

# THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Part 1: The formation and development of Ho Chi Minh's thought in the period before the 1930s

Nguyen Thi Nga<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Division of Political Theory, Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam

### ABSTRACT

*The article is the result of studies on the movement of learning and following Ho Chi Minh's thought, style, and morality that has undergone a long history and acquired many achievements in all aspects of social life. In particular, the author focuses on President Ho Chi Minh's viewpoint on democracy in education and training. Through the generalization of his viewpoint on democracy in the issue mentioned above in each historical period, it is obvious that from the early days of the Vietnamese revolution, he paid great attention to education - training, especially the people's right to learn. As a result, his thoughts have inspired and become an important motivation for the development of education in Vietnam today.*

**Keyword:** Ho Chi Minh, democracy, education and training, policy, Vietnamese youth.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Ho Chi Minh's thought, education and training plays a key role that covers the whole of his revolutionary career. Ho Chi Minh's thought on education was formed and developed by inheriting and creatively applying the traditional values of studiousness, the quintessence of education, and the theory of Marxism - Leninism to specific conditions in Vietnam. This thought was successfully demonstrated in practice by a creative revolutionary, talented organizer, brilliant thinker with a great personality - Ho Chi Minh, thereby making him reach a new height - A great educator. It is undeniable that the success and great achievements of the education of Vietnam today come from the merits of President Ho Chi Minh through opening a new democratic education. Ho Chi Minh's thought on democracy in education in Vietnam was formed and developed in his career of finding a way to save the country and fighting for the revolution. The foundation and development of ho chi minh's through democracy in education and training are divided into three main phases. The first stage analyzed in this article is the first stage. This is the period before the 1930s.

## **2. PERIOD BEFORE 1930: PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH CRITICIZED THE COLONIAL EDUCATION POLICY, ESPECIALLY THE “OBSCURANTISM” OF THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT**

This is the period most clearly showing the foundations for the formation of Ho Chi Minh's thought on democracy in education. In this period, Ho Chi Minh experienced domestic education, surveyed the practices of education in other countries around the world, and absorbed the educational theory of Marxism - Leninism to form fundamentals of education.

The first foundation set by Ho Chi Minh was the lessons learned from the absorption of domestic education. Born and raised in a patriotic Confucian family, both his father and grandfather were teachers, so it is for sure that Ho Chi Minh was definitely taught about the necessity of learning - which every true Confucianist always does. After that, Ho Chi Minh followed many teachers, studied in many schools, and underwent both the old and new education, thus an awareness of the importance of teaching and learning was gradually built in Ho Chi Minh's mind. From the fact that more than 90% of the population was illiterate under slavery and poverty, Ho Chi Minh has appreciated the importance of education, in which the desire to attend schools is one of the important requirements for the development of a nation.

In 1909, on the way of leaving from the “Quoc hoc Hue” to the South, Ho Chi Minh (known as Nguyen Tat Thanh at that time) stopped at Phan Thiet and became a teacher at Duc Thanh School for the first time in his life. Therefore, it can be said that teacher was his first job since leaving his family to start an independent life and revolutionary activities. As a teacher of the Chinese and Vietnamese alphabet in grade 2, in charge of physical education and guiding extracurricular activities, Ho Chi Minh formed and practiced the thoughts on goals, content, and methods of education for the young generation.

In 1911, he started his journey to find a way to save the country. He spent years in other countries to study the theory and practice of education, especially in developed capitalist nations such as the UK, the US, and France, so on. He found that the role of the intellectuals in these countries was paid high attention, unlike in his homeland whose education was stagnant due to backward feudal education and obscurantism of the colonists. This certainly resulted in concerns and thoughts in his mind.

Ho Chi Minh criticized colonial education in the general condemnation of colonialism in the colony, mainly in the 20s of the twentieth century - the period after Ho Chi Minh absorbed Marxism-Leninism and started to form his thoughts about the Vietnamese revolution. He condemned all aspects of colonial education.

After stamping out the Can Vuong movement (1885 - 1896), the French colonialists began carrying out their colonial exploitation. In addition to the economic, political and social policies, culture - education was also not an exception that they considered as a sharp weapon of the colonial regime. In a more particular term, the French colonialists educational development in the colony aimed at assimilation of our people.

These policies of the French colonialists are the reason for Ho Chi Minh's using many measures to reveal their malice during his career in France. In 1919, together with a group of patriotic youths, he wrote and sent to the Versailles Conference the “claim of the people of Annam”. One of the eight points of the Claim is that: “Freedom of learning and establishing the technical and professional institutions in all provinces for natives” (Ho Chi Minh Full collection, 2000a). In the period of 1923 - 1924, in the French manuscript of Indochina works (1923 - 1924), archived at the Communist International Archives, Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote a series of articles denouncing the crimes of the colonial policy, in which the article of obscurantism stated that the schools were established not to provide the youth of Annam with a good and true education in order to improve their intellectuals and develop their thoughts, but on the contrary, make them more stupid. In addition to training the couriers, interpreters and subordinate officials in service of the invaders - they built an education that was corrupt, crafty, and more dangerous than ignorance because it corrupted and destroyed all the characters of the learners. It only taught them fake honesty, to worship those stronger than them, and love a country that is not their own homeland and is oppressing them. This education taught the youth to despise their own lineage, made them become stupid. They failed to train students how to think and analyze. Any issues related to politics and society that can enlighten them were distorted and misrepresented. In the contents about the history of France, the chapter on the revolution was also skipped. The colonial regime forbade people to read the works of Huygo, Ruxo, and Mongtexkio. Therefore, it can conclude that

the educational policies under French colonialism were aimed at lowering the educational level of the people of Annam for the easy ruling.

In 1925, his work entitled “French Colonialism on Trial” was published for the first time in Paris once again helped us to recognize Nguyen Ai Quoc - a soldier on the front line of struggle against unjust oppression of the French colonialists towards Vietnam and Indochina at that time. In the field of education, he spent many paragraphs and pages on denouncing their “obscurantism”: “At that time, there were one thousand and five hundred retailers of alcohol and opium among every thousand villages, but only ten schools” (Ho Chi Minh Full collection, 2000b). Injustices and corruption took place everywhere in the colonial country, even in areas where democracy and equality seemed to need to be applied first for their purpose of “civilization”: “The native youths who have attended at universities of the colonial empire, and graduated the curriculum for medical doctor or doctor of law, but it was impossible for them to follow their job in their own country if they have had no French citizenship. Everyone knows that, in order to have French citizenship, a native person had to undergo countless hardships and humiliating efforts” (Ho Chi Minh Full collection, 2000c).

Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote that: “In order to deceive public opinion of France and exploit the native people without encountering challenges, the sharks of colonial empire not only poisoned the people of Annam with alcohol and opium but also applied an obscurantism” (Ho Chi Minh Complete works, 2000d). He spent a whole chapter of “Obscurantism” (Chapter IX) to denounce the crimes of the French colonialists in restricting the education of Vietnam, for example, he stated that the French colonialists did not lack money to establish schools, but such funds of the French Cochinchina budget are mainly “flowed” in the pockets of the colonial officials..

In 1927, Nguyen Ai Quoc’s lectures printed in the work “Duong Kach Menh” outlined his views about political, ideological, and organizational affairs for the establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam. He called on the Vietnamese working class to establish their own trade union and conduct steps to fulfill that purpose, including the payment of membership fees for “many a pickle makes a mickle”. He advised that: “When the fund was abundant, the following affairs should be completed first:

1. Construction of schools for workers
2. Construction of schools for workers’ children
3. Construction of places to read books and newspapers
4. Construction of hospitals for workers...”(Ho Chi Minh Full collection, 2002)

Following the works of “Duong Kach Menh”, Nguyen Ai Quoc continued to use his sharp pen to expose and criticize in public the undemocratic actions of the colonial regime.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen that, during the period of working abroad, before the establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Ai Quoc carried out deep analysis and criticized the shortcomings of colonial education. That was the foundation for his thought of a liberal and democratic education, including the freedom of learning, the freedom of establishing schools, the promotion of reading and newspapers, the equal rights of teachers, and so on. Those are lofty ideals formed early by a young patriot named Nguyen Ai Quoc. In the follow-up study, the author will study the second phase in the formation and development of Ho Chi Minh's thought on democracy in education and training from 1930 to 1945.

### 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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