



Key concepts in Nguyen AN Ninh's thought on political struggle

Le Ngoc Hien

University of Social Sciences and Humanities – VNU Hanoi, Vietnam

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66856/ijssh.2026.8.3.8117>

Abstract

The starting point of politics lies in human perception and reaction within social relationships, which determine the interaction or conflict of power. As an intellectual engaged in revolutionary activities, Nguyen AN Ninh (1900–1943) developed his political thought based on an awareness that the nature of the French colonial regime was inextricably linked to French capital and the global capitalist system. This reality led Nguyen AN Ninh to determine that political struggle must be grounded in ideology and organization, implemented through a system of cognition, methodology, and the identification of participating forces to build a political movement. The following article focuses on researching the core contents of Nguyen AN Ninh's thought regarding political movements. From there, the paper provides an analysis of his approach to the nature of colonial politics and the necessity of class struggle in mobilizing the masses to prepare for the revolution.

Keywords: Nguyen AN Ninh, political struggle, Marxism

Introduction

Since the French colonial army invaded Vietnam and sought every means to establish a colonial regime, the contradictions within Vietnamese society became increasingly complex. For instance, within the administrative apparatus, the French chose to neutralize the political system of the Nguyen Dynasty to install a colonial power order that served the interests of the bourgeois government in Paris. In Southern Vietnam, the French colonial authorities quickly implemented Decision No. 44 (dated March 31, 1863), which reflected a political objective where policies regarding indigenous officials had to be tied to an educational system “under the direct supervision of the provincial governor”^[1].

The concentration of power in the colony showed signs of being driven by the ideological dominance of French bourgeois political policy. Firstly, the political ideology of the French ruling class was the “civilizing mission” (*mission civilisatrice*), executed under the influence of “moral arguments further reinforced by rationalism”^[2]. Secondly, the foundation of political thought (for both the French government and the colonial administration) had to ensure that colonial policy was carried out through a colonial duty tied to a “superior race”^[3], as Jules Ferry presented to the French Parliament in 1885. Pierre Brocheux evaluated the impact of this political ideology as further complicating “hierarchy based on ethnic composition”^[4]. These challenges continued to demand that the Vietnamese revolutionary movement seek and select an ideology for class liberation to break the spiritual and material chains of colonialism. This mission was also reflected in the choices that Nguyen An Ninh sought, as he tested new ideologies, forms, and methods for political struggle in Vietnam.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Framework: Political Movements in the History of Thought

The works of Rousseau, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and others exerted a profound influence on the formation of Nguyen An Ninh's ideology regarding the conception and

construction of political movements. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau begins with an enduring paradox: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains”^[5]. His rationalist belief led him to focus on social contract, provided that this contract is established through collective strength. Rousseau defined the legitimacy of the collective as the “General Will” regarding human rights, asserting that “all legitimate power is based on conventions”^[6]. This served as a catalyst for Nguyen An Ninh's arguments concerning the colonial political situation. It partially explains his chosen course of action: engaging in an open struggle to reach the masses, communicating fundamental issues linked to each individual's life, and mobilizing forces for a broad and deep political movement.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, through *The Communist Manifesto*, were the next major intellectual sources influencing Nguyen An Ninh. Centered on the critique of human alienation in a society shaped by capitalist economics, Marx and Engels denounced the impoverishment of human relations. This was no longer manifested merely in isolated conflicts but existed as a class contradiction between the ruling and the oppressed classes. Class consciousness became the key element highlighted by Marx and Engels, placing it in a vital position for the self-awareness of the political subject. For them, the political subject is the power of the masses and the power of the working class. It must involve the ideological and material preparation for a proletarian revolution to achieve the goals of human and class liberation.

Furthermore, Nguyen An Ninh found within socialism the interpretations of democratic principles and spirits. He directly studied V.I. Lenin's Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions. Through exchanges with Phan Van Truong and Nguyen Ai Quoc, Lenin's perspectives helped Nguyen An Ninh clarify the nature of colonial bourgeois democracy: “Under the guise of the equality of the individual in general, bourgeois democracy proclaims the formal or legal equality of the property-owner and the proletarian, the exploiter and the exploited”^[7].

2. Political Movements in Historical Practice

Global historical changes reflect a fundamental relationship, interacting with a series of events, phenomena, and individuals in Vietnamese history. Particularly, high levels of industrialization did not only create disparities but also posed social issues requiring explanation by humans as subjects producing both thought and action.

Philippe Peycam, in *The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916–1930*, conducted a comprehensive study to explain the fluctuations that led the way for the development of the Vietnamese struggle against French colonial rule. He observed that the socio-political context in Southern Vietnam did not merely carry the colonial characteristics of French colonialism but was also accompanied by the growing role of public debate through the press. This medium was not simply initiated by a few individuals but continuously evolved based on the growth of social forces. In Peycam's assessment, Nguyen An Ninh was a revolutionary who created a breakthrough with a political revolution starting from journalism. Peycam evaluated Ninh's choice to "pursue political journalism as a means to reach and mobilize a much larger public" [8].

In the book *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945*, David Marr systematized the perspectives and choices of many socio-political activists in Vietnam during a challenging period from post-World War I to 1945. Marr also paid attention to the significant changes within the Vietnamese intelligentsia in their efforts to create choices and experiments to propel the struggle. He assessed that Nguyen An Ninh was always an individual associated with the practice of political liberation, seeking clear ways to communicate the "foundations of a liberating ideology" [9].

Daniel Hémery, in *From Patriotism to Marxism*, conducted a socio-historical study to understand the developments of the anti-French colonial movement. He presented and analyzed documents and reports to derive the shift in the ideology of Vietnamese youth and students who became activists establishing the system of revolutionary organizations in France. Furthermore, he explained that the choice of young Vietnamese going to France shared Asian characteristics, as they all had the "aspiration to understand the true nature of the enemy and to bridge the gap between Vietnamese culture and Western scientific thought" [10]. He also appraised Nguyen An Ninh as a "veteran figure in the national movement" [11].

3. Synthesis

In general, these documents focus on analyzing the political movement as a historical phenomenon conceived and operated through ideological and active foundations that arouse the spirit of freedom, resistance, and social solidarity. The efficacy of change lies in the objectives oriented during the process of building and consolidating the political movement. It requires more than just a spirit of commitment to solutions directed at specific individuals or communities. Indeed, the change that constitutes the effectiveness of a political movement is reflected in the analyses and presentations that help movement members and social forces clearly understand the complexities of real life. Accordingly, a political movement can only mobilize when it enables people to access and understand the roots of social contradictions, thereby developing and implementing effective solutions that contribute to the empowerment of the masses.

Content

1. The Reality of Political Struggle

Nguyen An Ninh's spirit was early exposed to the most fundamental form of political awareness: the patriotism kindled through his family's involvement in the Dong Du (Go East), Duy Tan (Modernization), and Minh Tan movements in Cochinchina. This influence served as the foundation for the quest of his ideology's system. For him, affection for the homeland and nation was always accompanied by a critical spirit to clearly perceive the nature of colonial rule. During his time studying Law in Hanoi, he found the curriculum revolved solely around the laws of governance. Moreover, the French authorities and the colonial education system "did not want to train indigenous lawyers" [12]. He resolved to go to France, wanting to "study the law of the very country that gave birth to those regulations" [13] so that he could return and contribute to his people.

In his lecture titled *Chung đúc nền học thức cho người An Nam* (Une culture pour les Annamites) on January 25, 1923, Nguyen An Ninh presented his assessment of the state of the political movement:

Politics is certainly a beautiful thing. It is attractive. It is entertaining. And anyone can talk more or less about politics. But politics does not only exist in nations endowed with the quality of civilization. Of course, during difficult crises, politics often generates special energies. Yet in times of peace, politics opens up a territory too vast, ruled over by a mediocre regime [14].

Nguyen An Ninh's critique was further reflected in his evaluation of the public's political awareness during his first lecture. He delved deeper into the manifestations of the contemporary political movement. Because poor political awareness persisted, its consequences were chaos that harmed both individuals and society. It caused the masses to depend on "promises, even if they are deceitful" [15]. Individual emotions were exploited when the reality of life was overturned by "the enthusiasm and disappointment of the crowd succeeding and chaining one another" [16]. Worse still, the reversal of values caused a crisis in political perception – a crisis that turned unrealistic people into victims "stripped of capacity and enslaved" [17]. This led to the emergence of stubborn visionaries who asserted that "the survival of the race is a political issue, not a social one" [18], while the reason behind their imposition was simply to view politics as a path to "achieving some promise they expect" [19].

The distinctions between racism, colonialism, imperialism, and slavery were no longer confined to chronological stages. All these extreme political forms dominated simultaneously from the moment the French invaded Vietnam and introduced the model called the Indochinese Union. Empowering people to be autonomous and have their own opinions was something that would never happen. Consequently, the Vietnamese were regarded as slaves by French bourgeois politics long before any promises of political or economic autonomy were mentioned. As an intellectual who had been exposed to socialism, Nguyen An Ninh skillfully used a dialectical allegory of class contradiction for the public to easily visualize:

We were born in a country lacking in every way, where everything must be created, born into an era where every intelligent initiative is loathed. Here, two opposing forces clash, two lives are competing: one side is weak, trying to

find a place under the sun; the other is powerful, yet draining to the point of exhaustion to supply a distant monster. And it is the weak one that is calling for our help. Being born on this land, our conscience compels us to take up the mission. Who else but us can take on this heavy responsibility? ^[20]

Similar to Nguyen Ai Quoc's metaphor regarding the nature of capitalism ^[21], Nguyen An Ninh regarded the "old order" as a colonial order representing "coercion, barbarism, and chaos" ^[22]. Their actions were draining the spirit and lives of the colonial people to "supply a distant monster" ^[23]. Nguyen An Ninh used this description to show the masses that the nature of contemporary society was that of a victim of oppression maintained by colonialism in collusion with the capitalist system in France and globally.

Nguyen An Ninh did not consider the enslavement the Vietnamese suffered to be inevitable. Thus, he refused all compromise when identifying that colonial politics in Vietnam and Indochina was nothing but a lie. This truth completely refuted the claims of French bourgeois politics regarding a "civilizing mission" equated with a civilized and modern status.

2. Definition of Politics and Characteristics of Political Struggle

Nguyen An Ninh returned to the country in 1923, a time when post-World War I (1918) Vietnam witnessed social shifts that led the Vietnamese bourgeois class to seek changes in their relationship with the French colonialists. The characteristics of the wartime economy prompted them to gather into collective groups ^[24]. They possessed both economic status and their own means of public expression. Examples include Bui Quang Chieu (an agricultural engineer graduated in Paris), Nguyen Phu Khai (a graduate of the Public Works School), and Nguyen Phan Long. Even when they gathered in the Parti Constitutionnaliste indochinois (Đảng Lập hiến Đông Dương) in 1923, their activities prior to 1918 had been patronized by the colonial administration, notably under Albert Sarraut – the architect of the "Franco-Annamite Collaboration" ideology (Pháp-Việt đề huê).

Sarraut's strategy established a new precedent in French colonial policy, as he asserted his ideology to be the "most complete form of French colonial policy in Asia" ^[25]. In return, the stance of Bui Quang Chieu's group (or the Tribune group) and those gathered around the newspaper La Tribune Indigène prioritized cooperation with colonial policy. They claimed their publication served as the "barometer of indigenous public opinion" ^[26]. The 1919 boycott of Chinese merchants was the first political movement initiated by the Tribune group alongside other national bourgeois newspapers. Regardless, they did not choose revolution. They maintained the political program of La Tribune Indigène as "brotherly solidarity for the common cause [...] under the protection of France, the defender of the rights and honor of all peoples" ^[27].

The aforementioned examples show that the revolution in Vietnam in 1923 was experiencing both opportunities and challenges. Regarding opportunities, history recorded that social consciousness in Vietnamese public opinion began to familiarize itself with several political and economic campaigns. This remained a challenge, as the Tribune group completely maintained their acceptance of the French colonial ruling order. This point stood in total opposition to

the political stance of Phan Chau Trinh, the revolutionary who initiated the Duy Tan (Modernization) movement. Phan Chau Trinh's patriotism had a certain influence on the choices of both Nguyen Ai Quoc and Nguyen An Ninh regarding the construction of political movements.

Nguyen An Ninh constructed his definition of politics through a very interesting social basis. This was evident when he presented his arguments during an exchange of ideas with readers about the role of women in politics. He wrote:

[...] those who enter politics must be those who understand the "interests" of the people, not those who exploit degrees, grand houses, or large cars to speak nonsense and deceive the ignorant as has been done in the past ^[28]

Politics, before being realized in the form of an organization, requires an ideological anchor. Contrary to the supporters of "Franco-Vietnamese Collaboration", Nguyen An Ninh viewed politics as an inseparable relationship between the individual and the people. Once an individual participates in social life and finds the motivation to contribute, that individual cannot disregard the realities and issues within the complex relationships between individuals and social groups. This is when the individual practices the principles of a political actor, which Nguyen An Ninh affirmed through the alignment of the individual with the interests of the people.

The entire colonial ruling system never ceased seeking ways to erase that truth, even increasing repression to force the people to concede. Nguyen An Ninh warned that the harm of prolonged concession would only push the people to "struggle in blood and tears" ^[29]. He encouraged the people to unite and bravely "demand the right to live, [...] and rise up against injustice" ^[30]. With that spirit, he summarized several characteristics of political struggle as follows:

First, political struggle must clearly understand the motivations, causes, and lessons from the people's struggles. For Nguyen An Ninh, the motivation for political struggle was a full awareness of historicity and its totality within the state of a sovereign, independent nation. He affirmed that the existence of the Vietnamese people and nation manifested a temporal continuity and a pivotal role of the people. He wrote:

History has fully proven the independence of the Annamese nation. China knows this well. They could not defeat the Annamese people, despite efforts that were sometimes very fierce, but usually persistent and resilient. When invading, the French soldier must also have tasted the vigor of that independence ^[31]

Nguyen An Ninh provided an assessment drawn from history: even over a thousand years of Northern domination by Chinese feudal regimes could not replace the Vietnamese concept of national independence. This remained clearly evident, as French colonial rule served as further reason for the Vietnamese to "remain fully aware of their unified bloc" ^[32]. Nguyen An Ninh proved this truth through a series of uprisings and revolts, from De Tham and the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, to the Gilbert Chieu's case, the Thai Nguyen uprising, and the revolt of Phan Xich Long. He reflected one consequence of these struggles: the fragmentation of the movements. He recreated the varying fates of the colonized people – some patiently "bending their backs over a plot of land" ^[33], and others going abroad to gather and prepare for an opportunity. There were also those who surrendered to the colonialists to "try to prove their loyalty" ^[34]. While

acknowledging the strong will of the Vietnamese for independence, Nguyen An Ninh criticized Phan Xich Long's methods. Disparities in material conditions were not as dangerous or damaging as a struggle method that "believed in amulets to protect them against swords and guns" ^[35]. Nguyen An Ninh labeled this method as nothing more than the "weapon of despair" ^[36].

Second, political struggle is a means to prove the necessity of a modern resistance organization. Simultaneously, Nguyen An Ninh expanded his concept regarding the dialectics of revolution. When a nation is pushed to the choice between death or slavery, he chose a "heroic" ^[37] death because it was a sacrifice for national independence. In every aspect, revolution could only become a reality when a modern resistance organization ensured the power of organizational building linked to the collective spirit of will – an element he termed the "power of discipline" ^[38]. Here, he analyzed the collective spirit as "racial liberation" ^[39]. For him, total liberation required "realized individuals, units, and creative powers" ^[40] in any fields building a new society.

Third, political struggle must be considered a condition to prepare for a comprehensive revolution. The depth of national independence and political struggle, for Nguyen An Ninh, lay within the thickness of culture. He linked culture to the vitality of the nation, asserting that it means "living with a culture, with strength, with all the best that a nation or an era can leave behind for future generations as a profound mark or a brilliant aura" ^[41]. As he linked politics to the interests of the people, he encouraged everyone to "defend your rights to the end against any encroachment" ^[42]. He recognized the spirit of the postal workers at the Saigon Post Office during their strike, as he saw it as a sign of political solidarity among laborers.

Fourth, political struggle must be the cause of liberating all people and overthrowing all forms of oppression and exploitation. Nguyen An Ninh understood that this struggle was by no means easy. He identified the object of political struggle as the entire relationship between capitalism and colonialism. Their dominance always required an intermediary subject. Its purpose was the accumulation of capacity and repressive mechanisms "whitewashed" by a significant portion of the bourgeois propaganda system. That intermediary subject was the colony – a collection of all natural elements coerced by the "regal shadow of the French colonialists" ^[43]. Within the colony, indigenous communities did not exist, as all were disparaged as people "stripped of dignity" ^[44]. The prosperity of the colony was an absolute version justified by colonialism and bourgeois politics. It was described by the crowdedness of secretaries constantly playing the role of distributing goods ^[45] and by racial discrimination that kept the people in misery. Regarding representation in the political system, the colonial apparatus collaborated with French capital to blatantly install a colonialist, Ernest Outrey, as the so-called "representative of Cochinchine" ^[46].

Nguyen An Ninh noted that the political struggle must be tied to the commitment to a revolutionary's duty. That duty is to "point out to everyone the obstacles and injustices threatening peace" ^[47]. The revolutionary must also keep in mind that their activities and ideals must "prepare for the younger generations to follow" ^[48]. This process required the radicalization of political struggle forms. On this point, Nguyen An Ninh emphasized class struggle. His approach

was entirely based on concrete historical characteristics, a point that can be directly linked to the perspective mentioned by Marx and Engels:

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air ^[49].

Two examples from the struggles of the Ba Son workers and the employees of the Bank of Indochina were added by Nguyen An Ninh to his assessment of the impact of strikes on colonial politics. His interest also noted the struggles of workers in Spain (1917–1919), Washington and Seattle (1919), Havana (1924), etc. These were milestones showing the maturity of consciousness and action within the proletariat in different regions, creating momentum for social revolution. The key to the success of class struggle was to "self-organize to protect one's interests" ^[50].

To achieve effectiveness, Nguyen An Ninh linked his theory of political struggle to class issues, the experience of class struggle, and the necessity of a national organization. As a general principle, a national organization needed to gather strength to end division, directing all efforts and spirit toward "fulfilling a common task" ^[51]. Additionally, he believed the national organization should be linked to the masses to find appropriate ways to help them "become aware of their rights and power" ^[52]. In this theoretical section, he continued to remind readers that the object the revolution needed to overthrow was the oppression of "the government in the metropole and the colonial administration" ^[53]. This identification was the final piece that allowed Nguyen An Ninh to fundamentally name the form of national organization as the United Front.

In practice, Nguyen An Ninh tested his ideology through the activities of the High Aspiration Youth (*Espoirs de la Jeunesse/Thanh niên Cao vọng*). This was an organization he discussed with Phan Van Hum and Mai Van Ngoc ^[54]. His purpose for the Hopes of Youth was to organize the masses, gathering and guiding them in revolutionary activities to become a force to "introduce to the Communist Party" ^[55]. The organization's activities began in the Gia Dinh – Thu Dau Mot area down to Tay Ninh and the remaining provinces of the South. A 1929 French intelligence report assessed the Hopes of Youth as "modeling the principles of the Communist International" ^[56]. Discussing nationalism, the 1929 report explained that the Hopes of Youth "seriously applied the rules of the Communist International, requiring the exploitation of nationalist sentiments to gather the necessary elements for the organization of a future communist government, within a narrow and hierarchical discipline" ^[57].

After Nguyen An Ninh supported the Communist Party of Vietnam in receiving the core forces of the High Aspiration Youth, he launched the newspaper *La Lutte* (No. 1, April 24, 1933) and published an article calling on the people to vote for the "Workers' List" (*sở Lao động*), consisting of Southern members of the Indochinese Communist Party and a group of Trotskyist activists (also known collectively as the Fourth International group). In this article, Nguyen An Ninh noted:

Laborers need to clearly realize their social situation, need to know what they want, and need to speak out about what they want in order to begin coordinating their strength. Only when the masses show will and determination will their fate be considered by the ruling class ^[58].

Here, Nguyen An Ninh shared the necessity of social awareness in the self-awareness of laborers. This process can only yield results when laborers push their awareness toward identifying their aspirations and ways to utilize their capabilities. He also noted that proactivity is necessary so that during the struggle, laborers must unite to create changes beneficial to their class ^[59]. Unlike the Constitutionalist approach, Nguyen An Ninh affirmed the role of laborers as “the creators and producers of goods for the whole city” ^[60], which fully deserved having representatives to present their aspirations. As the “Workers’ List” gained broad support from the people, Nguyen An Ninh continued to promote the rights of freedom, democracy for workers and peasants, and women’s liberation ^[61].

This was the premise for Nguyen An Ninh to implement a policy of class collaboration, laying the foundation for the birth of the Indochinese Congress (Đông Dương Đại hội). As a member of the La Lutte group (including members of the Indochinese Communist Party, Trotskyist activists, and several progressive figures), Nguyen An Ninh spoke to readers about the fundamental intentions and principles of class collaboration:

Our LA LUTTE group, concerned above all with staying closely and constantly attached to reality, has never shown ourselves to be stupidly intransigent or sectarian, narrow-minded and ineffective. Caring for the vital interests of the masses, we are ready to collaborate with anyone to improve the conditions of the suffering classes. Without renouncing our right to criticize, we remain forever faithful to the conditions agreed upon to achieve the demands discussed together ^[62].

Based on the history of that time, Nguyen An Ninh presented his views and knew how to take advantage of the Paris government’s shift toward the left-wing, radical Popular Front government. He continued to use his views on unifying forces from 1928, transforming them into a message of class collaboration. After learning about Algeria, he clarified this policy by calling on the people to gather opinions and unify them into a “People’s Petition” (Dân nguyện) to be sent to the leaders in Paris. He believed that, in essence, class struggle manifested “the necessity of historical evolution” ^[63]. Progressive people must be the forces “using every means” ^[64] to support the political evolution of the working class and propose “reforms to help the country” ^[65]. Nguyen AN Ninh’s vision of class cooperation was also shared by Ta Thu Thau, a Trotskyist revolutionary and a prominent member of the La Lutte alliance. In his response to Constant Metter, Ta Thu Thau remained consistent with the general policy of La Lutte. Both this correspondence and the practical mobilization for the Indochinese Congress demonstrated that Ta Thu Thau was in full agreement when “the progressive elements of our bourgeoisie also demand the same political freedoms as we do”. Similar to Nguyen AN Ninh, Ta Thu Thau was a revolutionary activist whose principles were established on conducting class struggle through the class cooperation of progressive forces.

Conclusion

By analyzing Nguyen AN Ninh’s system of thought regarding political struggle across the three aforementioned sections, this research concludes that his is a system of philosophy of action characterized by its dialectical and emancipatory nature. His thought did not merely stop at transient political slogans but established a profound philosophical foundation for liberation.

From a philosophical perspective, Nguyen AN Ninh affirmed that the political struggle was essentially a struggle to reclaim the spiritual and ontological autonomy of the Vietnamese people. He maintained that interpreting the nature and contradictions of political struggle was not merely a conceptual solution, but a necessary prerequisite for defining the logic of liberation in direct opposition to the logic of “civilizing mission” (mission civilisatrice). A nation can only achieve independence when each individual within that nation attains freedom of thought and escapes spiritual enslavement through a process of re-conceptualizing the self, the community, and the root causes of colonial conflict. The unique philosophical hallmark of Nguyen AN Ninh’s thought on struggle lies in his strategy of struggle through cooperation. As an intellectual with profound knowledge of both the West and the East, Nguyen AN Ninh viewed the colonial social structure through a dialectical lens. Regarding social contradictions, the specificities of colonial society and the impacts of colonial exploitation gave rise to class contradictions between the ruling class (comprising the colonial administration, French bourgeois politics, and collaborationist groups) and the forces of the oppressed classes.

Objective shifts created a period of political reorientation within the French power system, and that enabled Nguyen AN Ninh to propose a unity among progressive forces across the intelligentsia, the national bourgeoisie, and the laboring class. This was the fruit of the idea of class cooperation, manifested through an alliance within the scope of a united front a concept Nguyen AN Ninh had been constructing since the 1920s. Precisely because he profoundly understood Marxist dialectics, Nguyen AN Ninh always prioritized resolving the fundamental contradiction (nation vs. colonialism) to create the prerequisite for mobilizing forces, training the masses, and preparing for the national liberation.

References

1. State Records and Archives Management Department of Vietnam – National Archives Center I (2021), *Education in Vietnam during the Colonial Period: Through Archival Records and Documents (1858 – 1945)*, Dan Tri Publishers, Hanoi, p. 27
2. Nguyen Thuy Phuong (2020), *Education in Vietnam under the Colonial Era – Red Myth and Black Myth*, Hanoi Publishers, p. 22.
3. See in: Nguyen Thuy Phuong (2020), *Education in Vietnam under the Colonial Era – Red Myth and Black Myth*, Hanoi Publishers, p. 22.
4. Brocheux, Pierre & Daniel Hémerly (2022), *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858 – 1954*, trans. by Pham Van Tuan, ed. by Thu Nguyen, The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi, p. 262.
5. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (2016), *The Social Contract*, trans. by Duong Van Hoa, The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi, p. 29.

6. Ibid., p. 35.
7. Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich (1920), "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions," written on June 5, 1920, presented at the Second Congress of the Communist International. Cited: V.I. Lenin (1980) *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 198.
8. Peycam, Philippe (2015), *The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916–1930*, trans. by Tran Duc Tai, Tre Publishers, Ho Chi Minh City, p. 189.
9. Marr, David (2025), *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945*, trans. by Thieu Khanh, The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi, p. 178.
10. Hémery, Daniel (2001), *From Patriotism to Marxism*, trans. by Nguyen Trong Con, Lao Dong Publishers, Hanoi, p. 20
11. Ibid., p. 20.
12. Authors (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Through Memoirs of Relatives*, Van Hoc Publishers, p. 115.
13. Ibid., p. 115.
14. Nguyen An Ninh (1923a), "Une culture pour les Annamites" [A Culture for the Annamese], Jan 25, 1923. Published in *La Voix Annamite* newspaper, Feb 2, 1923, p. 2.
15. Ibid., p.2.
16. Ibid., p.2.
17. Nguyen An Ninh (1923a), "Une culture pour les Annamites" [A Culture for the Annamese], Jan 25, 1923. Published in *La Voix Annamite* newspaper, Feb 2, 1923, p. 2.
18. Nguyen An Ninh (1923c), "The Ideal of Annamese Youth" [Lý tưởng của thanh niên An Nam], *La Cloche Fêlée* newspaper, Jan 1 and Jan 14, 1924. Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 66.
19. Ibid., p.66.
20. Nguyen An Ninh (1923c), "The Ideal of Annamese Youth" [Lý tưởng của thanh niên An Nam], *La Cloche Fêlée* newspaper, Jan 1 and Jan 14, 1924. Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 72.
21. See in: Nguyen Ai Quoc (1925), *French Colonialism on Trial* [Bản án chế độ thực dân Pháp], Part IV – The Russian Revolution and the Colonial Peoples. Cited from: Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 130.
22. Nguyen An Ninh (1923c), "The Ideal of Annamese Youth" [Lý tưởng của thanh niên An Nam], *La Cloche Fêlée* newspaper, Jan 1 and Jan 14, 1924. Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 71.
23. Ibid., p.72.
24. See in: Nguyen Cong Binh (2020), *Understanding the Vietnamese Bourgeois Class during the French Colonial Period*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 126
25. Peycam, Philippe (2015), *The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916–1930*, trans. by Tran Duc Tai, Tre Publishers, Ho Chi Minh City, p. 71.
26. Tan Dan (1918), "Réponse à M. J.A.Marx", *La Tribune Indigène*, Feb 7, 1918, p. 2.
27. *Tribune Indigène* (1917), "Notre Programme", *La Tribune Indigène*, Aug 20, 1917, p. 1.
28. Nguyen An Ninh (1933), "Women Must Participate in Politics", *Trung Lap* newspaper, Apr 27, 1933. Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 1128.
29. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "Defend Your Rights" [Hãy bảo vệ các quyền của mình], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 4 (Jan 28, 1924). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 219.
30. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "The Dark Era is About to Pass" [Thời kì đen tối sắp qua], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 12 (Mar 31, 1924). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 284.
31. Nguyen An Ninh (1925), "France in Indochina" [Nước Pháp ở Đông Dương], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 20 (Nov 26, 1925) and No. 23 (Dec 7, 1925). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 81.
32. Ibid., p. 81.
33. Ibid., p. 82.
34. Ibid., p. 82.
35. Ibid., p. 83.
36. Ibid., p. 83.
37. Nguyen An Ninh (1925), "France in Indochina" [Nước Pháp ở Đông Dương], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 20 (Nov 26, 1925) and No. 23 (Dec 7, 1925). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 83.
38. Nguyen An Ninh (1923), "Order and Chaos" [Trật tự và hỗn loạn], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 4 (Dec 31, 1923). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 161.
39. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "The Final Bell" [Tiếng chuông cuối cùng], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 4 (Jul 14, 1924). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 386.
40. Nguyen An Ninh (1923), "Order and Chaos" [Trật tự và hỗn loạn], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 4 (Dec 31, 1923). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 161.
41. Ibid., p. 158.
42. Nguyen An Ninh (1926), "Hail the Telegraph Workers!" [Hoan hô, những người đánh dây thép!], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 31 (Jan 4, 1926). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 467.
43. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "The Conquerors and the Conquered" [Những kẻ chinh phục và những kẻ bị chinh phục], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 15, Dec 31, 1923. Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), *Nguyen An Ninh – Works*, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 330
44. Ibid., p. 331.
45. Ibid., p. 330.
46. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "The Meaning of Mr. Outrey's Election" [Ý nghĩa của sự bầu cử ông Outrey], *La Cloche Fêlée*, No. 15 (May 19, 1924). Excerpted from:

- Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 334.
47. Ibid., p. 334.
 48. Nguyen An Ninh (1924), "Speaking to Fellow Countrymen" [Nói với các anh em đồng bào], La Cloche Fêlée, No. 8 (Jan 28, 1924). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 210.
 49. Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels (1848), The Communist Manifesto. Cited: Marx & Engels (2010), Collected Works, Vol. 6, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 495.
 50. Nguyen An Ninh (1926), "A Slave's Monologue" [Lời tự sự của một người nô lệ], L'Annam newspaper, No. 94 (Sep 2, 1926). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 550.
 51. Nguyen An Ninh (1928), "The Problem of National Organization" [Vấn đề tổ chức quốc gia], L'Annam newspaper, No. 181 (Jan 19, 1928). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 691.
 52. Nguyen An Ninh (1927), "Communism in Indochina" [Chủ nghĩa cộng sản ở Đông Dương], L'Annam newspaper, No. 167 (Jun 9, 1927). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 646.
 53. Nguyen An Ninh (1928), "The Problem of National Organization" [Vấn đề tổ chức quốc gia], L'Annam newspaper, No. 181 (Jan 19, 1928). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 693.
 54. See in: Authors (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Through Memoirs of Relatives, Literature Publishers, pp. 155–157.
 55. Ibid., p. 202.
 56. National Archives Center II (1929). Anti-French Organizations in Indochina and Communist Propaganda. Overseas Archives, File No. 65433.GGI, Vol. 3, p. 16. Cited in: Nguyen Van Gia Thuy (2021), "The Role of Nguyen An Ninh with the High Aspiration Youth Organization from 1925 to 1935", Journal of Science, Vol. 50 - No. 4B/2021, p. 78.
 57. Ibid., p. 78.
 58. Nguyen An Ninh (1933), "Our Attitude" [Thái độ của chúng tôi], La Lutte newspaper, No. 1 (Apr 24, 1933). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 703
 59. Ibid., p. 704.
 60. Nguyen An Ninh (1933), "A List of Candidates Comprising Intellectual and Manual Laborers" [Một bảng danh sách ứng cử viên gồm những lao động trí óc và lao động chân tay], La Lutte newspaper, No. 1 (Apr 24, 1933). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 705.
 61. See in: Nguyen An Ninh (1933), "To the Brothers in the Ranks of Workers and Peasants" [Gửi anh em trong giới thợ thuyền và giới nông dân], La Lutte newspaper, No. 4 (Jun 2, 1933). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 751–753
 62. Nguyen An Ninh (1936), "Towards an Indochinese Congress" [Tiến tới một Đại hội Đông Dương], La Lutte newspaper, No. 92 (Jul 29, 1936). Excerpted from: Nguyen An Ninh – Works, p. 761
 63. Nguyen An Ninh (1936), "Starting Preparations for the Indochinese Congress" [Bắt tay chuẩn bị Đại hội Đông Dương], La Lutte newspaper, No. 93 (Aug 5, 1936). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 764.
 64. Ibid., p. 765.
 65. Nguyen An Ninh (1936), "For the Indochinese Congress – A Call for Youth Action" [Vi Đại hội Đông Dương – Lời kêu gọi thanh niên hành động], La Lutte newspaper, No. 93 (Aug 19, 1936). Excerpted from: Centre of Research of National Studies (2009), Nguyen An Ninh – Works, Literature Publishers, Hanoi, p. 772.
 66. National Archives and Records Administration – National Archives Center I. Vietnamese Education in the Colonial Period: Through Archival Materials and Documents (1858–1945). Dan Tri Publishers, 2021.
 67. Lenin VI. First Sketch of the Thesis on National and Colonial Questions (June 5, 1920). In: Lenin VI. Collected Works. National Political Publishing House, 1980, 41.
 68. Marx K, Engels F. The Communist Manifesto (1848). In: Collected Works. Vol. 6. Lawrence and Wishart, 2010.
 69. Ho Chi Minh. Complete Works. National Political Publishing House, (Including French Colonialism on Trial by Nguyen Ai Quoc), 2011,2.
 70. Nguyen AN Ninh. Une culture pour les Annamites. La Voix annamite, 1923.
 71. Centre of Research of National Studies. Nguyen AN Ninh – Works. Literature Publishers, 2009.
 72. Authors. Nguyen AN Ninh – Through Memoirs of Relatives [Nguyễn An Ninh – Qua hồi ức của những người thân]. Van Hoc Publishers, 2009.
 73. Brocheux P, Hémery D. Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954 [Đông Dương – Một nền thuộc địa nhập nhằng: Giai đoạn 1858–1954]. Translated by Pham Van Tuan. The Gioi Publishers, 2022.
 74. Hémery D. From Patriotism to Marxism [Từ chủ nghĩa yêu nước đến chủ nghĩa Mác]. Translated by Nguyen Trong Con. Lao Dong Publishers, 2001.
 75. Marr D. Vietnamese Tradition on Trial: 1920–1945 [Truyền thống Việt Nam qua thử thách: 1920–1945]. Translated by Thieu Khanh. The Gioi Publishers, 2025.
 76. Nguyen Cong Binh. Understanding the Vietnamese Bourgeoisie during the French Colonial Period [Tìm hiểu giai cấp tư sản Việt Nam thời Pháp thuộc]. Social Sciences Publishing House, 2020.
 77. Nguyen Khac Ve. Discours de M. Nguyen-khac-Ve. La Voix annamite, 1923:(3):1–2.
 78. Nguyen Thuy Phuong. Vietnamese Education under Colonial Rule – Red Myth and Black Myth [Giáo dục Việt Nam dưới thời thuộc địa – Huyền thoại đỏ và Huyền thoại đen]. Hanoi Publishers, 2020.
 79. Nguyen Van Gia Thuy. The Role of Nguyen an Ninh in the High Aspiration Youth Organization from 1925 to 1935 [Vai trò của Nguyễn An Ninh với tổ chức Thanh niên Cao vọng từ năm 1925 đến năm 1935]. Scientific Journal, 2021:50(4B).
 80. Peycam P. The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916–1930 [Làng báo Sài Gòn

- 1916–1930]. Translated by Tran Duc Tai. Tre Publishers, 2015.
81. Rousseau JJ. The Social Contract [Khế ước Xã hội]. Translated by Duong Van Hoa. The Gioi Publishers, 2016.
 82. Tạ Thu Thâu. Au camarade Metter l' AGIR. La Lutte, 1936.
 83. Tan Dan. Réponse à M. J.A. Marx. La Tribune indigène, 1918.
 84. Tribune Indigène. Notre Programme. La Tribune indigène, 1917.