

Chapter 2: The Nationalist Movement In Indo-China

Though Vietnam achieved nominal independence before India in 1945, it took three decades to achieve Republic status. Nationalism emerged in colonial Indo-China.

Emerging From The Shadow Of China

Indo-China is modern-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Colonial Domination And Resistance

1. The French colonialism of Vietnam drove the Vietnamese people into conflict with the colonisers in practically every facet of life.
2. French forces arrived in Vietnam in 1858 and gained dominance over the northern area by the mid-1880s.
3. Following the Franco-Chinese war, Tonkin and Annam were annexed by France, and in 1887, French Indo-China was founded.
4. Slowly but surely, the Nationalist resistance arose among the Vietnamese people.

Why The French Thought Colonies Necessary

Colonies were considered necessary for the provision of natural resources and other necessities. France believed that it was the European nations' responsibility to transmit the advantages of civilization to backward people. The French began constructing canals and draining land in the **Mekong delta** to increase farming in order to extend their territory. The development of a **trans-Indo-China rail network** connecting northern and southern Vietnam was also begun.

The French also constructed a second railway from Vietnam to Siam (modern Thailand) through **Phnom Penh**, Cambodia's capital.

Should Colonies Be Developed?



Paul Bernard, a writer and politician, thought that the colonies' economies needed development. Indentured Vietnamese labour was extensively exploited in the **colonial economy** of Vietnam, which was centered mostly on **rice production** and **rubber plantations**.

The Dilemma Of Colonial Education

French colonial expansion was likewise motivated by the concept of a '**civilising mission**.' The French, like the British in India, desired to introduce modern civilization to the Vietnamese. The French sought to eradicate indigenous cultures, faiths, and customs. They wanted to educate the '**native**' in order to civilize them.

Taking Modern

The French were confronted with another educational problem. In Vietnam, the elites were inspired by **Chinese culture**. To counter Chinese influence, the French built **French-language schools** for Vietnamese children.

Vietnamese will be taught in **lower grades**, whereas French will be taught in **upper grades**.

School texts extolled the virtues of the French and justified colonial control, while portraying the Vietnamese as **primitive** and **backward**, capable only of physical labor. Children were taught at school that only **French control** could secure Vietnam's peace.

Looking Modern

The Tonkin Free School was founded in 1907 to offer Vietnamese students with a western-style education. Numerous Vietnamese instructors and students spoke out.

Resistance In Schools

In **1926**, at the **Saigon Native Girls School**, a big controversy occurred when a Vietnamese girl seated in one of the front seats was requested to evacuate the seat for a local French student and refused.

Throughout the colonial period, students struggled against the colonial government's attempts to keep the Vietnamese from out **white-collar occupations**. Thus, schools became a focal point for **political** and **cultural conflicts**.

Hygiene, Disease And Everyday Resistance

In several other institutions, the colonists expressed their rage against the colonisers in a variety of ways.

Plague Strikes Hanoi



When the French went on rebuilding modern Vietnam, they chose **Hanoi** as their starting point. In **1903**, the present section of Hanoi was infected with **bubonic plague**. The French section of Hanoi was designed as a clean city with a well-developed sewer system, but the '**native quarter**' lacked contemporary facilities. The enormous sewers in the modern section of the city offered an excellent and protected breeding ground for **rats**.

The Rat Hunt

In **1902**, a rat hunt was started. The French used Vietnamese **labourers** and paid them for each rat captured. Thousands of rats started to be trapped. The reward was paid when a rat's tail was shown as evidence of catch. Indeed, some individuals started raising rats in order to receive a **bounty**. The rat-catchers' acts exemplify numerous little ways in which **colonialism** was challenged in daily life.

Religion And Anti-Colonialism

1. **Religion** was critical in uniting Vietnamese against colonial rule. Vietnam's religion was a synthesis of **Buddhism, Confucianism**, and local customs. The French missionaries brought **Christianity** to the Vietnamese and attempted to convert them.
2. In **1868**, the **Scholars' Revolt** began in opposition to French rule and the introduction of Christianity. It was headed by imperial court officials who were angered by Catholicism's growth and French influence.
3. Another organization, dubbed the **Hoa Hao Movement**, was founded in **1939** in the lush **Mekong Delta** region by **Huynh Phu So**.

The Vision Of Modernisation

1. Resistance against French dominance in the late nineteenth century was often led by **Confucian scholar-activists**.
2. **Phan Boi Chau** (1867-1940) was a pivotal player in the anti-colonial resistance movement from the moment he founded the **Revolutionary Society (Duy Tan Hoi)** in **1903** under the leadership of **Prince Cuong De**.
3. **Phan Chu Trinh** (1871-1926) was not the same as Phan Boi Chau. He was opposed to the notion of opposing the French with the assistance of the court.

Other Ways Of Becoming Modern: Japan And China

The '**Go East Movement**' gained popularity throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. Between **1907** and **1908**, over **300 Vietnamese students** traveled to Japan to get a modern education.

In **1911**, Vietnamese nationalists overthrew China's emperor and founded a republic. These students formed a chapter of the **Restoration Society** in Tokyo to achieve the same goal, but they were deported and sent back to **China** and **Thailand**.

The Communist Movement And Vietnamese Nationalism

1. The Great Depression of the 1930s had a profound effect on Vietnam.
2. Ho Chi Minh was elected Chairman of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
3. In 1940, Japan invaded Vietnam in order to gain control of Southeast Asia.

The New Republic Of Vietnam

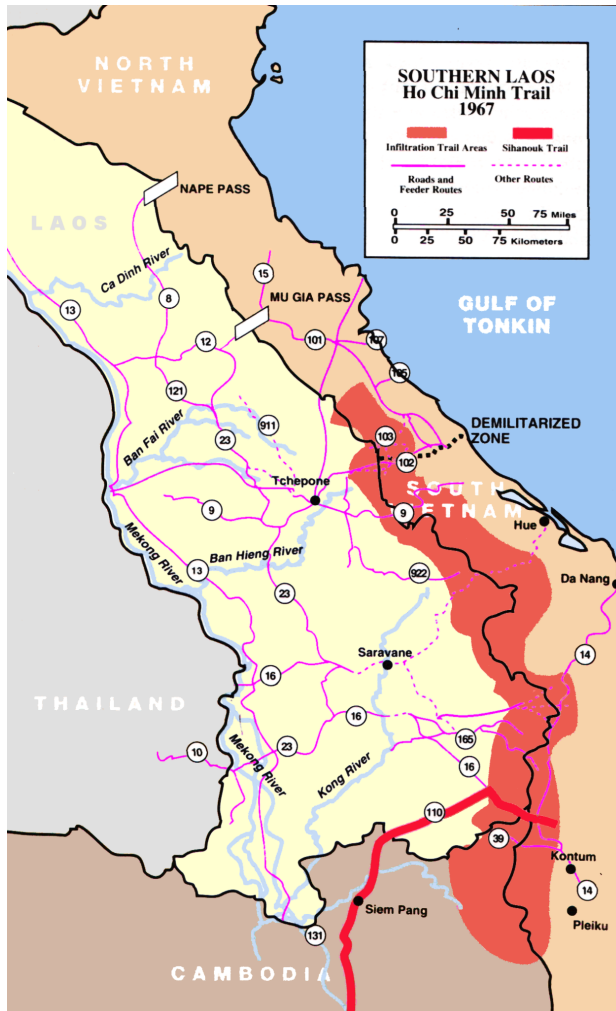
The new republic encountered a lot of difficulties. The French attempted to reclaim authority by using the emperor, **Bao Dai**, as a puppet. They succeeded in driving **Vietminh** into the hills.

Soon after, the Bao Dai administration was deposed in a coup headed by **Ngo Dinh Diem**. The **National Liberation Front (NLF)** fought for the country's unity with the assistance of the **Ho Chi Minh** government in the north.

The Entry Of The Us Into The War

US involvement in the war had a detrimental effect on both the Vietnamese and the Americans. The conflict had an influence on the United States as well. The **poor working class youth** were enraged at being forced to serve in the armed forces.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail



The **Ho Chi Minh trail** is the narrative of how the Vietnamese made the most of their limited resources in their war against the US. The majority of the path passed through neighboring **Laos**, **Cambodia**, and **South Vietnam**. The US attempted to **bomb** this path on a regular basis but failed since it was rapidly repaired.

The Nation And Its Heroes

Vietnamese women were important in the anti-imperialist movement. They fought and worked as **warriors** and **labourers**. They aided in the care of the injured, assisted in the construction of underground rooms and tunnels, and **fought the**

enemy.

Women As Rebels

As the nationalist movement grew, a new vision of womanhood formed. **Writers** and **political theorists** started romanticizing women who defied societal norms.

Heroes Of Past Times

Historically, rebel women were also praised. **Phan Soi Chau**, a nationalist, composed a drama in **1913** based on the life of the **Trung sisters**, who struggled against Chinese dominance.

He portrayed these sisters as **patriots** trying to liberate the Vietnamese country from the Chinese in this drama.

Women As Warriors

In the **1960s**, women were represented in magazines and journals as **youthful, brave, and determined**. They enlisted in the army and gained the ability to carry a rifle.

Women In Times Of Peace

By the **1970s**, as the peace process progressed, the idea of women as **labourers** began to take hold. Rather than fighting, they worked in **agricultural cooperatives, factories, and manufacturing units**.

The End Of The War

A **peace settlement** was signed in Paris in **1974**, ending the war with the US, although fighting between the Saigon administration and the **NLF** continued. In **1975**, the NLF captured Saigon's presidential palace and **united Vietnam**.

