Hồ Chí Minh's Nationalist Ideology: Process of Formation and Establishment

Nguyễn Văn Khánh[*], **Trương Thị Bích Hạnh**[*]

Received on 7 June 2021. Revised on 25 August 2021. Accepted on 24 December 2021.

Abstract: Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology and nationalism have so far been a major topic that continues to be discussed but has yet to reach a consensus among historical and political researchers. Some researchers argue that in Hồ Chí Minh's thought, there was only patriotism, not nationalism. Others asserted that Hồ Chí Minh's patriotism was the foundation and starting point for him to absorb proletarian internationalism. Based on historical events and analyses of the political and ideological changes of Nguyễn Ái Quốc (Hồ Chí Minh[1]) through his publications and revolutionary activities in the 1920s, the article focuses on clarifying the process of forming and perfecting Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology to step by step establish Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist line, which was reflected in the First Revolutionary Platform at the beginning of 1930 and was reaffirmed in the Eighth Conference of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Central Committee in May 1941.

Keywords: Hồ Chí Minh, nationalist ideology, national liberation.

Subject classification: Political science

1. Introduction

Nationalist ideology or nationalism is a familiar concept in the research circle specialised in many social sciences and humanities at home and abroad. However, the content of the concept is still understood differently. Some people think of nationalism as the domain of nation-state issues and problems. Others identify nationalism with ethnocentrism, even with populism, and similar issues.

When studying Hồ Chí Minh's thought, some researchers tend to associate patriotism with nationalism, while others tend to separate national issues from international issues, even separating Hồ Chí Minh's thought from the communist ideology and Marxism-

[*] University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Email: khanhnv@vnu.edu.vn

[1] The name Hồ Chí Minh first appeared in 1942. Before that time, the name Nguyễn Ái Quốc was mainly used, in addition to other names. For convenience, the authors mainly use the name Hồ Chí Minh in the article.

Leninism. In fact, in search of a way to save his homeland to liberate the nation, how did the views of Nguyễn Ái Quốc on the national issues take shape? What are the content and true nature of Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology? Is it patriotism or nationalism, or a combination of nationalism and internationalism? Through a historical approach and based on analysing the ideological evolution of Hồ Chí Minh from 1911 to May 1941 when the Eighth Conference of the Central Committee of the Indochina Communist Party (ICP) was held, the article aims to define the process of establishing Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology in the Vietnamese revolution.

2. Formation of Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology

First, it is necessary to clarify the concept of nationalism. Although there are many different definitions, the term "nationalism" refers to two phenomena. The first is the perception and attitude of a nation about its national identity. The second is the political action of a nation to win (or maintain) and to protect the national interests, i.e., the right to self-determination of a nation (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010). According to the orthodox concept in Vietnam, nationalism is "an ideology and policy that promotes and protects the interests and characteristics of one's nation, which can be separated from or opposed to those of other nations." (Hoàng Phê, 2005, p.175).

In addition, it is also important to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism, as these are terms that many people often use interchangeably. But according to Elie Kedourie in *Nationalism*, nationalism is related to political theories and movements, while patriotism is more emotional (Kedourie, E., 1985, pp.73-74).

For Hồ Chí Minh, nationalist ideology was formed based on Vietnamese patriotism and closely associated with finding a way to save the homeland to liberate the nation as early as May 1911.

Born in a time when his homeland lost its independence and was in ruins, studying at one of the best schools in colonial Vietnam, namely the Huế National School (*Quốc học Huế*)[2], Nguyễn Tất Thành[3] was soon exposed to bourgeois-democratic ideas, and at the same time, he gained a thorough understanding of the colonial people's status. Overcoming the limitations of the old-styled path to save the homeland initiated and led by generations of Confucian scholars, imbued with patriotism, on 5 June 1911, Nguyễn Tất Thành boarded a ship at *Nhà Rồng* harbour, Saigon, named Amiral Latouche-Tréville to go to the West to find a new way to save his homeland.

[2] Originally named École Primaire Supérieure. Also known as Collège Quốc học.

[3] The birth name of President Hồ Chí Minh is Nguyễn Sinh Cung. Nguyễn Tất Thành was the name of President Hồ Chí Minh since 1901. After obtaining the degree of *Phó bảng* (i.e., junior doctor, second best examinee), Nguyễn Sinh Sắc took his three children to his paternal village of Kim Liên. When he was admitted to Kim Liên Village with an acceptance ceremony, Nguyễn Sinh Cung was renamed as Nguyễn Tất Thành.

In the following years, Nguyễn Tất Thành travelled to different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America and had to do many different jobs to live and study. As a result, the patriotic young man Nguyễn Tất Thành better understood the nature of the colonial regime and the situation of the working people under colonial rule in the world.

At the end of 1917, from England, Nguyễn Tất Thành crossed the English Channel to France and resided in Paris. It was here that he met Phan Châu Trinh - a strong-willed patriotic scholar - and lawyer Phan Văn Trường, who would collaborate and synergise (Pièrre, B., 2003, p.34) with him in patriotic activities. On 18 June 1919, the Peace Conference of the victorious imperialist countries in World War I was convened in Versailles, France, to redistribute the world market, and at the same time determine the level of war compensation paid by the losing countries. On behalf of the Vietnamese patriots in France, Nguyễn Tất Thành, under the name Nguyễn Ái Quốc, sent to the conference a copy of "Claims of the Annamese People" *(Revendications du Peuple Annamite).* The next day (19 June 1919), the entire content of the 8-point claims was published in *L'Humanité*[4] (the Humanity), asking the French government to return basic rights to freedom and democracy to the Vietnamese people (Ruscio, A., 2005, p.54).

The claims were assessed by Hồ Chí Minh as "very moderate in terms of both content and form because our aspirations are aimed at the major reforms for our liberation and our freedoms without which people of today are just wretched slaves."[5] (Hồ Chí Minh, 2011, Vol.1, p.15).

But in the end, the gutsy and heart-felt proposals and the Vietnamese patriots did not achieve the desired results. The French government then launched a campaign to track down the author of the claims, and the countries participating in the Versailles Conference did not stand with colonial people such as the Vietnamese. However, the event of submitting the claims to the Versailles Conference marked a major turning point in Hồ Chí Minh's thought on the right to national self-determination because "…considering those correct claims as one's own, in an era when the will of the people was to exercise self-determination." (Hồ Chí Minh, 2011, Vol.1, p.10).

Before the Versailles Conference took place, Hồ Chí Minh still believed in political freedom within the framework of the colonial regime. But after the claims were rejected, he understood that the right to self-determination could only be achieved by violent struggle. Unlike Phan Châu Trinh who continued to support the path of "depending on the French for progress", after the Versailles Conference, Hồ Chí Minh was determined to find a more effective way to save his homeland. He began to study colonial theory books. To

[4] L'Humanité was the central organ of the French Socialist Party from 1904 to the end of 1920. From the beginning of 1921, the newspaper became the mouthpiece of the French Communist Party.

[5] The article was published in L'Humanité on 2 August 1919, entitled Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

learn about communism, recommended by Jean Longer - a friend in the French Socialist Party and grandson of Karl Marx - Hồ Chí Minh went to the library in District 13 (Paris) to borrow and read Karl Marx's *Capital* (Brocheux, P., 2003, p.38).

In July 1920, Hồ Chí Minh was first exposed to "The First Draft of Lenin's Theses on Colonial Issues" published in *L'Humanité*. Later, in the article *The road led me to Leninism*, he recalled: "In those theses, there were difficult political words, but after reading them repeatedly, I understood the main part. Lenin's theses made me so moved, excited, clear, and confident. I was excited to tears. Sitting alone in my room, I spoke aloud as if I were speaking to a large audience: 'Oh my compatriots who are suffering and persecuted! This is what is necessary for us, this is the way to our liberation!'" (Hồ Chí Minh, 2011, Vol.12, p.562).

On the way to find the truth to save his homeland, he realised that only communism could liberate the nation, the working class, and the people. From July 1920, Hồ Chí Minh actively researched Lenin, the Russian October Revolution, and the Communist International. Hồ Chí Minh especially believed in the Communist International because Article 8 apart from the 21 conditions for joining the Communist International stipulated that "...political parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie has colonies and oppresses other nations must maintain a particularly clear and transparent line. Any political party that wants to participate in the Third International must directly expose the cunning tricks of their country's imperialists in the colony and provide real support, not just lip service. All liberation movements in the colonies must demand the expulsion of their country's imperialists from those colonies, and instil in their workers a sincere brotherly attitude towards the working people of the colonies and oppressed peoples, and conduct propaganda systematically in their army against all oppression of the colonial peoples." (Phạm Xanh, 2009, p.25).

At the 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party held in Tours, on 29 December 1920, Hồ Chí Minh was the only delegate from the colonies who, along with 69% of the delegates present at the Congress, voted in favour of joining the Communist International (Comintern) also known as the Third International, and at the same time participated in the founding of the French Communist Party. The act of voting in favour of establishing the Third International was an event that marked a leap forward in Hồ Chí Minh's political thought, from a patriotic stance to a communist stance. That event also opened for Vietnam's national liberation revolution a new stage of development, "a stage of linking the Vietnamese revolutionary movement with the international workers' movement, leading the Vietnamese people to follow the path that he went through, namely, from patriotism to Marxism-Leninism" (Lê Duẩn, 1976, p.8).

It was patriotism that led Hồ Chí Minh to Marxism-Leninism. He admitted: "At first, it was patriotism, not communism, which led me to believe in Lenin and the Third International. Step by step, in the course of the struggle, studying Marxist-Leninist theory

and doing practical work, I gradually understood that only socialism and communism could liberate the oppressed peoples and the working people of the world from slavery" (Hồ Chí Minh, 2011, Vol.12, p.563).

Thus, by the end of 1920, Hồ Chí Minh had turned himself from a patriot to a communist, and at the same time found the way to save his homeland which was closely associated with the proletarian revolution. Therefore, it can be said that Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology was formed based on patriotism. Patriotism, as well as genuine nationalism, were not contradictory but, on the contrary, would lead to communism and combine with communism to form the salvage for the nation to get rid of the slavery yoke imposed by capitalism. The process characterised by patriotism, then communism, and then revolutionary nationalism, is a historical process in Hồ Chí Minh's political thought.

3. Hồ Chí Minh and propagation of national liberation path into Vietnam and other colonial countries

After finding the right way to save the homeland for the nation, from 1921 onward, Hồ Chí Minh continued to study to enrich and perfect his ideology of national salvation and, at the same time, actively propagated the way of national liberation into Vietnam and other colonial countries. However, Hồ Chí Minh did not copy the entire Marxist-Leninist doctrine, but creatively and selectively applied those contents suitable to the specific circumstances of Vietnam and the colonial countries to formulate the theory of national liberation in the new era, the era of the proletarian revolution that was started with the Russian October Revolution (1917).

To promote the efforts towards this goal, in mid-1921, Hồ Chí Minh and several revolutionaries from other French colonies such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, and Madagascar established the *Union of French Colonial Nations*. On 1 April 1922, the newspaper *Le Paria* (i.e., The Poor) - the mouthpiece of the *Union of French Colonial Nations* was opened, and the first issue was published by Hồ Chí Minh in his capacity as the director cum editor. In addition to establishing the *Union of French Colonial Nations* and publishing the newspaper *Le Paria*, he also actively organised training courses, and especially wrote and published many articles in *L'Humanité, La Vie Ouvrière* (the Worker's Life), and *The Communist Magazine*, etc. The content that covered all of Hồ Chí Minh's articles and speeches during his stay in Paris was to denounce the crimes of colonialism, thereby awakening a sense of nationalism and patriotism of the people of the colonial countries.

The time of voting in favour of the Third International and joining the founding of the French Communist Party (1920) to the time of leaving France for the Soviet Union (1923) - although less than three years - was a period of special importance for deciding the

direction of Hồ Chí Minh (Thu Trang, 2002, p.335) on the path of perfecting his ideology and realising the goal of national liberation.

Around mid-June 1923, bearing the name of a Chinese man, Trần Vương (Chen Vang), Hồ Chí Minh went to the Soviet Union to attend the International Congress of Peasants, the International Congress of Youth Voices, and especially the Fifth Congress of the Communist International. In December 1923, he entered the Communist University for Labourers of the East (commonly known as the Oriental University). Besides studying, he also spent a lot of time authoring articles for such newspapers as *L'Humanité* and *La Correspondance Internationale* (the International Letters). Most importantly, he completed the work of *Le Procès de la Colonisation Française (The French Colonisation on Trial)* whose manuscript was edited and fine-tuned by Hồ Chí Minh over many years and sent to France to be printed in 1925. During his time in the Soviet Union, Hồ Chí Minh was considered an expert on colonial as well as Asian issues (Brocheux, P., 2003, p.54).

The main content in the works and statements of Hồ Chí Minh during this period was still to denounce the crimes and inhuman acts of the French colonialists, thereby awakening the compatriots, but at a higher level than that of the time, he was in Paris. When in Paris, he used to write many short articles, but when in the Soviet Union, he focused on writing more elaborate articles on the topics of the *Black Race, China,* and *Chinese Youth*. In addition to these familiar topics, Hồ Chí Minh began directing the national liberation struggle of Vietnam and the colonial countries to the path of the proletarian revolution with the support and mainstay of the Soviet Union and the Communist International. Hồ Chí Minh placed the national liberation revolution in the trajectory of the proletarian revolution and contributed an important argument to the theoretical treasure of Marxism-Leninism when asserting that a revolution in a colonial country could break out and win before a proletarian revolution in the metropolitan country.

After nearly a year and a half working in the Soviet Union, in November 1924, Hồ Chí Minh decided to go to Guangzhou to perform urgent tasks, namely, opening a revolutionary training course for Vietnamese patriotic youths who were staying there, promoting the conditions for the establishment of the Marxist party, and monitoring and directing the peasant movement in China and Southeast Asia assigned by the Communist International.

In Guangzhou, after contacting and learning about the situation of the Vietnamese patriotic community, Hồ Chí Minh reformed the *Tâm Tâm Xã* (心心社, the Heart Club) and established the Communist Youth Union, which became the nucleus of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association, a precursor organisation to the establishment of a Marxist political party in Vietnam. In June 1925, the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association (referred to as the Youth Association for short) was established with the aim of

"making a national revolution (i.e., smashing the French colonialists and gaining independence for the homeland) and then making a world revolution (overthrowing imperialism and realising communism)" (Central Committee on Historical Research of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 1977, p.82). That line reflected the relentless revolutionary thought of Lenin's doctrine, the inevitable development trend of the national revolution led by the working class in colonial countries, from the national liberation revolution to the socialist revolution. This was also the solution to realise the right to national self-determination and to thoroughly solve the national issues.

Along with the establishment of the Youth Association, Hồ Chí Minh also promoted the building and directing of the communication system between domestic and foreign networks to transport Vietnamese youth to Guangzhou for training. From 1925 to early 1927, in the city of Guangzhou, China, Hồ Chí Minh organised political training courses for about 75 participants (Hồ Chí Minh, 2011, Vol.2, p.261).

Realising that the objective requirement of the Vietnamese revolution in the 1920s was the need for a revolutionary newspaper in the Vietnamese language to propagate, organise, and guide the movement, Hồ Chí Minh published the first issue of the *Thanh Niên* (i.e., the Youth) newspaper on 21 June 1925.

Through lectures at political training classes and articles published in the *Thanh Niên* newspaper, Hồ Chí Minh's thoughts on the national revolution and the relationship between the national revolution and the proletarian revolution were increasingly perfected and demonstrated. Regarding the goal of the national revolution, Hồ Chí Minh gave such examples as Vietnam driving off France, India driving off Britain, and Korea driving off Japan. The proletarian revolution had the task of overthrowing the yoke of capitalism, bringing happiness to all classes of people in all countries, and making "a great world of universal brotherhood." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.1, p.22).

After three years of active and fruitful activities, until April 1927, due to the counter-revolutionary transformation of Chiang Kai-shek, Hồ Chí Minh was forced to leave China to return to the Soviet Union and Europe to operate. In the middle of 1928, he secretly moved from Germany to Siam (i.e., Thailand).

In Siam, in addition to opening training classes and publishing newspapers and plays, Hồ Chí Minh also translated several classic works of Marxism such as *The History of the Evolution of Human*, *The ABC Communism*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *The Paris Commune* to disseminate them into Vietnam to enlighten people of all classes and to direct the national struggle to the path of the proletariat revolution.

In response to the requirement to unify communist organisations, in the last days of 1929, Hồ Chí Minh left Siam for China to prepare for the conduct of a conference to establish the Communist Party of Vietnam.

During the Party-founding Conference in Hongkong, China (from 6 January 1930), *The Brief Political Programs, The Brief Strategy, The Brief Programs,* and *The Brief Regulation of the Party* written by Hồ Chí Minh were approved to form the *first revolutionary platform of the Communist Party of Vietnam*.

This first revolutionary platform highlighted the basic issues of the Vietnamese revolution and asserted that the Vietnamese revolution had to carry out "the civil rights bourgeois revolution[6] and the land revolution to reach a communist society" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.4). Regarding the revolutionary forces, the Party advocated gathering the strength of the entire nation, first of all, the masses of workers and peasants: "The Party must win over the majority of the tillers and must firmly rely on the poor tillers", and at the same time, "it must make every effort to contact the petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and middle peasants… to draw them to the side of the proletariat class. The rich peasants, middle and small landowners, and Vietnamese capitalists must be overthrown if they are counter-revolutionary" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.4). While the Communist International and some Vietnamese revolutionaries maintained a left-wing ideology and wanted Vietnam to carry out a "civil rights bourgeois revolution" with an anti-imperialist and land-based character, considering the land revolution to be a content of the civil rights bourgeois revolution, Hồ Chí Minh separated the land issue from the content of the civil rights bourgeois revolution to correctly identify the priority and urgency of the task of national liberation. Hồ Chí Minh also accurately assessed the national spirit of all classes and strata in society. Genuine nationalism was promoted by him and considered to be a great driving force of the revolutionary cause of Vietnamese national liberation.

Thus, the national issue throughout Hồ Chí Minh's thought was national liberation. Implementing the revolutionary strategy of national liberation and democracy, moving forward in the direction of building communism for independence and freedom was the core revolutionary thought and the precious jewel set forth by Hồ Chí Minh in the first platform of the Party (Lê Mậu Hãn, 2000, p.28).

4. Vietnam in May 1941 - reaffirmation of Hồ Chí Minh's thought on national issue

In the 1930s, the correct line of harmoniously combining the goal of national liberation with the task of class liberation of Hồ Chí Minh at the Party founding conference was downgraded while the viewpoint of the "leftist" class struggle prevailed in the Vietnamese communist movement. In October 1930, the first meeting

[6] Originally c.m in Vietnamese means revolution.

of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Communist Party was held, and many very important issues were resolved, including the discussion of *The Political Thesis of the Indochina Communist Party*, first drafted by Trần Phú. Also at this conference, *The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Plenary Congress on the current situation of Indochina* and *The Urgent Tasks of the Party* were passed, in which it was stated that the conference was to merge three different party organisations and establish the Communist Party of Vietnam at the beginning of 1930, however, with some mistakes in the organisation, politics, and even in the Party's charter and naming. In terms of organisation, the conference said that the Party Founding Conference "...only cared about merging those organisations into one but paid little attention to eliminating the differentiated ideas and actions of the previous parties. Therefore, although the Party was unified, the ideas and actions of any previous party remained the same" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.109). Politically, the Unification Conference's policy of taking advantage of the middle and small landowners and taking advantage of or neutralising the national bourgeoisie "...was wrong and dangerous", "...only concerned with anti-imperialism, but forgetting the interests of class struggle..." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.110). Regarding the name and charter of the Party, the conference assessed that the Party's name, "Vietnam Communist Party," did not include Cambodia and Laos, and left the proletariat of these two countries outside the Party's scope, which was not correct" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.111). Therefore, the conference decided to change the name of the Party to the Indochina Communist Party. In addition, the conference also held that the regulations of mass organisations such as workers' and farmers' unions proposed by the Unification Conference were "...losing the meaning of class struggle as a whole." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, p.111).

Thus, the Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in October criticised the correct strategic and tactical points of the national liberation revolution mapped out by the Unification Conference at the beginning of 1930. At the same time, the conference stipulated that it was necessary to *"abolish the Party's previous platforms, strategies, and charters, and use the recent past experiences to perform the work in accordance with the resolutions and directives of the Communist International" (*Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, Vol.2, pp.112-113). Instead, the conference adopted a political line, strategy, and tactics based entirely on the theory of class struggle, downplaying national conflicts and the power of traditional patriotism which was the most important driving force for the survival of the Vietnamese nation in history. On the other hand, changing the Party's name to the Indochina Communist Party also showed that the Party assumed its political mission of Indochina, not only of the Vietnamese nation. This was also an inappropriate approach, which both did not comply with the Leninist principle of national self-determination and did not consider differences in culture, historical traditions, and national aspirations of the three countries on the Indochinese peninsula.

Three years after the First Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in October 1930, Hồng Thế Công[7] (i.e. Hà Huy Tập) - one of the leaders of the Indochina Communist Party, in the book *A Brief History of the Indochinese Communist Movement* (written in 1933), after assessing the historical significance of the Party Founding Conference, pointed out the "mistakes" of the Party Founding Conference and personally. Those mistakes are as follows.

First, regarding the "unprepared affairs for unification… The Unification Conference did not work to eliminate the opportunistic elements and hesitant nationalists to ensure the newly unified party a shared ideology and a pure proletarian discipline. The conference did not select the most elite revolutionary elements from the communist groups for the United Communist Party, but monolithically transferred all existing communist organisations into the Communist Party of Vietnam… The Unification Conference brought groups together in a fashion of 'a bad compromise is better than a good lawsuit', not based on the hard-line principles of Leninism" (Hà Huy Tập, 2006, pp.108-111).

Second, the author also assessed that Hồ Chí Minh "made a series of opportunistic mistakes during the Unification Conference that could not be ignored. However, his great merit was to have gathered the scattered communist forces into a single block, thereby giving the Indochinese working people a fighting vanguard with a firm revolutionary spirit" (Hà Huy Tập, 2006, p.111) and, at the same time, opined that "the reason for such mistakes was that comrade Hồ Chí Minh and the delegates of the Unification Conference still carried the remnants of nationalism and chauvinism." (Hà Huy Tập, 2006, p.111).

Criticisms of the documents of the Party Founding Conference and personally lasted until before the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. Hồ Chí Minh was invited only as a guest, not as a representative of the Indochina Communist Party, to attend the Seventh Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow, Soviet Union, in 1935.

On 6 June 1938, Hồ Chí Minh sent a letter to a comrade in the Communist International clearly showing his situation since coming out of the British imperial prison. The letter read: "Today is the seventh anniversary of my arrest in Hongkong. It is also the start of my eighth year of inactivity. On this occasion, I am writing to ask you to

[7] This was the pen name of Hà Huy Tập who was born in 1906 in Cẩm Xuyên District, Hà Tĩnh Province. When he was young, his name was Hà Huy Khiêm. He joined the Tân Việt Revolutionary Party and then the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association. From 1929 to 1934, he was sent to study in the Soviet Union. During this time, he wrote the book *A Brief History of the Indochinese Communist Movement*. He was one of the leaders and theorists of the Indochina Communist Party. In July 1936, he was elected General Secretary and held this position until March 1938. In May 1938, he was arrested by the French in Saigon and then released. In March 1940, he was arrested again in his hometown and brought to Saigon, sentenced to five years imprisonment. In March 1941, his sentence was changed to a death sentence because he was "mentally responsible for the Cochinchina uprising" (November 1940). On 28 August 1941, he was shot by the French government along with some other comrades in Saigon.

help me change this sad situation… What I would like to suggest to you is not to let me live too long in a state of inactivity and like I live on the side or the outside of the Party" (Quinn-Judge, S., 2006, p.11).

Despite going through many ups and downs and challenges, historical reality proved that Hồ Chí Minh's revolutionary ideology, the way of combining true patriotism and nationalism with communist ideals were right, which became the most important driving force for the development and victory of the national liberation revolution in Vietnam.

After three decades of leading a rough itinerant life to find a way to save his homeland, in February 1941, Hồ Chí Minh returned home to his country to assume the role of leader of the Vietnamese revolution. From Cao Bằng - the northern border area of the country - Hồ Chí Minh promoted the process of developing revolutionary forces and prepared to perfect the national liberation line. At the Conference of the Central Committee of the Indochina Communist Party from 10-19 May 1941, in Pác Bó, Cao Bằng, under the chairmanship of Hồ Chí Minh, the Indochina Communist Party decided that: "It is necessary to change the strategy. Emerging changes in terms of the economic and political situation, and the forces of social classes in Indochina, force us to change our revolutionary policy in Indochina to suit the common aspirations of the entire Indochinese people" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2000, Vol.7, p.118).

For the core issue of the national liberation revolution, which is the relationship between the national and the democracy tasks, between national independence and class interests, the conference presented a new thinking - a breakthrough compared with all the documents of the Party during the previous 11 years - by asserting that: "At this time, the interests of the components and the classes must be subordinated to the life and death and survival of the nation and the people. At this time, if the problem of national liberation cannot be solved, and the independence and freedom for the entire nation cannot be reclaimed, not only will the entire nation and people suffer forever, but also the interests of the components and classes cannot be reclaimed even after ten thousand years" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2000, Vol.7, p.113).

Finally, faced with the question, "What is the current revolution in Indochina?", the conference had a definitive answer: "...the current Indochinese revolution is not a civil rights bourgeois revolution which must solve two problems: anti-imperialism and land. Rather, this revolution only must solve an urgent problem of 'national liberation', thus the Indochinese revolution in the current period is *a revolution for national liberation*" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2000, p.119).

The Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in May 1941 marked a turning point in the transformation of revolutionary strategies and tactics, deciding to establish the Việt Minh Front, completely renewing the guideline of mass mobilisation, and building forces, making ingenious forecasts about the opportunity and form of the general uprising to seize power. The Eighth Conference of the Central Committee of the Party paved the way to the final victory for the entire movement for national salvation

and national liberation that was launched during the period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. In terms of the Party's path to national liberation, the Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in May 1941 was a turning point, completing the strategic shift of the Vietnamese revolution, which began at the Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in November 1939. Moreover, the important decisions of the conference (i.e., defining that the Vietnamese revolution was not a civil rights bourgeois revolution but a national liberation revolution which only solved one urgent problem, namely, the national liberation) were not limited to a "diversion" but a "change" of strategy. The Resolution of the Conference of the Central Committee of the Party in May 1941 was the return and development to new heights of the true values of the political platform of the beginning of 1930. The Vietnamese communists were no longer bound by the theory of "civil rights bourgeois revolution" in the colonies. Rather, they approached and solved the tasks of the national liberation revolution according to the idea of national self-determination, under the specific conditions of Vietnam, but still without losing the class and revolutionary vanguard character. Vietnam since 1941 witnessed the return of Hồ Chí Minh's revolutionary nationalism but at a new height and with a new attitude, i.e., genuine nationalism skilfully combined with Marxism-Leninism to create a new impulse to bring the Vietnamese revolution to success quickly and thoroughly.

Immediately after the conference, in his Appeal to the Compatriots, Hồ Chí Minh reaffirmed: "At this time, the national interest is above all else. We must unite to defeat the imperialists and the wicked unpatriotic Vietnamese to save our race from the current critical situation!" (Hồ Chí Minh, 2000, Vol.3, p.230).

After the August Revolution (1945), on the journey to find a peaceful solution for his homeland in France, answering an American journalist's question in Paris in November 1946 about why Vietnam dared to fight the French while there were poor economic conditions coupled with a lacking army and modern weapons, President Hồ Chí Minh said: "We have an army that is at least as strong as tanks and cannons. That is nationalism. You should not underestimate the strength of the Vietnamese nation, especially you Americans… We have millions of thatched huts, each of which has a Trojan horse there, ready to fight any invaders." (Duiker, W. J., 2000, p.279).

5. Conclusion

On 9 May 1954, the New York Times commented that "No Asian name is better known today than that of the veteran communist and nationalist, Hồ Chí Minh". The same newspaper, after Hồ Chí Minh's death, on 4 September 1969, issued an article by Alden Whitman about Hồ Chí Minh (Whitman, A., 1969**)** which asserted: "Among 20th century statesmen, Hồ Chí Minh was remarkable both for the tenacity and patience with which he

pursued his goal of Vietnamese independence and for his success in blending communism with nationalism". Not only Whitman but also many Western scholars and journalists from a very early stage were very interested in the characteristics and role of Hồ Chí Minh's nationalism in the liberation struggle of the Vietnamese nation.

Unlike extreme nationalism and big country chauvinism, Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist ideology was seen as patriotism, formed and developed based on patriotism and a sense of national self-reliance. It was patriotism that urged Nguyễn Tất Thành to find a way to save his homeland, then led him to communism and found in it the way to liberate the nation. From genuine nationalism to communism, from national consciousness to class enlightenment was a natural development process in Hồ Chí Minh's political thought. After becoming a communist, Hồ Chí Minh again combined communist with nationalist ideology to form the theory of national liberation of Vietnam, contributing to the theoretical treasure of Marxism-Leninism on the national and colonial questions. Hồ Chí Minh's thought about the nation was not a narrow nationalist thought, and far from demagogy. Such an ideology was by no means contradictory, but on the contrary, consistent with internationalism, becoming the source of invincible strength of the Vietnamese nation in the long struggle to regain independence and freedom and to protect and develop Vietnam into a mighty country.

Note: Translator: Lương Quang Luyện. Language editor: Etienne Mahler.

References

1. Ban Nghiên cứu lịch sử Đảng Trung ương (1977), *Các tổ chức tiền thân của Đảng*, Hà Nội. [Central Committee on Historical Research of Communist Party of Vietnam (1977), *Predecessor Organisations of Party*, Hanoi].
2. Lê Duẩn (1976), *Dưới lá cờ vẻ vang của Đảng, vì độc lập tự do, vì chủ nghĩa xã hội, tiến lên giành những thắng lợi mới*, Nxb Sự thật, Hà Nội. [Lê Duẩn (1976), *Under Glorious Flag of Party, for Independence, Freedom and Socialism, Advance forward to Win New Victories*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi].
3. Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam (2000), *Văn kiện Đảng toàn tập*, t.7 (1940-1945), Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Communist Party of Vietnam (2000), *Complete Party Documents*, Vol. 7 (1940-1945), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
4. Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam (2002), *Văn kiện Đảng toàn tập*, t.1 (1924-1930), Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Communist Party of Vietnam (2002), *Complete Party Documents*, Vol. 1 (1924-1930), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
5. Lê Mậu Hãn (chủ biên) (2000), *Tư tưởng Hồ Chí Minh rọi sáng con đường độc lập tự do của dân tộc Việt Nam*, Nxb Nghệ An, Nghệ An. [Lê Mậu Hãn (ed.) (2000), *Hồ Chí Minh's Thought Illuminates Path of Independence and Freedom of Vietnamese Nation*, Nghệ An Publishing House, Nghệ An].

6. Hồ Chí Minh (2000), *Toàn tập*, t.3 (1930-1945), Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Hồ Chí Minh (2000), *Complete Works*, Vol. 3 (1930-1945), National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
7. Hồ Chí Minh (2011), *Toàn tập*, t.1, 2, 12, Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Hồ Chí Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, 2, 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
8. Hoàng Phê (chủ biên) (2005), *Từ điển tiếng Việt*, Nxb Đà Nẵng. [Hoàng Phê (ed.) (2005), *Vietnamese Dictionary*, Đà Nẵng Publishing House].
9. Quinn-Judge, S. (2006), "Nguyễn Ái Quốc với Quốc tế Cộng sản qua lưu trữ của Quốc tế Cộng sản", Tạp chí *Xưa và nay*, số 259. [Quinn-Judge, S. (2006), "Nguyễn Ái Quốc and Communist International through Archives of Communist International", *Journal of Xưa and Nay* (Past and Present), No. 259].
10. Hà Huy Tập (2006), *Hà Huy Tập - Một số tác phẩm*, Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Hà Huy Tập (2006), *Hà Huy Tập - Some Selected Works*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
11. Thu Trang (Công Thị Nghĩa) (2002), *Nguyễn Ái Quốc tại Paris (1917-1923)*, Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Thu Trang (Công Thị Nghĩa) (2002), *Nguyễn Ái Quốc in Paris (1917-1923)*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
12. Phạm Xanh (2009), Nguyễn *Ái Quốc với việc truyền bá chủ nghĩa Mác - Lê-nin ở Việt Nam (1921-1930)*, Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội. [Phạm Xanh (2009), *Nguyễn Ái Quốc and the Dissemination of Marxism-Leninism in Vietnam (1921-1930)*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi].
13. Duiker, W. J. (2000), *Hồ Chí Minh*, Hyperion, New York.
14. Kedourie, E. (1985), *Nationalism*, third edition, Hutchinson, London.
15. Brocheux, P. (2003), *Hồ Chí Minh du révolutionnaire à l'icône*, ed., Biographie Payot, Paris.
16. Ruscio, A. (2005), *La question coloniale dans "L'Humanité" (1904-2004)*, La Dispute, Paris.
17. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2010), *Nationalism*, Center for Language and Information, Stanford University, Stanford, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/, pp.1-3 retrieved on 28 January 2021.
18. Whitman, A. (1969), *Ho Chi Minh Was Noted for Success in Blending Nationalism and Communism; From Youth He Pursued A Goal of Independence, the New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/ 1969/ 09/04/archives/ho-chi-minh-was-noted-for-success-in-blending-nationalism-and.html, retrieved on 28 January 2021.