

# Nguyen An Ninh's Political Ideology and Its Value for Vietnam Today

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DOI: [10.36348/jaep.2020.v04i12.003](https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2020.v04i12.003)

| Received: 26.11.2020 | Accepted: 09.12.2020 | Published: 16.12.2020

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## Abstract

Nguyen An Ninh is a thinker and a big patriot in Vietnam's revolutionary movement. The political thought of Nguyen An Ninh holds an important place in the history of modern and modern thought of Vietnam and has profoundly influenced Vietnam's revolutionary movements in history and in the present period. This study focuses on a comprehensive analysis of the political system of Nguyen An Ninh, but the value that that ideology brings to the Vietnamese revolution in the history and significance of that thought in the present period. At the same time, this study not only helps to clarify the special features in the thought of a great thinker but also partly depicts the spiritual beauty and revolutionary qualities of a typical patriot.

**Keywords:** Nguyen An Ninh, political ideology, historical value, Viet Nam's revolution.

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## INTRODUCTION

National independence and national development in the direction of "rich people, strong country, democracy, justice and civilization" [1] has always been the aspiration of Vietnamese people. It is this purpose and ideal that has inspired generations of Vietnamese to fight selflessly, overcome all difficulties and challenges to find the right way to save the country. Vietnamese history in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed many profound changes in the nation. In this new context, national history has raised a pressing question about the issue: How to liberate the people, liberate people from oppression, exploitation and national development? To answer that question, at the time, there were many thinkers who gave many different options, in which Nguyen An Ninh (1900 - 1943) with his unique political ideology was a famous name during this stage.

In the first half of the twentieth century, during the long dark years under the French colonial rule, a bright star appeared in the sky of the Vietnamese revolution, namely Nguyen An Ninh, a passionate patriotic and revolutionary soldier, a great, brave and talented intellectual, a leader with the capacity to organize and oratory in the first half of the twentieth century. That is why the late Prime Minister Pham Van Dong wrote: "Nguyen An Ninh is a patriot, a resilient revolutionary soldier, determined to fight for the nation

and the nation until the last breath. Nguyen An Ninh has the stature of a revolutionary leader" [2], or as the late General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh affirmed: "Nguyen An Ninh is a great patriot, a great intellectual, if submit to the imperialists, surely he will be rich and live regal. But because he loved the country and the people, he joined the working masses, mobilizing them against the empire and the henchmen" [2].

Nguyen An Ninh's political thought is deep, systematic and quite comprehensive, reflecting the reality of life and the imprint of the times. That is one of the prominent, core and throughout content throughout his thought. It was Nguyen An Ninh's political ideology and revolutionary activities that made an important contribution to the change in the political thinking of the Vietnamese nation, and was an important step in the search for truth. Vietnam national liberation at that time. It has a worthy place in the history of Vietnamese thought, as well as has great significance for the practice of building the current Vietnamese political system.

Through a life of hardship, Nguyen An Ninh has made great contributions to the nation politically as well as culturally and Nguyen An Ninh's research and assessment of people and career in general, private Nguyen An Ninh's political ideas in particular is a very necessary job. It is the resilient spirit and uncompromising belief of the nation and its predecessors, including heroic Nguyen An Ninh, that

has summed up the value of independence and freedom for today. It can be said that Nguyen An Ninh was a leading revolutionary leader in the history of Vietnam in the early twentieth century, he soon became one of the leading symbols of young people engaged in the goal of democracy and national salvation. He was a revolutionary active in the practice of the patriotic movement, at the same time he was also active in journalism and academic forums. His political views and ideas were formed from the process of practical activities and expressed by him in the media and ideology. That is the political ideology about the revolutionary struggle path to national liberation, social liberation and human liberation; about revolutionary forces, revolutionary methods; about the political regime, the political party and the people's front in the national liberation revolution, etc. Nguyen An Ninh not only followed Marxism-Leninism but also deeply understood and applied the dialectic method, the materialism was quite fluent in revolutionary practical activities and was one of the first to spread Marxism-Leninism into Vietnam, he used the newspaper *La Cloche Fêlée* to publish the Declaration of the Communist Party of C. Mark and Ph. Angels. Nguyen An Ninh was a revolutionary advocate in the form of public and legal speech and press and won a certain number of victories over the fierce control of the French colonialists. At times, he was one of the masters on the press front, speaking to fight the open and legal revolution to claim democracy, freedom and equality in order to enlighten the masses of the people join the revolution for a bright future.

Researching Vietnamese history during this period not only clarifies the profound transformation of the entire revolutionary movement, but also shows the contribution of his predecessors, including Nguyen An Ninh, to the determination of the road pathway, building solidarity, discovering approaches to regional and world integration. From there, it is possible to draw the historical significance of the role and importance of patriotism in the transformation of the national liberation movement in the early years of the twentieth century. The content of Nguyen An Ninh's thoughts in general, the political ideology of Nguyen An Ninh in particular, although not really massive, but it is an open system, outlines as a basis for further development. . Those are the issues that, until later, reality has proved the correctness and objectivity of Nguyen An Ninh's prediction. His views and thoughts reflect the transition from the reformist ideology of the progressive Confucian scholars to the revolutionary ideology of the new intellectual class, the core of Nguyen An Ninh's thought is the issue of independence of the people. Ethnic group with a very new perspective: "Culture is the soul of the nation" [3]. The content of Nguyen An Ninh's thoughts in general and Nguyen An Ninh's political ideology in particular are plentiful and profound in many aspects in the spirit of national resilience. These views are not only of historical

significance but also of epochal significance. For that reason, an objective and scientific research on Nguyen An Ninh's ideology in general, Nguyen An Ninh's political ideology in particular is a necessary job, because it not only helps clarify the features special features in the thought of a great thinker but also partly depicts the spiritual beauty and revolutionary qualities of a typical patriot.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past 30 years of comprehensive national renewal, Vietnam has achieved great and historic achievements in all fields of economy, politics, culture and society. However, our country still faces many great challenges, intertwined, combined effects and complicated developments, hostile forces continue to plot peaceful developments, causing riots to overthrow and use the tricks of democracy and human rights to change the political regime in our country. Institutions and political lines play a very decisive role in the destiny of a nation like V. I. Lenin once said: "Politics is the real destiny of millions of people" [4]. Stemming from the above situation and context, it has created alternating opportunities and challenges for the development of the country. The new requirements and tasks of the revolution in the current context, which require building and perfecting an increasingly strong political system, are a fundamental issue. The Resolution of the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly stated: "Strengthening the building of a clean and strong Party, improving the Party's leadership and fighting strength, building the system strong politics" [2]. Therefore, the recognition and correct assessment of the content and characteristics of Nguyen An Ninh's political ideology in the early years of the twentieth century, in order to properly realize and draw useful historical meaning for the renovation in Vietnam is essential.

Political thought is a system of opinions reflecting the relationship of interests between classes, classes, nations and peoples around the issue of gaining and holding government, organizing and exercising state power [5]. Political ideology always arises from certain socio-economic conditions, directly and concentrative reflects class benefits, meeting the socio-economic development requirements of a community society. In the national renewal initiated and led by the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Party has always affirmed the important role of political ideology. Therefore, our Party always determines that political ideology plays a role as a guide for national renewal and development [5]. Over the past 30 years of comprehensive national reform, Vietnam has achieved great and historic achievements in all economic, political, cultural and social fields thanks to us promptly renewing thinking, especially political thinking, at the same time inheriting the traditional values of the nation, regularly summarizing the practice to supplement and build theories suitable to the renewal requirements. In

order to continue to bring the “Doi moi” (Innovation) to success, in the XII National Congress document, the Communist Party of Vietnam continues to emphasize: “inheriting and promoting the fine traditions of the nation, absorb the cultural essence of humanity” [1]. Therefore, studying, researching, absorbing and inheriting the value of human political ideology in general, the political ideology of the Vietnamese nation in particular, including Nguyen’s unique political ideology. Security is a must. That is really one of the issues of deep and practical theoretical and practical significance, which are both urgent topical and long-term strategic.

Scientists with their works, while researching quite extensively and deeply about the career of revolutionary activities, about works, works of Nguyen An Ninh and especially private content Nguyen An Ninh’s idea, has analyzed and made different judgments about the characteristics and great historical significance in Nguyen An Ninh’s thought. Especially, noteworthy is the assessment of author Cao Xuan Long [6] and author Pham Dao Tinh [7]. However, the above judgments and assessments are often inserted into all the problems by scientists, the contents when studying on Nguyen An Ninh, so they are still quite scattered; and the above judgments of researchers often focus on the content of Nguyen An Ninh’s ideology in general, not the comments and assessment of Nguyen An Ninh’s political ideology into a work private. Obtaining the above research results, in their dissertation, the graduate student will focus on analyzing, evaluating and drawing the contents expressing the political ideology of Nguyen An Ninh, on that basis features, values and lessons of history in a general and systematic way, both theoretically and practically, especially with the historical and social practice of Vietnam at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century as well as the current practice of national renewal, national construction and defense.

### **Nguyen An Ninh’s political ideology**

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was a period in which Vietnam’s history had undergone great changes. French colonialists invaded and turned Vietnam into colonial, semi-feudal society. The feudalism of Vietnam together with Confucian ideology increasingly proved powerless to the demands of the fight against foreign aggression for national independence. In that context, some typical thinkers such as Pham Phu Thu, Dang Huy Tru, Nguyen Truong To, Nguyen Lo Trach, etc. to Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chau Trinh, Nguyen An Ninh, etc. have taken a step forward. Political thought has great historical significance. In particular, the political ideology of Nguyen An Ninh has a particularly important position.

From his critique of feudal ideology, he proposed reform thought and initiated bourgeois

democracy in the early twentieth century, creating a great influence on Vietnamese society. Although the bourgeois-democratic revolution movement failed, its people and innovative ideology still have a certain meaning for the cause of saving the country and the people in the future. On that land, Nguyen Ai Quoc sowed the seeds of Marxism-Leninism and was the one who completed the transition of political thought in this special historical period in the 30s of the twentieth century. Therefore, it can be said that political ideology at the end of the nineteenth century - the beginning of the twentieth century is a transition, an intermediate stage to change from feudal ideology to proletarian ideology.

By criticizing a feudal ideology, thinkers have proposed reform ideology, preparing to abandon old ideology and find a new way to save the country and save the people. At the end of the nineteenth century, realizing that Confucianism had entered the path of decline, helpless before the requirements of history, many progressive thinkers proposed reform and renewal in order to revive the country. “They are the ones who planted the seed of civilization” [8].

From the early years of revolutionary activities (1923), Nguyen An Ninh was extremely anxious and anxious about determining the revolutionary path, his mindset was written by Nguyen An Ninh in his article *Can make a revolution direct or not in La Cloche Félée* (May 19, 1924). In that article, his biggest concern was whether Vietnam could have a revolution and if so, which way? According to him, if the Vietnamese people followed the path of the bourgeois democratic revolution of Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chau Trinh, it would not be possible to liberate the nation. But following the proletarian revolution is also very difficult. He wrote: “In the countryside, young Nguyen Ai Quoc is enduring a miserable life to maintain a newspaper on which he voiced his patriotism” [9]. Nguyen An Ninh realizes a negative reality, that is, many people’s revolts against the colonial invasion and then suppressed, resulting in the loss of their strength, money, and people as a result do not make the colonialists falter. He wrote: “Occasionally there are some discrete, shallow mass movements that only need about a hundred guns, a few machine guns to be extinguished, and only a month later the silence fades in everyone’s angry children memories of a helpless people. What consequences did all those things have? That exhaustion, loss of energy of the race?” [9]. Due to the fact that the Vietnamese revolutionary potential at that time was still very weak, the most important issue for national liberation was not follow any path.

For choosing the revolutionary path, if determined correctly, it is not possible to have the force to implement that road, the most important issue is how to fight colonialism and improve the lives of people today. For that purpose, Nguyen An Ninh advocated

organizing unions and associations to fight for the basic rights of the people, to fight against the injustice and tyranny of the colonialists. He wrote: "Whether" "yes" or "no" to make a revolution, a certain job in the immediate future can be done is to fight against the acts of tyranny embedded in colonial customs, etc" [9]. Accordingly, the anti-colonial struggles, the basic issue is to protect the legitimate interests of the people, the living conditions, but should not set political goals, when the people are guaranteed, the goal is politics also gained from those struggles. Nguyen An Ninh explained: "An Annamese people can organize a federation, for example, without a political goal, only need the muscular strength of their hands or feet to protect the weak colonial thugs threaten or bully"? [9]. According to Nguyen An Ninh's thought at that time, the purpose of the Vietnamese revolution at this time needed to "stop the violent people, trust in power, make them ashamed, use any means to expose them, so that they cannot live" [9]. Thus, right from the early years of independent operation, Nguyen An Ninh agreed with communism but said that it could not be done in the immediate future due to the immature conditions.

According to Nguyen An Ninh, the path of proletarian revolution is necessary for the Vietnamese revolution to liberate the nation, but there must be enough conditions, there must be a combination of the proletariat revolution with the national liberation revolution. He wrote: "On the stance of a proletariat, together with all classes of the people to fight for the establishment of a democracy, even though democratic bourgeoisie and crickets create their forces and become greedy, On the international stance, to unite with the proletariat, with the people of other countries and prevent the expansion of fascism" [9]. At that time, there were a number of Torotxit leaders said that the proletariat would be carried out in the next fifteen years, while Nguyen An Ninh noticed that when the Vietnamese people prepared all the necessary conditions. The design of the proletariat could be successful before 15 years, he wrote: "The wealthy people are not as convinced that the proletariat will succeed in fifteen years, but be afraid of the proletarian revolution national and international conditions to practice it, that is, maybe ten years before" [9].

Such as, the recognition of communism is necessary for the Vietnamese revolution with the goal of national liberation. Therefore, it can be said that Nguyen Ai Quoc and Nguyen An Ninh both promote nationalism in the revolution. In the article "Experiences of the National Party" - praise Ton Trung Son, Nguyen An Ninh has drawn the lessons learned that the fox attaches great importance to the element of specific historical circumstances of each people in the national liberation revolution, it is necessary to have a transfer formula for a long-term revolution in both theory, objective, suitable method is fit.

He wrote "as the name suggests, the National Party is a project mainly of China character. It has the essence of China. This is original, not sold. Yes, this is trying to take advantage of human experiences by following the course of the world transformation and paying attention to the monastic circumstances at the pace of their formation, but they did not depend on their own pain" [9]. Nguyen An Ninh said that all the oppressed and exploited peoples of colonialism must clearly realize their own ability to progress revolutionized. It is impossible to free the mim on its own without preparing the forces and organization. Nguyen An Ninh wrote: "All the oppressed peoples want to liberate themselves, and this idea is due to their own fault rather than the cruelty of the oppressors. But there is one. The idea is not all. There must be more. Reason once in doubt, it is necessary to have a persistent will to explore and consider all practical possibilities" [9]. According to Nguyen An Ninh, depending on the historical conditions of each nation to choose to go nationalism or international thought. So di Nguyen Ninh said that in order for the revolution to liberate the nation for the benefit of the nation, the entire Vietnamese nation must have all eight, all-out strength to protect the people. After completing the task of solving the national liberation then need to be associated with humanity, completing the common destiny.

#### **The values on the political ideology of Nguyen An Ninh**

At the turn of the late 19th and early 20th century, some Vietnamese thinkers received social Darwinian thought from Chinese thinkers, claiming that Vietnam fell into the hands of French colonialism because Vietnam was small weak. They attribute this weakness to the lack of a strong intellectual culture and the inability to modernize. They criticized the Vietnamese for clinging to the old Confucian ideas of China and called on the Vietnamese to apply new Western liberal ideas for survival, ideas that might have worked for the West. The West became powerful [10]. By the 1920s, the influence of Social Darwinism was replaced by the growing influence of radicalism, a term adopted by Ho Tai Hue Tam used to describe the preoccupation "not about survival and competition but about freedom and relationships between individuals and society" [10]. This young generation also complained of anti-intellectualism and lack of ethical leadership, but now sees "a parallel symmetry between the national struggle for independence from the real regime people and their own efforts to free themselves from the oppression of indigenous social institutions and the stalemate of tradition" [10].

The most influential figure of this period was Nguyen An Ninh [10]. He was jailed many times by the French government for his anti-colonial activities, Nguyen An Ninh wrote articles exposing the brutality and hypocrisy of the "civilized mission" of French for

French citizens in the motherland. But when addressing his compatriots, Nguyen An Ninh criticized the Vietnamese, urging them to change themselves and Vietnamese revolution. He sees self-cultivation as a prerequisite for political action and structural change.

In a speech in Saigon in 1923, Nguyen An Ninh spoke frankly about his country's shame for its poor literacy compared to other countries: "Today, when India and Japan Dedicating talented thinkers and artists or geniuses who shine alongside the talents and geniuses of Europe, Vietnam is still just a child who doesn't even have the idea or the strength to strive for direction towards a better destiny, towards true emancipation" [11].

Nguyen An Ninh wants his fellow countrymen to feel ashamed of past and present Vietnam's intellectual weakness as well as the absence of "great" thinkers, but this is seen as a way of motivating them to be "great", rather than making them hopeless. He encouraged their mission to gather a creative spirit to "guide the nation's footsteps and enlighten their path. We need artists, poets, painters, musicians, scientists to enrich our intellectual heritage" [11].

The revolutionary path that Nguyen An Ninh embraces a testament to a nation's value is not necessarily "European" (eg, rational and autonomous spirit), but rather is concerned with whether families have cultural and intellectual heritage, in particular literary and artistic works, and more importantly, will these persist to guide and energize future generations and to inspire inspiration for the world in general or not. "How many people owe the cultural legacies they have created, ages marked by their names, their influences in the world and the messiah role they have assumed", he wrote [11].

During the 1920s and 1930s, Nguyen An Ninh always stood side by side with patriots and communist soldiers, especially Vo Cong Ton, Chau Van Liem, Ha Huy Tap, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Van Tao, Nguyen Van Nguyen. , Duong Bach Mai, Tran Van Giau, Nguyen Van Tran, etc. He had an initiative to organize the Indochina Congress movement (often called the Indochina Congress and approved by the Communist Party) to promote public activism opposing the reactionary colonial regime, demanding the rights of freedom, people, democracy for the Vietnamese people.

His home in My Hue - Trung Chanh (Hoc Mon), a few kilometers from the secret headquarters of the Party Central Committee at Ba Diem, was frequented by many patriotic intellectuals and leaders of the Party Central Committee, There was the largest communist bookcase in Cochinchina and the whole country of Vietnam at that time. The confiscation record of a French spy said: Nguyen An Ninh's private

bookcase had 13,000 books - many of which were Marx, Angghen, Lenin.

Nguyen An Ninh, although following the trend of bourgeois democratic revolution, but was very sympathetic to Marxism. In a post against Nietzsche philosophy, he highly appreciated the thought of C. Marx: "Marx's works are massive works, like great arms that want to embrace whole life and Raise it up forever according to the wishes of mankind" [10]. He was the first person in Vietnam to publish the "Declaration of the Communist Party" of C.Marx and Ph.ngghen in the newspaper Bell Re (La Cloche fêlée). Nguyen An Ninh also considers the biggest mistake to over-emphasize Confucian thought, leading to hindering the development of history. He said: "... honoring Confucius' doctrine to the highest spiritual value, it is another step that is difficult for us to come" [3]. Not only was that but the shaping of Confucian thoughts from the perspective of feudal Confucians also very harmful.

It can be said that Nguyen An Ninh's political ideology is of great value in promoting progressive ideas, enlightening the revolutionary ideals of Vietnamese youths. He emphasized the role of the people in revolutions. He affirmed: "It was the people who created the king, and not the king founded the people", "in this An Nam land, the people are kings, not the ones sitting on the throne" [2]. The view that democracy is the nation of the nation, and the country of the people is the nation of the people, is a radical ideological transition from monarchy to democracy. This is a new thing in contemporary political thinking, which is a huge step up from feudal political thinking.

## CONCLUSION

Nguyen An Ninh was a patriot, a resilient revolutionary soldier, determined to fight for the Fatherland and the nation, until his last breath. Nguyen An Ninh has the stature of a leader in a revolution, so we must keep in mind the important contributions of a figure of historical stature. He was not only an theorist, a thinker of the revolution in our country at that time, especially in the period before the founding of the Party, but also a prominent revolutionary activist in his career fight for national liberation. His political thoughts were an important driving force of the Vietnamese revolution in the 1930s.

As a patriotic intellectual and an idol of the youth at that time, Nguyen An Ninh had a great reputation in all classes of people and was admired by all revolutionaries. In secret activities, Nguyen an Ninh was the leader of the most powerful revolutionary organization in our country in the period before the establishment of the Party, directly approaching the communist trend, actively contributing to creating the premise needed for the establishment of the Communist Party led by Nguyen Ai Quoc.

Nguyen An Ninh is a continuation of the revolutionary activities of Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chau Trinh in the early years of the 20th century. He is a representative of the most progressive cultural ideological movement in the 20s in Vietnam, he has great merit in enlightening the masses from true patriotism to enlightenment socialism, in building a united National Front on the basis of allied workers and peasants, in launching The masses had a revolutionary movement, such as the 1936 Indochina Congress campaign.

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11. "Idéal de la jeunesse Annamite" (Ideals of Annamite Youth) reprinted in the newspaper La Cloche Fêlée (Saigon), January 7, 1924. Unless noted otherwise, translations are mine. Annam is the name used for Vietnam prior to 1945.