this, you'll famish and can only cry to Mother!

The Flute of a Fellow-Prisoner

Nostalgically a flute wails in the ward.
Sad grows the lone, mournful the melody.
Miles away, beyond passes and streams, in infinite melancholy.
A lonely wife mounts a tower to gaze abroad.



The Stocks

I

Opening a hungry mouth like a wicked monster,
Each night the stocks seize the ankles of the prisoner.
Their jaws grip the right leg of the wretch;
Only the left is free to bend and stretch.

II

There happen in this world things even stranger:
People jostle to get their feet in priority bound.
For once locked, they can look forward to peaceful slumber;
Otherwise, where could they lie undisturbed on this crowded ground?



Learning to Play Chess

I

To while the time away we learn to play chess.
Horse and foot are engaged in pursuit endless.
Move with lightning speed either to attack or defend:
Talent and nimble feet will give you the upper hand.

II

Look far ahead, and ponder deeply.
 Be resolute: attack and attack incessantly.
 A wrong move and even your two chariots³³³ are useless;
 Come the right juncture: a pawn can bring you success.

III

The forces on both sides are balanced equally.
 But victory will come only to one player.
 Advance, retreat—do both with unerring strategy:
 Only then can you be called a great commander.



Moonlight

In jail there is neither flower nor wine.
 What could one do when the night is so exquisite?
 To the window I go and look at the moonshine.
 Through the bars the moon gazes at the poet.



The Water Ration

The water ration is half a basin only:
 You can either wash or make tea, just as you please.
 If you want to clean your face, then go without tea.
 Should you be keen on tea, well, you can't wash your phiz.

³³³ The most powerful men on a Chinese chessboard.

Mid-Autumn Festival

I

Like a round mirror the moon shines in mid-autumn,
Beaming on the earth her silvery light.
You who enjoy the festival in your family's bosom,
Think of those in prison and their sorrowful plight.

II

In jail we also celebrate mid-autumn.
But moon and wind carry a tinge of sadness.
Barred from enjoying the autumn moon in freedom,
My heart wanders after her across the heavens boundless.



Gambling

Ordinary folk who gamble are at once arrested.
But once locked up they can play games to their hearts' content.
And so jailed gamblers are often heard to lament:
“Why did we never think of this place blessed?”



Jailed Gamblers

The State supplies no food to those jailed for gambling,
So they may learn to mend their ways all the sooner.
Each day “affluent” inmates can enjoy copious eating.
As for the poor, hunger makes their eyes and mouths water.

Transferred to Tianbao on “Double Ten”³³⁴ Day

Every house is decked with lantern and flower:
 It's national day, the whole country is filled with delight.
 But just now I'm put in chains for a transfer:
 Contrary winds persist in hampering the eagle's flight.



Out on the Road

Out on the road we grow fully aware of the difficulties.
 One peak hardly climbed, another above us rises.
 But once we've struggled up to the highest pass,
 Ten thousand *li* at one glance can our eyes encompass.



Dusk

To the wood seeking shelter a bird flies, forlorn.
 Leisurely a lone cloud floats across the expanse of heaven.
 In yonder mountain hamlet a girl is grinding corn.
 The grain ground, a hot fire glows red in the oven.



Overnight Stop at Longquan

All day my “two horses”³³⁵ have trotted, tireless.
 When night comes I'm served with “five-spice chicken.”³³⁶
 Bedbugs and cold draughts attack, merciless.
 How welcome, the dawn-announcing song of an oriole golden!

³³⁴ Tenth of October, Chinese National Day under the Kuomintang regime.

³³⁵ Jokingly, his two legs.

³³⁶ To cook this dish, the legs of the chicken are tied crosswise. The phrase is a jocular description of the way the prisoner's limbs are bound at night.

Tiandong

For each meal only a bowl of rice gruel:
The hungry stomach moans, wails, and curls.
Three yuan of rice is not enough to feed a man well
When wood sells as dear as cinnamon and rice as pearls.



Arrival at Tianbao Jail

Today I walked fifty-three kilometers.
My hat and clothes are soaked through, my shoes in tatters.
Without a place to sleep, all through the night
I sit on the edge of the latrine, waiting for light.



Visiting Her Husband in Prison

On this side of the bars, the husband.
Outside stands the wife.
So close, only inches distant;
Yet as heaven from earth apart.
What their mouths cannot let know
Their eyes try to impart.
Before a word is said, tears flow:
Truly their plight rends your heart.

The Press: Warm Welcome to Willkie³³⁷

Both good friends of China, for Zhongqing
We are both heading.
But there you are, offered the seat of honor;
While here I am, down the steps, a prisoner.
Like you I'm a visiting delegate;
Why then is the difference in treatment so great?
Such is life: coldness to some, warmth towards others.
Forever eastward flow the waters.³³⁸



Advice to Myself

Without the cold and bleakness of winter
The warmth and splendor of spring there could never be.
Misfortunes have steeled and tempered me
And strengthened my resolve even further.



Country Scene

When I came here the rice was still tender green.
Now half the autumn harvest has already been brought in.
Everywhere peasants' faces wear smiles of gladness,
And the rice fields resound with songs of happiness.

³³⁷ Head of an American delegation to China in 1942.

³³⁸ Major Chinese rivers all flow east towards the sea.

The Gruel Stall

On the roadside, in the cool shade of a tree opulent,
Stands a thatch hut calling itself “restaurant.”
The menu consists of cold gruel and white salt:
Drop in, traveler, and enjoy a restful halt!

♪ ♪ ♪

Gode Prison

Life in the ward calls for quite a bit of housekeeping:
Wood, rice, oil, salt—everything must be bought and paid for.
In front of each cell there’s a little stove standing;
On it all day boil rice, broth, and more.

♪ ♪ ♪

Departure Before Dawn

I

The cocks have crowed just once: the night has not yet passed.
With a retinue of stars the moon sails o’er the hills yonder.
On the road for a long journey has set out the traveler,
His face beaten by gust after gust of icy autumn blast.

II

The pale east has turned rosy: nascent day
The last shadows of the night has swept away.
A warm breath blows across the immense skies,
And the wayfarer feels poetic inspiration rise.

From Longan to Dongzheng

Vast but alas! barren is the land.
No wonder the people work hard and are thrifty.
This spring there has been a bad drought, we understand:
Of the hoped-for harvest they've brought in a fraction only.



On the Road

My arms and legs are tightly bound.
But in the hills birds sing and flowers blossom.
Who can prevent my enjoying such sweet scent and sound?
In my long trudge I may feel a little less lonesome.



Dongzheng

Dongzheng jail can be to Pingma likened:
Each meal a bowl of gruel, the stomach as good as empty.
But water and light we can have aplenty,
And each day for airing the cells are twice opened.



The Paper Blanket of a Jail-Mate

Old scrolls and new books complement each other.
A blanket of paper is indeed better than no cover.
Do you people in jade-and-brocade beds ever think
Of those in prison who cannot sleep a wink?

Cold Night

In the cold autumn night, with neither quilt nor mattress,
I curl myself up for warmth but cannot close my eyes.
Moonlight on the banana-palms adds to the chilliness.
I look through the bars: the Little Bear has lain down in the skies.



The Bonds

Entwined round my arms and legs is a long dragon:
I look like a foreign officer with braid on the shoulders.
But the cords officers wear are of golden thread woven,
While my decoration is but a thick rope of fibers.



Goodbye to a Tooth

You were, my friend, hard and unyielding;
Not like the tongue, soft and stretching.
The bitter and the sweet we have shared to this day,
But now each of us must go his own way.



The Wife of a Conscript Deserter³³⁹

That day, never to come back, you went away.
Leaving me alone, weighed down with sadness.
The authorities, in pity of my loneliness,
Invited me to prison for a temporary stay.

³³⁹ Families of Kuomintang army deserters were subjected to harsh penalties.

Said in Jest

The State feeds me, I stop at state-owned palaces.
Guards work in relays to keep me company.
Passing by mounts and streams, I enjoy wonderful scenery.
It fills a man with pride thinking of such privileges.



On the Way to Nanning

The supple rope has been replaced, with hard irons.
At every step like jade bracelets they jingle.
Although a prisoner, detained on spying suspicions,
I have the dignified carriage of a Court official.



Guards Carry a Pig

I

Going with us, guards carry a pig
On their shoulders, while I'm dragged along rudely.
A man is treated worse than a pig,
Once deprived of his liberty.

II

Of the thousand sources of bitterness and sorrow
None can be worse than the loss of liberty.
Even for a word, a gesture, you're no longer free:
They just haul you along, like a horse or a buffalo.

A Stumble

It was still pitch-dark when we started.
The road was uneven, rough and rugged.
I slipped and landed in a dangerous pit
But managed to jump out: lucky, wasn't it?

☺ ☺ ☺

In a Boat to Yongning (Nanning)

Carried by the current, the boat sails towards Yongning.
My legs are tied to the rail, a new style of hanging!
On both river banks a truly prosperous countryside;
In midstream light fishing-boats swiftly glide.

☺ ☺ ☺

Nanning Jail

Here's a jail built on the latest model:
All night the cells are lit up with electric lamps.
But each meal is nothing more than a bowl of gruel,
And one's stomach suffers continuous cramps.

☺ ☺ ☺

Sadness

The whole world is ablaze with the flames of war.
To the battlefield eagerly fighters ask to be sent.
In jail inaction weighs on the prisoner all the more:
His noble ambitions are not worth a paltry cent.

Listening to a Cock's Crow

You are only a very ordinary rooster.
Every morning you crow to announce the day nascent.
Cock-a-doodle-doo! You rouse people from slumber.
Truly, this feat of yours is no mean achievement.



A Jailed Gambler Dies

Nothing but skin and bone remained of him.
He slept close to my side only last night.
But misery, cold and hunger were the end of him,
And this morning gone he was to the world of eternal night.



Still Another

Bo Yi and Shu Qi³⁴⁰ would not eat the Zhou's rice.
That man would not swallow the government's gruel.
Bo Yi and Shu Qi died on the Shouyang mountainside;
The jailed gambler starved to death in his cell.



No Smoking

Here smoking is strictly prohibited!
Your tobacco by the warder is quickly confiscated.
Of course he can smoke his pipe whenever he wants to;
But just try to have a puff and he'll handcuff you.

³⁴⁰ Sons of the chief of a principality in ancient China who were pacifists. When King Wu conquered the country and founded the Zhou dynasty (c. 11th century B.C.) in spite of their moral exhortations, they refused to eat the “Zhou’s rice” and starved to death in the mountains.

Twilight

The wind on mountain rocks the edge of its sword sharpens.
The cold with its spear the tree-boughs pierces.
The bell from a far-off pagoda the traveler's steps hastens.
Flute-playing buffalo-boys leisurely ride home to the villages.



The Charges

Sixty cents to get a pot of rice cooked.
A basin of hot water costs no less than one *yuan*.
For sixty cents' worth of goods you're charged a full *yuan*:
How clearly the prices in prison are fixed!



Sleepless Night

The first watch... the second... the third dies.
I toss about, restless: sleep would not come, it seems.
The fourth watch... the fifth... No sooner have I closed my eyes
Than the five-pointed star haunts my dreams.³⁴¹



Thinking of a Friend

That day you went with me to the edge of the river:
“When will you be back?”—“When you see the rice ripen.”
But now that the fields have been ploughed for the next season,
In a foreign land I still remain a prisoner.

³⁴¹ The national flag of the Democratic Republic of Việt Nam, founded by President Hồ Chí Minh in 1945, is red, with a five-pointed gold star in the middle.

Writing a Petition for Jail-Mates

Being in the same boat, how could I refuse to help you?
 On your behalf to the authorities I wrote that petition.
 “Whereas... in consequence of...”—For such newly learnt jargon
 No end of thanks I got as my due.



Scabies

Covered with red and blue as though dressed in brocade;
 Scratching all day long, we seem to be playing the guitar.
 Honored guests, of our rich garbs we make a parade.
 Strange virtuosos, sharing an itch for music we surely are!



Listening to the Sound of Rice-Pounding

Under the pestle how terribly the rice suffers!
 But it comes out of the pounding as while as cotton.
 The same thing to man in this world occurs:
 Hard trials turn him into polished diamond.



The Eleventh of November

I

Formerly when came the Eleventh of November,
 Of the armistice in Europe was observed the anniversary.
 Today bloody fighting rages the five continents over:
 The wicked Nazis for this crime bear the responsibility.

II

Now China has been resisting for almost six years.
Her heroic feats of arms are known all the world over.
Although victory is just around the corner,
Even more effort is needed when counter-offensive time appears.

III

All over Asia anti-Japanese flags flutter.
Big flags, little flags—in size they differ.
Of course the big banners must be present;
But the little ones can never be absent.



Air-Raid Warning

Enemy planes come roaring in the sky.
People flee helter-skelter, leaving the place empty.
Out of prison we are ordered for safety:
How gladly we all hasten to comply!



Ideograms Analyzed³⁴²

Freed, the prisoner can build the country.
Misfortunes are tests of a man's loyalty.
To worry about the common good is a great merit no doubt.
Let the prison door open and the real dragon will fly out.

³⁴² The poem written in Chinese ideograms:

拆字 / 囚人出去或為國 / 患難到頭始見忠 / 人有憂愁優點大 / 籠開竹門出真龍
The analysis:

Take 人 (man) from 囚 (prison), add 或 (probability) and you get 國 (country).

Lop off the top of 患 (misfortune), that gives 忠 (loyalty).

Add 亻 (man) to 憂 (worry) to get 優 (merit).

Take 竹 (bamboo) off the top of 籠 (cell), that leaves 龍 (dragon).

The “Inn”

Newcomers to the prison, as a rule,
Must spend the night near the privy.
Anyone who wants a sleep peaceful,
To pay some cash let him be ready!



The Morning Sun

The morning sun into the prison penetrates:
The smoke clears away, the mist dissipates.
The breath of life suddenly fills the skies,
And the prisoners’ faces are now all smiles.



Commotion in Việt Nam

News reports in the Nanning press

Death rather than servitude! Everywhere in my country
The flags of insurrection again proudly flutter.
Oh, how sad at such a time to be a prisoner:
To rush into battle I wish I could be free!



A British Delegation in China

November 18

The Americans gone, now the Britons are there.
Their delegation is warmly received everywhere.
Though I’m also a delegate on a visit friendly,
Of a peculiar kind is the welcome accorded me!

Taken Back to Wuming

They transferred me to Nanning;
Now they are taking me back to Wuming.
Transfer after complicated transfer.
My journey they seek to hinder.
Oh, how bitter!

🐶 🐶 🐶

Dog-Meat at Baoxiang

At Gode the guards relished fish fresh.
Now at Baoxiang they savor dog flesh.
Ah, even that gang of turnkeys
At times show a taste for delicacies!

🐶 🐶 🐶

The Road-Mender

Drenched with rain, flogged by the wind, given a rest never:
In what wretched conditions you work, road-mender!
Of all who pass—on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage—
How many show any gratitude to you ever?

🐶 🐶 🐶

To my Staff, Stolen by a Guard

All your time with me you've been upright and unbending.
Hand in hand we've passed many seasons of mist and snow.
Cursed be the rogue who caused our parting!
A long, long time will last our sorrow.

The Milestone

Neither high up nor far away,
 On neither emperor's nor king's throne,
 You're only a little slab of stone
 Standing on the edge of the highway.
 People ask you for guidance;
 You stop them from going astray,
 And tell them the distance
 O'er which they must journey.
 The service you render is no small one;
 People will remember what you've done.



The Child in Biniang Prison

Boohoo! Away ran my conscript Daddy:
 He was afraid to serve in the army.
 That's why I'm here in jail with Mummy
 Though I'm half a year old barely.



Lighting Costs

For the cost of lighting every newcomer pays:
 Six *yuan* per person in local currency.
 In this realm of darkness and haze
 Light is worth only that much money.

Prison Life

A stove for each of the prison folk,
And earthen pots of every imaginable size,
For making tea, boiling vegetables, and cooking rice:
All day the whole place is filled with smoke.

☺ ☺ ☺

Mr. Guo

Like duckweed meeting water, glad we were to see each other.
How kind and cordial Mr. Guo was to me!
Nothing much: “A little gift of coal in wintry weather.”
Yet, that such people still exist is a blessing truly.

☺ ☺ ☺

Mr. Mo, the Chief-Warder

A generous man, Mr. Mo, the Biniang chief-warder!
He buys rice for the prisoners with his own money;
At night he takes the fetters off for them to sleep better;
He never resorts to force, only uses bounty.

☺ ☺ ☺

On the Train to Laibin

After weeks of trudging along wearily,
Today we board a train happily.
Although our seats are but a heap of coal,
Still it's much better than to resume our stroll!

A Prisoner Seeks to Escape

Driven by only one thought: liberty,
Reckless, he jumped off the moving train.
Alas, after running about half a *li*,
He was caught by the guards and a prisoner again.

🐼 🐼 🐼

Laibin

The head-warder plays cards every day;
The police-chief extorts money from transferred prisoners;
By lamplight the district mandarin busies himself with his papers:
In Laibin peace is indeed there to stay!

🐼 🐼 🐼

Arrival at Liuzhou

December 9

There must come an end sometime to suffering:
On the ninth, here I arrive in Liuzhou now.
As from o'er a hundred days' nightmare I'm awaking,
A trace of sadness still lingers on my brow.

🐼 🐼 🐼

Long Detention Without Interrogation

A bitter drug tastes all the more bitter when the cup is almost empty.
The last stage of a hard journey is often the hardest of all.
To the mandarin's residence the distance is no more than one *li*:
Why then for so long have I been kept in thrall?

Midnight

In sleep an honest look all faces adorn;
Only when people wake does good or evil show.
Good and evil are not qualities inborn;
More often than not from education they flow.

🌸 🌸 🌸

At the Mandarin's Residence

We had thought this was to be the last gate,
And the day of deliverance was approaching.
Alas, there is another pass to negotiate.
Transfer! Now we are going to Guilin.

🌸 🌸 🌸

Four Months have Passed

“One day within prison walls seems as long as a thousand years without.”
How right the ancients were, no doubt!
Four months of a subhuman life, it appears,
Have aged me even more than ten years.
Indeed

For four months I've lived on meagre fare;
For four months I've never had a sound sleep;
For four months I've never changed my wear;
For four months I've never taken a dip.

And so

One of my teeth has fallen away;
Much of my hair has turned, grey;
Scabies covers my body;
I'm dark and thin like a demon hungry.

Fortunately

Stubborn and persevering,
 I've not yielded an inch.
 Physically I'm suffering,
 But my spirit will ne'er flinch.



Seriously Ill

With my health harmed by China's fickle weather,
 And my heart grieved by Việt Nam's long suffering,
 Oh, to fall ill in prison, what a trial bitter!
 Enough to make you weep, but I prefer to sing.



Arrival at Guilin³⁴³

Neither forest nor cinnamon is found in Guilin;
 Only high mountains and deep rivers are in sight.
 In the shade of a banyan the prison looks terrifying:
 Dark in the daytime, grim and desolate at night.



Entrance Fee

Once in jail an entrance fee you'll have to disburse:
 Usually not less than fifty yuan, down to the last cent.
 If you have no money ready in your purse,
 Then at each step you'll meet with endless torment.

³⁴³ Guilin means Cinnamon Forest.

?!

Forty days have gone by in useless sorrow,
Forty days of truly ineffable suffering.
And now I'm being sent back to Liuzhou:
The prospect is really disheartening!

☹ ☹ ☹

?!

Liuzhou, Guilin, and now again Liuzhou;
Kicked back and forth like a soccer ball.
Innocent, I've been dragged o'er Guangxi, to and fro:
An end to this shuttling can one ever hope to call?

☹ ☹ ☹

At the Political Bureau of the Fourth War Zone

Hauled o'er thirteen districts of Guangxi;
Kept in eighteen prisons successively!
Tell me, of what crime have you found me guilty?
That of showing my people unflinching loyalty?

☹ ☹ ☹

Morning Scenery

Each morning the sun emerges from behind the mountain
And bathes the countryside in a rosy glow.
But in front of the prison there remains a dark shadow,
And sunlight cannot yet reach the warder's domain.

Qingming³⁴⁴

Pure Brightness! Yet a drizzle falls monotonously
 And the prisoners' hearts suffer grievous agony.
 "Which way to freedom," we plead, "pray?"
 To the yamen the guard points, far away.



Evening Scenery

A rose blossoms, and then fades.
 It blooms and withers—listless.
 But its scent the cells invades
 And arouses the prisoners' bitterness.



Restrictions

Without freedom one leads a wretched life truly!
 Even on relieving nature restrictions are imposed.
 When the door is open the bowels are, alas, not ready;
 When one has the gripes, it remains of course closed.



Sleepless Nights

During the long, sleepless nights in prison,
 I've written a hundred-odd poems on thralldom.
 At the end of each quatrain I put down my brush often
 And through the bars looked up at the sky of freedom.

³⁴⁴ The word means "Pure Brightness" and designates a period in the lunar year which corresponds roughly to early April.

Endless Rains

Nine days of rain, of sunshine one day:
Really the sky above has shown no feeling.
Tattered shoes, muddy road, legs caked in clay!
Still, tirelessly I must keep slogging.



Regret at Time Lost

On a militant an adverse destiny maintains its hold.
Eight useless months now have I spent in custody.
A day is worth a thousand taels of gold:
When can I ever again hope to be free?



Autumn Impressions

I
The Little Bear lies atop the hill, it's ten in the evening.
Autumn has come, says a cricket's intermittent chirping.
But what does the prisoner care about the season?
Of only one thing does he dream: liberation.

II
Last year when autumn came I was free.
This year autumn finds me into prison cast.
With regard to services rendered my country,
This autumn is, let me say, equal to the last.

Permitted to Take a Walk in the Prison Yard

After such long inactivity my legs are soft like cotton.
Trying a few steps, I stagger and totter.
But very soon bellows the chief-warder:
“Hey you, come back, no loitering in prison!”



Autumn Night

At the gate guards holding rifles stand.
Above, shredded clouds with the moon are drifting.
Bed-bugs swarm about like tanks maneuvering.
Real air squadrons, mosquitoes assemble and disband.
My heart travels a thousand *li* to my country.
Sadness turns my dreams into a thousand tangled skeins.
An innocent man, yet I've been a whole year in chains.
With tears dropping on my ink slab, I compose a poem on captivity.



Reading the “Anthology of a Thousand Poets”

Of nature the ancients loved to sing the beauty:
Moon and flowers, snow and wind, mist, hills and streams.
But in our days poems should contain verses steely,
And poets should form assault teams.

Landscape

The branches of yon tree draw a portrait of Zhang Fei;
The red sun forever lights the heart of Guan Yu.³⁴⁵
For a whole year I've received no news from my country;
O my people, every day I'm waiting for word from you!



The Weather is Clearing Up

Everything evolves, such is the law of nature.
After days of rain, here's fine weather coming!
In an instant the earth has cast off its damp clothing;
O'er ten thousand *li* the land spreads its brocade coverture.
Under a warm sun and balmy wind flowers smile with rapture;
In the tall trees with shiny boughs birds their trills rehearse.
Joy fills man's heart as well as the universe.
After the bitter comes the sweet: so runs the course of nature.

August 29, 1942

September 10, 1943



After Prison, Practicing Mountain–Climbing³⁴⁶

The mountains embrace the clouds, the clouds hug the mountains.
The river below shines like a spotless mirror.
On the slopes of the Western Range, my heart throbs as I wander,
Looking towards the Southern skies and thinking of old friends.

³⁴⁵ Two warriors in the period of the Three Kingdoms in China, famed for their valor and loyalty.

³⁴⁶ After his release from prison, Hồ Chí Minh took long walks in the mountains to recover his health.

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