

## Scholar Ứng Hòe Nguyễn Văn Tố

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**Abstract:** *Nguyễn Văn Tố was a famous patriotic personality before the August Revolution. He worked at the French School of the Far East (French: École française d'Extrême-Orient, EFEO - an agency of France established in Indochina in 1898), in charge of managing the bulletin of the School. He is a journalist who wrote in French and Vietnamese on many fields of social sciences and humanities in many contemporary newspapers and magazines such as the French-Annamese Judiciary Review (French: Revue Judiciaire Franco-Annamite), Nam Phong Magazine, Indochina Weekly, Đông Thanh Magazine, Thanh Nghị Newspaper, Tri Tân Newspaper... He also participated in the organizations in order to raise the people's intellect such as the Trí Tri Society (Society of Intellect and Knowledge) and especially the National Language Propagating Association whose he was one of the founders and the Chairman. This article mainly refers to family situation and social activities of Ứng Hòe Nguyễn Văn Tố before 1945 and to precious materials he has left to the Social Sciences Library.*

**Keywords:** Ứng Hòe Nguyễn Văn Tố, French School of the Far East.

Right after the movement from Tân Trào to Hanoi in 27<sup>th</sup> August 1945, President Hồ Chí Minh received the Ministers of the Provisional Government, and the Provisional Government announced the Declaration to the nation and fellow-citizens, stating clearly: "... Following the directives of President Hồ Chí Minh, the National Committee of Liberation has

decided to reform, inviting some notabilities to participate in the government in order to jointly shoulder the heavy tasks that people and the nation entrusted to" (Parliament Complete Documents, 2006, Volume 1 (1945-1960): 1511-1512). One of notabilities who was invited to join the Provisional Government by President Hồ Chí Minh

was scholar Nguyễn Văn Tố, also named Ứng Hòa as pseudonym. He was invited to be the Minister of Social Assistance in the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After that, he was the member of the first National Assembly of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Head of the National Assembly Standing Committee, Minister without portfolio of the Government.

Nguyễn Văn Tố (1889-1947) was born in Đông Thành, at the commune of Tiền Túc in former district of Thọ Xương (now Cua Đông precinct, Hoàn Kiếm district) of Hanoi, in a long-living Hanoi family<sup>(\*)</sup>. His parents were Nguyễn Văn Thịnh and Lê Thị Kim. He had two younger brothers, one of which was an official and the other was a teacher. His wife was Ms. Vũ Thị Chắt, coming from Mọc village (now in Nhân Chính precinct, Thanh Xuân district, Hanoi), and she had the job of trading bronze goods at home in Bát Sứ Street. He and his wife had three children. The eldest daughter did trade. The first son Nguyễn Văn Bảo studied in the Bưởi Protectorate School (the “Grapefruit”

(\*) Many documents wrote: “Nguyễn Văn Tố, born in Hanoi, had the father and grandfather as Confucians” (See *Souverains et Notabilités*, 1943, p. 92); “He came from a Confucian family” (See Phan Huy Lê, 2009; Trần Đức Cường, 2009). However, according to Paul Mus, in the recruitment dossier of Nguyễn Văn Tố in 1905, there is no information about the study of Nguyễn Văn Tố on Chinese. His proficiency in Chinese and his understanding of the traditional culture were gotten by himself (Paul Mus, 1977: 18-19). And at that time, if people came from a Confucian family, they used to learn to take the academic exams (exams of Hương, Hội, Đình), instead of attending the Interpreter School.

School), in 1935 he went to Toulouse (France) to learn dentistry, but did not return home. The second son, Nguyễn Văn Tá, is the teacher of natural sciences at Chu Văn An School in Hanoi, and after retirement, he followed his eldest son who was an engineer and they went to Canada in the 1990s<sup>(\*)</sup>.

### I. Working in EFEO

After having studied at the School of Interpreters and received the Thành Chung certificate<sup>(\*\*)</sup>.

(\*) The content on the Nguyễn Văn Tố family was written according to the words of Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Thành Yên, born in 1933, the daughter of Nguyễn Văn Tố's son, daughter of Nguyễn Văn Bảo and Nguyễn Thị Thành (1915- 1991) (See Nguyễn Phương Ngọc, 2012:137).

(\*\*) Something more about the School of Interpreters (French: Collège des interpretes de Hanoi): Having had campus in Yên Phụ, it was established on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1886 by the Decision of General Charles-Auguste-Louis Warnet, Acting General Ambassador at Central-North Region of Vietnam. To be able to take examination to Yên Phụ Interpreters School, the candidates had to finish primary school programs and finished:

- Reading writing and translating the commonly used Chinese characters;
- Writing an essay in Vietnamese national language;
- Making well four basic operations
- Writing and reading a simple article in French.

The main objectives of the Interpreters School were to train the students to interpret French and know Chinese characters. In addition to French and Chinese characters, students “learn counting, geography, history and history of the country.”

After 3 years of study, students earn a high school diploma (French: Diplôme de fin d'études complémentaires indigènes), that Vietnamese people often called as Thành Chung diploma.

In an interview in 1943, Nguyễn Văn Tố described the study manner in the School of Interpreters as follows: “There, all teachers were French, except one old teacher of Chinese characters and one teacher of translating from French to Vietnamese

on the date of 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905, at the age of 16, he was temporarily recruited by Alfred Foucher, EFEO, acting director at the time, as the temporary secretary from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1905 (Nguyễn Phương Ngọc, 2012, p. 138). After Nguyễn Văn Tố passed the exam of secretary-interpreter staff at the first rank, held by the Resident Superior Authority of Tonkin on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1905<sup>(\*)</sup>, he was officially

admitted into EFEO as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade secretary-interpreter assistant from the date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1906<sup>(\*)</sup>.

There are not many documents on Nguyễn Văn Tố for his first 15 working- years in the EFEO, but since 1920, when he was ranked at 5<sup>th</sup> grade commission (French: Commis de 5<sup>e</sup> classe) and worked in the Bulletin of the EFEO (French: Bulletin de

l'École française d'Extrême-Orient), one of the magazines that had an important position in Orientalism of the world, his name appeared more often on EFEO documents. He was responsible for monitoring the publication of the EFEO, especially



Director of EFEO George Coedes, Nguyễn Văn Tố (dressed in white robes) and members and Vietnamese staff at the EFEO. Photo taken in 1936, at the EFEO headquarters (26 Boulevard Carreau, now Lý Thường Kiệt Street, Hanoi). Photos stored in the Library of Social Sciences.

who are Annamese (in Nguyễn Văn Tố times one of these two was Trần Hữu Đức). Learning then was not widened as now, but was just limited in counting, geography, history and history of the country - and first the French language, that is we must learn how well to be quickly able to work as interpreter for the French”.

The Decree dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1908 of the Governor-General of Indochina A. Klobukowski merged the Hanoi School of Interpreters, Hanoi Pedagogy Primary School (École normale d'Institutes d'Hanoi) and Nam Định Jules Ferry High School (Collège de Namdinh Jules-Ferry) into Protectorate High School (French: Collège du Protectorat), commonly known as Buoi School, now the Chu Văn An High School in Hanoi (see Trần Thị Phương Hoa, 2012).

(\*) Decree of Acting Resident Superior of Tonkin dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 1905, in: *Bulletin Administratif du Tonkin*, 1<sup>th</sup> January 1906, p. 19.

cially the Bulletin of the EFEO and the compilation of analytical bibliography (French: bibliographie analytique) of the works of Vietnamese authors and making indexes, especially he made the General Bibliography of the EFEO Bulletin, issuing in the volumes from I to XX (1921) and from XXI to XXX (1932), and

(\*) The book *Souverains et Notabilités* (1943) recorded that Nguyễn Văn Tố attended Hanoi Law School (French: École de droit de Hanoi). But EFEO's dossiers as well as other articles never mentioned this. Maybe the exam of secretary-interpreter staff was held by the Resident Superior Authority of Tonkin at the campus of Law School, therefore the document wrote like that.

of a series of articles on Vietnam dictionary written by the Society for intellectual and moral formation of the Annamese [Khai Trí Tiến Đức Society] (from 1931 to 1938). This was an advantage for him to possibly understand thoroughly different humanities subjects.

In 1925, his scientific research “Slang in Hanoi” (French: L’argot Annamite de Hanoi), published in the Journal of Asian Studies (French: Études Asiatiques) on the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EFEO establishment. Hence, he was appointed as 1<sup>st</sup> grade assistant by Decree dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 1930<sup>(\*)</sup>. And then he was appointed as academy officer by the decision of the Minister of National Education and Fine Arts of France<sup>(\*\*)</sup>. In 1931 he was awarded the Monisapharon Royal Order (the Order of Cambodian Royalty for excellent individuals at home and abroad in the fields of history, literature, arts and sciences)<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup>.

From 1932, he was in charge of the administrative and publication affairs of the EFEO<sup>(\*\*\*\*)</sup>, replacing a retired French officer. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1933, he was appointed as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade senior assistant, and on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1936 as 2<sup>nd</sup> grade assistant.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May of 16<sup>th</sup> year of Bảo Đại (28<sup>th</sup> Jun 1940), the Nguyễn dynasty offered him a title<sup>(\*\*\*\*\*)</sup> of loyal mandarin Quang

Lộc Tự Khanh (corresponding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)<sup>(\*)</sup>.

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 1942, the French government awarded the Order of Knight Legion of Honor to senior assistant Nguyễn Văn Tổ for his 36 years 5 months working at the EFEO<sup>(\*\*)</sup>.

Nearly a week after President Hồ Chí Minh declared independence of Vietnam, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1945, the Chairman of Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued the 13<sup>th</sup> Decree which stated that “French School of the Far East, the museums, the public libraries (except those libraries which were belonging to the offices), the academies (and the oceanology library) from now on will be merged into the Ministry of National Education controlled by the Minister of National Education”. This decree was signed by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Võ Nguyên Giáp, on behalf of the Provisional Government<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup>. On 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1945, President of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Hồ Chí Minh, signed the decree No. 65 assigned the tasks of Vietnam Oriental Institute<sup>(\*\*\*\*)</sup>.

titles to Vietnamese officials who were working in the civil offices of the French, and this was adopted by Governor-General Albert Sarraut on 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 1919.

(\*) See in the titles fund of Social Sciences Library, fund label: S.072.

(\*\*) See *Journal officiel de l'État Français*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1942, p. 1071.

(\*\*\*) *Việt Nam Dân quốc Công báo [Vietnam National Official Journal]*, the first year, No. 1, dated 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 1945.

(\*\*\*\*) *Việt Nam Dân quốc Công báo [Vietnam National Official Journal]*, the first year, No. 12, dated 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1945.

(\*) See *BEFEO, Chronique*, 1930, p.189.

(\*\*) See *Journal officiel de la République Française*, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 1930, p. 2088.

(\*\*\*) Xem *BEFEO, Chronique*, 1933, p. 287.

(\*\*\*\*) Xem *BEFEO, Chronique*, 1933, pp. 416-417.

(\*\*\*\*\*) To correspond with the officials of Nguyễn Dynasty, Emperor Khải Định issued the Edict dated 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 1918 which granted the mandarin's

Earlier, on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1945, the Minister of National Education Vũ Đình Hòe issued the Decree 146/ND establishing an advisory board at the Vietnam Oriental Institute, in which Nguyễn Văn Tổ was a member as well as Nguyễn Đổ Cung, Lê Du, Trần Văn Giáp, Hoàng Xuân Hãn, Cao Xuân Huy, Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Văn Khoan, Nguyễn Thiệu Lâu, Đặng Thai Mai, Nguyễn Đức Nguyên (Hoài Thanh), Công Văn Trung, Vĩnh Thụy, Đào Duy Anh, Ngô Đình Nhu, Nguyễn Văn Thọ, with Nguyễn Văn Huyền as Chairman<sup>(\*\*)</sup>.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 1946, the Minister of National Education issued the Decree that stated: Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tổ, outstanding premium assistant, number 2 national mandarin, working at the Vietnam Oriental Institute, was allowed to be retired with seniority from 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 1945<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup>.

Over the years at EFEO, Nguyễn Văn Tổ, as an assistant, soon became an erudite scholar, famous in current and past knowledges, was the key person in many areas of the EFEO, was respected and admired by both French and Vietnamese colleagues. Paul Mus, a colleague of Nguyễn Văn Tổ at the EFEO, who twice served as Acting Director of EFEO, called Nguyễn Văn Tổ as the Earth Genie of EFEO. Nguyễn Thiệu Lâu, a geographer graduated in France and fellow-worker of Nguyễn Văn Tổ at EFEO, related the

words of Dr. Pierre Huard (Director of the Institute of Anatomy) as follows: “Mr. Director George Coedès (of EFEO) didn’t need to work anything at all, Mr. Tổ did all work himself. This is a truth that everyone must recognize it. “Mr. Coedès also commented: “Mr. Tổ made well the studies and was kind-hearted too. If I did not have him as my assistant, I would rather work as a employee instead of director to be off heavy tasks” (Nguyễn Thiệu Lâu, 1994: 30, 33).

## II. Joining the scientific organizations and social activities

1. Friends Society of the EFEO (French: Société des Amis de l'École française d'Extreme-Orient) was established in 1934. The Society has 2 branches in Indochina and in France. It included organizations, agencies and individuals which were more or less related to the EFEO in many aspects: administrative, financial, and especially scientific. The funds of Society were contributed by its members. The Society published the quarterly “Cahiers de l'École française d'Extreme-Orient” (Cahier of French School of the Far East). It often held the conferences to announce EFEO activities, to present scientific works and took members to visit the bodies and works of the EFEO. It also had various honor titles for the members: founding member, lifetime member, active member and adherent member. Among the Vietnamese active members there were: Trần Văn Giáp, Nguyễn Văn Tổ, Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Văn Khoan, Ngô Quý Sơn, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh, Phạm Quỳnh,

<sup>(\*\*)</sup> Decree 146/ND dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1945 by the Minister of National Education.

<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup> *Việt Nam Dân quốc Công báo* [Vietnam National Official Journal], issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1946.

Trần Trọng Kim, Hoàng Trọng Phu. Vietnamese members are in great numbers, usually being EFEO staff and teachers at the school such as Mr. Dương Quảng Hàm (professor at the Hanoi Protectorate School), Võ Nguyên Giáp (professor at the Thăng Long School in Hanoi), Nguyễn Thị Mão (Female Students Đồng Khánh School of Hanoi)... Until the early 1940s, the number of members came to over thousand people<sup>(\*)</sup>.

Nguyễn Văn Tố gave many presentations in French at the Louis Finot Museum (now the National Museum of History), mainly on the antique arts of Vietnam.

2. Indochina Institute for Human Studies (Institut Indichinois pour l'Études de l'homme) was established by Decree No. 619 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1938 of the Governor-General of Indochina. It was a link of knowledge between social sciences and humanities of the members of EFEO studying ethnography with anthropology and anatomy of the Hanoi Medical University to "enhance the understanding of human races in the Far East both physically and socially" (Ngô Thế Long, Nguyễn Thái Bình, 2009: 34, 35). The Institute was a scientific agency that had legal entity and financial autonomy. In the short course of activities (from the late 1937 to 1944), the Institute has published many scientific works related to human studies, mainly in Indochina and other countries in the Far East, through the journal of Institute named in French:

"Institut Indochinois pour l'études de l'homme: Bulletin et Travaux". Every month, the Institute organized scientific presentations of its members. Institute had 4 titles for the members: honorary member, founding member, full member and correspondent member<sup>(\*)</sup>. The Vietnamese founding members of this organization were: Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Văn Khoan, Nguyễn Văn Tố, Trần Văn Giáp (of EFEO), Nguyễn Xuân Nguyên, Tôn Thất Tùng (of Medical and Pharmaceutical University). Chairman of the Institute was the EFEO Director, and two Vice-Chairmen were the director of the Institute of Anatomy and the head of ethnology of EFEO. Vietnamese advisory members of Institute were: PhD. Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Dr. Nguyễn Xuân Nguyên, Dr. Đỗ Xuân Hợp and Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tố.

Nguyễn Văn Tố published many articles in French on the journals of Institute. There are some of them: "The change of name and surname of the Vietnamese" (1938), "About children singing and children playing" (1944), "The Diên Châu area according to Chinese and Vietnamese materials" (1944), "Place-names in Chăm-Vietnamese language of Chăm people" (1944)", The 'heap' graves in the Tonkin delta" (1944), "A Vietnamese version of the story 'The Man Who Understands the Animals Language'" (1944).

The Institute also organized classes in anthropology, history and ethnology.

<sup>(\*)</sup> *Cahiers de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, N ° 9, Quatrième trimestre de 1936, pp. 16-30.

<sup>(\*)</sup> *Institut Indochinois pour l'étude de l'homme* (1938), *Bulletin et Travaux*, No. 1.

Nguyễn Văn Tố was a lecturer on chronicle of important events in the history of Vietnam.

3. The “Trí Tri” Society (Society of Intellect and Knowledge) was established on 01.04.1892. Its French name was “Société d'Enseignement Mutuel du Tonkin”, This means “Society of Mutual Education of Tonkin”, but was often used in Vietnamese as “Trí Tri” (named after a verse in the book “Great Learning”: “Tiên trí kỳ tri” [“First, it must know thoroughly”], these words were also on the cover of the Journal of the Society: “Bulletin de la Société d'Enseignement Mutuel du Tonkin”).

The purpose of Trí Tri Society was to enhance people's intellect by organizing classes for children and adults, issuing the journal of the Society (in which it published the articles of Vietnamese authors, the translations of the ancient works of Vietnam and China into French, of the classic works of France into Vietnamese, and the transcripts of rudimentary scientific documents into Vietnamese scripts), and to hold lectures in various topics of different areas. Many scholars in culture and sciences as well as teachers joined this organization such as Đặng Phúc Thông, Dương Quảng Hàm, Đặng Thai Mai, Nguyễn Xiển, Phạm Huy Thông, Nam Sơn Nguyễn Văn Thọ, Tô Ngọc Vân, Đoàn Phú Tứ, Trần Văn Lai...

Nguyễn Văn Tố joined this organization since 1910s. He was responsible for the publication of the journal issues in 1920, 1921 of the Society. In 1922, due to personal reasons, he left off this task, but

the journal still followed the way of Nguyễn Văn Tố<sup>(\*)</sup>. Annual session of General Assembly dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 1928 elected Nguyễn Văn Tố as Director of Courses (French: Directeur des Cours). From volume 12 (7/1931-12/1932) of the Society journal, Nguyễn Văn Tố was Head Clerk of this journal. Annual session of General Assembly dated 29<sup>th</sup> Jun 1934 elected Nguyễn Văn Tố as Chairman of Society<sup>(\*\*)</sup>. He also published many articles written in French in the journal of the Society like these: “*Teaching the Morals*” (1931), “*Scientific Study of Religions*” (1933), “*The Unpublished Poems of Le Dynasty*” (1934), “*The Career of Nguyen Van Vinh*”(1936), “*Petrus Ky (1837-1838)*” (1937)...). In addition, since 1932, Nguyễn Văn Tố was also in charge of 3 columns of the journal: Conferences (abstracts of presentations), Questions and Answers and Bibliographies. Number of pages of this series of articles was pretty much.

#### 4. Society for Propagating the National Language

In his memoirs, Trần Huy Liệu wrote: “According to the resolution of the Party, to become an organization against illiteracy, we, some comrades, met some notable personalities to discuss the creating this organization. The meeting was at Phan Thanh house, included brothers Phan Thanh, Đặng Thai Mai, Võ Nguyên Giáp, I and some notabilities such as Bùi Kỷ, Nguyễn Văn Tố, Trần Trọng

(\*) *Bulletin de la Société d'Enseignement Mutuel du Tonkin*, Tome 3, N°1 (1-3/1922), p. 1.

(\*\*) *Bulletin de la Société d'Enseignement Mutuel du Tonkin*, Tome 14, N o 3 (7-9/1934), p. 495.

Kim... The meeting came to decision to ask permission for establishing a society, at first intended named “Anti-illiteracy Society” (Memoirs of Trần Huy Liệu, 1991, p. 214). The meeting appointed scholar Nguyễn Văn Tố, Chairman of Trí Tri Society, to take charge of procedures, establishing and directing as Chairman of the Society for Propagating National Language.

In the article “Spreading national language against illiteracy”, Nguyễn Văn Tố explained: “Society for Propagating National Language has the mission of propagating the subjects in Vietnamese national language with the principle to raise the people’s intellect, the aim to wish everyone knows how to read and write the country language, to quickly build a future” (Nguyễn Văn Tố, 1945: 3-4). In that spirit, Nguyễn Văn Tố asked “those who were taught by the Society to try to teach other uneducated people around them”.

Society for Propagating National Language had also the policy of presenting speeches, publishing books, establishing popular libraries to disseminate knowledge to the people. The largest meeting of the Society was held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1938 at the Annam Sports Club-house in the Charles Coulier Street (now Khúc Hạo Street, Hanoi). Here, Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tố presented the purposes and principle of the Society for Propagating National Language that still was under the way of establishment. Although on the date of 29<sup>th</sup> July 1938, the Resident Superior of Tonkin had just issued the Decision No. 3622-A of

approving the petition for establishing the Society for Propagating National Language dated 8<sup>th</sup> Apr 1938 by scholar Nguyễn Văn Tố, but the date 25<sup>th</sup> May 1938 was considered to be the official date marking the birth of the Society for Propagating National Language (Trần Đức Cường, 2009: 26, 29). The Society’s headquarters was at the N° 59 of Hàng Quạt Street that was the headquarters of the Trí Tri Society too, directed by chairman Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tố.

Following Hanoi, the Society for Propagating National Language of Annam was, established under the licence dated 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 1939 and another of Cochinchina on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

At the national didactic conference on 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Society for Propagating National Language held on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July 1944 in Hanoi, Mr. Chairman Nguyễn Văn Tố summarized: Central Society for Propagating National Language had opened 17 branches in the Tonkin with 820 classes and 2,903 teachers teaching 41,118 students to read and write; and 11 branches in Annam (Central region)... (Dương Trung Quốc, 2000: 280, 281).

*The News* newspaper (agency of the Democratic Front) commented “The Society for Propagating National Language is a very large cultural school and also a school of patriotism, teaching loving people” (Dương Trung Quốc, 2000: 280-281).

Mr. Vũ Đình Hòe (Director of the *Thanh Nghị Newspaper*, later becoming the Minister of National Education in the



Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) said about Nguyễn Văn Tố and the Society for Propagating National Language as follows: “He (Nguyễn Văn Tố) had a popular speaking way, a humble, sincere and amiable attitude. Having inspected the classes, he often visited the poor families, urged them to join in classes, and by the way inquired after their lives and businesses, so he was very loved by people... On the other hand, he had a skillful diplomacy in relation with high-ranking French and Vietnamese officials, a tactic sometimes solid and sometimes soft, sometimes forwards and sometimes backwards, therefore the Society had stepped forward smoothly over huge difficulties like a raft floating over waterfalls” (Vũ Đình Hòe, 2009: 9).

5. In addition, the documents of the EFEO and the book *Souverains et Notabilités d'Indochine* (Indochina Royalties and Notabilities) said that Nguyễn Văn Tố was also the First Vice-Chairman of Vietnam Society for Promoting Arts and Industry (French: Société annamite d'encouragement à l'art et à l'industrie), founded in 1934), and Councillor of the Hanoi City (French: conseiller municipal de Hanoi) (See: *Souverains et Notabilités d'Indochine*, 1943).

### III. As journalist

Nguyễn Văn Tố contributed articles to many newspapers, magazines, especially to those newspapers and magazines which spread and disseminated the knowledges in French and Vietnamese writings. His articles also referred to a lot of different

areas. We can mention a number of well-known newspapers and magazines such as:

1. *French-Annamese Judiciary Review* (French: *Revue Judiciaire Franco-Annamite*)<sup>(\*)</sup>: Nguyễn Văn Tố was almost a full member of the journal when he wrote a series on Vietnamese conventions: “Some problems of Vietnamese customs” (1931, 1932), “On the binding body laws upon local people in civil and commercial affairs” (1931). In this series, Nguyễn Văn Tố wrote in French and had a abstract in Vietnamese. Also, in the issue there are analyzed Folder, compiled by Nguyễn Văn Tố.

2. *Nam Phong Magazine*<sup>(\*\*)</sup>: In this magazine, we must mention some articles written in French by Nguyễn Văn Tố such as: “Individuals in ancient Vietnamese society” (Thesis of Nguyễn Mạnh Tường) (1930), “On the issue of patriotism and the nationalism” (1930), “Vietnamese ethics and Western ethics” (1930), “On the issue of Vietnamese-Chăm history and archeology, Ethics and Religion” (1934).

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(\*) This is a monthly magazine, published the first issue in May 1931 and was sponsored and protected by a number of members of protectorate government, of the Tribunal and the Huế court. The Magazine published the articles in French and Vietnamese about the laws of Indochina.

(\*\*) Monthly magazine published in three languages: Vietnamese, Chinese and French. Its first issue was on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1917 and after No. 210 - December 1934 it ceased to exist. *Nam Phong Magazine* was headed by Phạm Quỳnh as Chairman and Chief Editor. It published many articles on philosophy, religion, society, politics, economics, education, customs, language, literature, sciences, arts, history, geography ...

3. *Indochina Weekly* (French: Indochine hebdomadaire illustré): In this magazine, Nguyễn Văn Tố wrote articles in French like: “Father Alexandre de Rhodes and transcription in Vietnamese” (1941), “The ancient Vietnam before French culture” (1942), “The Trí Tri Society of Tonkin” (1942), “Bishop d'Adran (Bá Đa Lộc) and Gia Long Emperor” (1942), “Indochina literature prize - The works by R. P. Cadière” (1945), “Vietnam and China books” (1945).

4. *Đông Thanh Magazine*<sup>(\*)</sup>: Some of the most typical articles of Nguyễn Văn Tố in this magazine were: “The Kingdom of Champa” (1932), “The arts of our country” (1932), “Love poems in the Book of Poetry (Shih Ching) and duologue of boys and girls” (1932), “What did the Vietnamese language originate from?” (1932), “Was King Gia Long a great hero or not?” (1932), “Đại La citadel relics” (1932), “In what times did Vietnam coin money?” (1932), “A glorious part of Vietnam history” (1932,

1933), “Survey of ancient coins” (1933), “A new book surveying on Confucianism” (1933), “Some articles of law should be revised” (1933)...

5. *Thanh Nghị Newspaper*<sup>(\*)</sup>: The Nguyễn Văn Tố's articles published in this newspaper were as follows: “The youth and the learning” (1942), “The youth and the ethical behaviour” (1942), “The youth and the working classes” (1943), “The youth and the village affairs” (1943), “The youth and the music” (1943), “Historical records: Vietnam history in comparison with China history” (1944), “Popular education” (1945).

6. *Tri Tân Magazine*<sup>(\*\*)</sup>: Nguyễn Văn Tố frequently contributed various articles to most issues of *Tri Tân Magazine* in historical studies and cultural surveys... His articles were written under the pseudonym Ứng Hòe Nguyễn Văn Tố, among which there were many articles published in several issues such as: “The documents to be used for correcting the ancient texts” (1941, 1942, 1943, 1944,

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(\*) Founded by printing-house owner Ngô Tử Hạ, published fortnightly on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> every month. No. 1 dated the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1932. The purpose of *Đông Thanh Magazine* is to conserve and maintain the language, customs and rituals of the Vietnamese, to advance “new-old harmony” and encourage learning the West while preserving the national identity. *Đông Thanh Magazine* gathered many outstanding writers such as Sở Cuồng Lê Dư, Ứng Hòe Nguyễn Văn Tố, Đồ Nam Tử Nguyễn Trọng Thuật, Ưu Thiên Bùi Kỳ with many valuable articles and surveys. However, the Magazine was suspended after 35 numbers (in 1934). By 1935, it further reissued the numbers from 36, but only after number 38 it was suspended again. Then reissued sporadically a few ones before formally ceasing to exist after No. 43 (on the 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1935).

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(\*) Newspaper issuing weekly on Saturday, directed by Vũ Đình Hòe as Chairman. Its purpose is debating and studying history, literature, art and culture, sciences, education, economics and society, agriculture, breeding and rurality, legislation, social activities and daily life, international affairs, political system; writing editorials and commentaries. It brought together most contemporary intellectuals in various scientific fields.

(\*\*) The Journal was directed by Nguyễn Tường Phụng as Chief Editor. The first issue was on 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun 1941, the last on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1945, the total was 212 issues. The purpose of Journal was “To revise the old in order to know the new” (after an Chinese saying) in various fields such as history, ethnography, philosophy, linguistics, literary studies and criticism, etc.

1945); “Stone stelae of Literature Temple: The doctors of letters in Lê Dynasty” (1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945); “Missing history of Đại Nam” (1943, 1944, 1945); “Vietnam literary history” (1944, 1945); and others such as: “The glorious stories in the Đại Việt history” (1945), “In the old days, when newly getting independence, how did our country arrange affairs?” (1945), “Propagating national language against illiteracy” (1945), “Equal land distribution” (1945), “Did Vietnam have the freedom of speech in the old days?” (1945), “The spirit of martial art” (1945),...

In addition, Nguyễn Văn Tố also wrote other articles in French and Vietnamese newspapers and magazines such as: *Avenir du Tonkin* (The Future of Tonkin), *Annam nouveau* (The New Annam), *Tao Đàn* (The Literary Coterie) ...

Contemporarily, Nguyễn Văn Tố was classified in the top 4 reputations: “Quỳnh, Vĩnh, Tố, Tôn” (Phạm Quỳnh, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh, Nguyễn Văn Tố, Phạm Duy Tôn).

#### **IV. President Hồ Chí Minh and Nguyễn Văn Tố**

1. At the end of August 1945, President Hồ Chí Minh invited Nguyễn Văn Tố to be the Minister of Social Assistance in the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He was elected on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 1946 as a member of the first National Assembly of Democratic Republic of Vietnam representing Nam Dinh city. In the first session of the first National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March

1946 in Hanoi, the National Assembly elected Nguyễn Văn Tố as Chairman of the Standing Committee (equivalent to the current Chairman of the National Assembly). On 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1946, he was appointed as Minister without portfolio. However, he still kept a room at the Vietnam Oriental Institute in N° 26 of Lý Thường Kiệt Street for working (Nguyễn Thiệu Lâu, 1994).

In the time of war in late 1960s, when packing the documents of the Social Sciences Library to move to safe place, people found in the drawer of Nguyễn Văn Tố the letter of President Hồ Chí Minh sent to Nguyễn Văn Tố on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1946:

“Dear Sir!

In recent Sunday, the Thái Bình people gave me two bottles of sauce made with shrimp. Thinking that “heavy love in the light thing”, I couldn’t refused and I accepted for their pleasure.

Now I would like to present you a bottle, and wish you health.

Yours cordially!

Hồ Chí Minh”

This letter was given by Social Sciences Library to Vietnam Museum of Revolution and now is kept at the Hồ Chí Minh Museum.

2. When the French troops attacked Việt Bắc Region (upper North of Vietnam) in Nov 1947, Nguyễn Văn Tố was arrested and murdered in Bắc Kạn on 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 1947 (Parliament Complete Documents, 2006, Volume 1 (1945-1960), p. 1531).

Although “never writing funeral oration”, President Hồ Chí Minh wrote the funeral oration to Nguyễn Văn Tố that sounded:

“Sir, unforgettable forever you are!

You, with purely literary knowledge, high and profound learning

With humble attitude, incorruptible character

Tried your best to expand culture, .

Did not wish the riches, honours and fame.

When the nation gained the liberation, you were ready to help the country,

Serving as Minister you were close to people every day.

As member of Congress you always discussed to build country...”

(Parliament Complete Documents, 2006, Volume 1 (1945-1960), p. 1445)<sup>(\*)</sup>.

#### V. Nguyễn Văn Tố and Social Sciences Library

In 1957, the EFEO in Hanoi, where Nguyễn Văn Tố worked before, handed over to the Government of Democratic Republic of Vietnam the headquarters, the Louis Finot Museum of EFEO (now the National Museum of History) and the EFEO Library (now the Library of Social Sciences – managed by Institute of Social Sciences Information).

In May 1970, the family of Nguyễn Văn Tố donated to the Social Sciences Library 322 books from his personal books store, including 46 Vietnamese language books and 276 French language ones. Having

been collected by Mr. Tố, this fund of books was selected very carefully. With the respect to a erudite scholar and member of the EFEO like Nguyễn Văn Tố who had many contributions to the national social sciences and humanities and to the country, especially because the books he donated library are the rare books, the Library of Social Sciences has established a particular fund for this books and labelled with Nguyễn Văn Tố as symbol. These books are being digitized to serve readers □

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(\*) Letter of President Hồ Chí Minh sent to Mr. Bùi Bằng Đoàn and draft of funeral oration to Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tố.

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