



# The Journey to National Independence of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh (1911-1945)

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## ABSTRACT

Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh is the founder of the Communist Party of Vietnam (early 1930), leader of the General Uprising in August 1945, to gain national independence, author of the Declaration of Independence declaring the establishment Democratic Republic of Vietnam (September 2, 1945) and the first President of the new Vietnam... He is the soul, the leader who leads and realizes the aspirations of independence and freedom of Vietnam. This study outlines the journey of national independence of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh in the period 1911-1945.

**Keywords:** Nguyen Ai Quoc, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, journey, finding the way, saving the country, August Revolution 1945, national independence.

## INTRODUCTION

Ho Chi Minh once expressed to different degrees his desire to achieve national independence. When it was as simple as the reason for going to France in 1911 was because of reading French newspapers, so I wanted to go to France to see what “mother country” was like (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.1, p.465) and “I want to go out, see France and other countries. After considering how they do it, I will return to help our compatriots” (Tran Dan Tien, 1975, p.13). When it was just a comment from the subtle feeling when visiting the Statue of Liberty in New York, USA at the end of December 1912: “The light above Liberty's head spread across the blue sky, but below her feet. Statue of Liberty, black people are being trampled... When will black people be equal to white people? When will there be equality between nations?” (Van Hong, 2017). At times, he was strong and straightforward, like answering the Minister of Colonies Albert Sarro: “What I need most in the world is: My compatriots are free, my country is independent” (T. Lan, 2015). As President of an independent Vietnam, he affirmed: “I have only one desire, the ultimate desire is to make our country completely independent, our people to be completely free, all the compatriots to have food, clothes, and education” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.4, p.187).

The journey to national independence of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh in the years 1911-1945 is reflected in the main events: Nguyen Ai Quoc found the way to save the country; actively established the Communist Party of Vietnam and determined to lead the people to gain independence. Nguyen Ai Quoc found the way to save the country was a nearly decade-long journey (1911-1920), originating from the decision to go to the West, France. It is “A historic decision, a very special new event that has never happened” (Nguyen Manh Ha, Vu Thi Hong Dung, 2022), “a courageous innovation” (Song Thanh, 2005, p.63). In July 1920, in France, Nguyen Ai Quoc read the first draft of Lenin's theses on national and colonial issues, he found the way to save the country and affirmed that “this is what is needed for us, this is the way to our liberation” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.10, p.127). This is the event that opened a big turning point in the life of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh and the history of the Vietnamese nation.

After finding the way to save the country, Nguyen Ai Quoc actively prepared theoretical, political and organizational conditions and actively convened and presided over the founding conference of the Communist Party of Vietnam in Kowloon (Hong Kong), China (During the Vietnamese revolution, the Communist Party of Vietnam has changed its name many times such as Communist

Party of Vietnam, Communist Party of Indochina, Labor Party of Vietnam... This event “affirms the prestige, intelligence, bravery and creativity of Nguyen Ai Quoc” (Nguyen Manh Ha, Vu Thi Hong Dung, 2022). It is also an important turning point of the national liberation revolution and the development process of Vietnam.

When favorable opportunities arose, Ho Chi Minh “acted resolutely and quickly...” (Archimedes L.A. Patti, 1995, p.146) leading the Vietnamese people to conduct a successful general uprising for national independence. On September 2, 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was born, affirming the right path of national salvation of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh, the fruit of a long journey of more than three decades, when leader Nguyen Ai Quoc has both researched and tested the way to save the country, and at the same time led the people to realize his path and aspiration for freedom and independence and that of the whole Vietnamese nation.

### **Research Questions:**

The article focuses on clarifying research questions, which is also the orientation in which the report conducts research:

1. *How did Nguyen Ai Quoc find the way to save the country?*
2. *Why did Nguyen Ai Quoc take the initiative to establish the Communist Party of Vietnam?*
3. *Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) determination to lead the people for national independence?*

### **Nguyen Ai Quoc Found a Way to Save the Country**

On June 5, 1911, Nguyen Tat Thanh (later renamed Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh) left Saigon harbor to find a way to save the country. On July 6, 1911, he arrived at the port of Marx, France - a country of highly valued values such as “Liberty, Equality, and Charity”, which is also the country that dominates Vietnam. After nearly a decade of traveling through many countries and continents, doing many jobs to survive, and being exposed to all kinds of people in society, Nguyen Ai Quoc has gradually realized who is a friend and an enemy. understand the nature of colonialism.

In France, in 1918, he joined the French Socialist Party - a legal political organization in France, he actively worked for the interests of the country. In June 1919, he was known as Nguyen Ai Quoc - the representative of a group of Vietnamese patriots in France signed the claim of the people of Annam (referred to as the Claim) to claim the freedom and democracy of the colonists

sent to the Conference of the delegates of the victorious countries in the First World War, meeting at Versailles (France). The claim was the Political Declaration of Nguyen Ai Quoc, which opened the process of him openly fighting for the cause of national liberation. Researcher Alain Ruscio writes: “The name Nguyen Ai Quoc is known in nearly all groups... We are well aware of this patriotic figure's ideas: he even made them public without fear. scared. He and his friends claimed they remained in France to denounce the abuses of the French government in Indochina and possibly, through their contacts in certain circles of the National Assembly, conduct propaganda campaigns, broadcast in the press in European and Asian countries, in order to quickly gain autonomy for Annam”. This event made Nguyen Ai Quoc become a character who received special attention from secret agents and the French government, and at the same time understood clearly: if you want to liberate the nation, you can only rely on your own forces. His political thinking and practical activities have matured.

In particular, in July 1920, Nguyen Ai Quoc reads *the first draft of Lenin's Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions* published in L'humanité newspaper, created an important turning point in his actions in the process of leaving to find a way to save the country. The thesis directly deals with national and colonial issues, providing theories about the national liberation revolution - the issue that Nguyen Ai Quoc is focusing on. Receiving Lenin's Thesis thought, Nguyen Ai Quoc from the patriot came to Leninism and found the way to national liberation. As he later confided: “Lenin's theses made me very touched, excited, clear, confident! I was so happy that I cried. Sitting alone in a room, I spoke loudly as if I were He said to a large crowd: O afflicted and suffering compatriots! This is what is needed for us, this is the way to our liberation. Since then, I have completely believed in Lenin and in the Third International” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.10, p.127). From Lenin's Thesis, Nguyen Ai Quoc realized the specific demands of the nation. Vietnam in the Claim is generalized to a theoretical level, so even in France - the country is trying to protect and maintain colonial rule over the colonial peoples, Nguyen Ai Quoc - a member The French Socialist Party and the people of the French colony found a way to fight against the French colonial rule and liberate the nation - the path of proletarian revolution. Then, at the 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party held in Tour City (December 1920), Nguyen Ai Quoc joined the group of radicals and became one of its members. At the same time, he voted for the French Communist Party to join the Communist International (Internationale III), which confirmed Nguyen Ai Quoc's maturity in practical activities. He went from being a patriot to being an international communist soldier.

After nearly 10 years of working for a living, observing, learning and operating, Nguyen Ai Quoc has accumulated a lot of theoretical and practical experience, learned about major revolutions in the world, and clearly friend - enemy, the essence of capitalism, colonialism; understand the half-hearted character of bourgeois revolutions; the meaning and value of the Russian October Revolution (1917). Leaving from the reality of the country's loss and dissolution, the passionate patriotism and the aspiration to liberate the people and the Fatherland, Nguyen Ai Quoc came to Marxism-Leninism, found a way to save the country and become a international communist soldier. Since then, he has been active, resolute and stronger for the goal of national liberation. Alain Ruscio commented on Nguyen Ai Quoc's work: a citizen of the colonial country, in the very land of the dominant power, openly challenged it, amazed: this could not go unnoticed in Indochina (Alain Ruscio, 2020, p.180). Nguyen Ai Quoc succeeded in his journey to find the way to national liberation. He has determined the right goals, ways and directions and always strives, actively and creatively on that path.

### **Actively Establish the Communist Party of Vietnam**

The event that Nguyen Ai Quoc actively founded the Communist Party of Vietnam was a great contribution that created an important turning point of the Vietnamese revolution, creating a premise and basis for changing the country's destiny and the flow of history Vietnam. After finding the way to save the country, Nguyen Ai Quoc actively worked, spreading the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, and prepared ideological, political and organizational conditions to establish the Party. He played an important decisive role in the birth of the Communist Party of Vietnam. With the consent of the Communist International<sup>1</sup> (Thanh Dam, 1998, pp.15-16), November 1924, Nguyen Ai Quoc returned to Guangzhou, China, which opened the way for him directly, actively prepared the conditions for the birth of the Communist Party of Vietnam. *Those are the conditions:*

*In terms of ideology*, from practical activities, through articles published in many newspapers and magazines, works such as *The Judgment of the French Colonial System*, *Duong cach menh (Revolutionary Road)*<sup>2</sup>. Nguyen Ai Quoc has both described the oppressive and exploitative nature of colonialism, portrayed the hardships and injustices of the colonial people, and pointed out the causes of the people's sufferings. Propagating, enlightening and awakening the national spirit in each of the people who lost their country, aroused in them the desire to rise up and fight for the liberation of themselves and the country. Nguyen Ai Quoc soon saw the ability of the oppressed

colonial people to fight to escape slavery. He asserted: “Behind the negative submission, the Indochinese people hide something that is boiling, screaming, and will explode violently, when the time comes. The elite division has a duty to push for that opportunity to come quickly. The brutality of capitalism has already prepared the ground: Socialism has only to sow the seeds of liberation” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.1, p.40) and “The Annamites are fed up with the French domination. The hatred, smoldering in their hearts and just waiting for the opportunity to explode” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.2, p.158). There, he pointed out that the path to national independence and people's liberation is the path of proletarian revolution and it is necessary to unite and fight all classes of people in the country as well as international solidarity.

Regarding politics, through works, articles, lectures, especially the book *Duong Cach Menh*, published in 1927, Nguyen Ai Quoc formed a system of views and theories on the national liberation revolution. Later, it developed into the core contents of the documents: The Party's brief strategy and the Party's brief outline, which were drafted by Nguyen Ai Quoc and discussed and approved at the Unification Conference of Communist organizations. To establish the Communist Party of Vietnam (February 1930) chaired by Nguyen Ai Quoc. In the 1990s, these documents were evaluated and considered as the first political platform of the Communist Party. Vietnam). Which affirms: 1. The cause of liberating the colonial peoples from domination, oppression and exploitation must be the cause of the colonial people. 2. The national liberation revolution is a part of the world proletariat revolution, there must be international solidarity and the revolution in the colonies has a close relationship with the revolution in the country, there must be “friendship proletariat”. 3. The revolution in the colonies is first a revolution for national liberation, then a socialist revolution - national independence is associated with socialism. 4. The revolution is the cause of the masses, of all patriotic Vietnamese. It is necessary to build an alliance to unite forces, in which the workers and farmers are the root and the driving force of the revolution. 5. The revolution must be led by the proletariat itself, and must be guided by reason.

*In terms of organization*, Nguyen Ai Quoc paid special attention to building and developing the organization, training and fostering staff. From his practical activities, he is deeply aware of the role of the organization, of the need to stand in an organization to fight. To prepare the organization for the birth of the Communist Party of Vietnam, as soon as he arrived in Guangzhou, Nguyen Ai Quoc sought to contact the patriotic Vietnamese youths in the *Tam Tam Xa* group, enlightening

and enlightening them, reformed into the Communist League (March 1925). On that basis, in June 1925, the *Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association* was established<sup>3</sup>- a precursor organization of the Party with the hope that “It is the egg from which the young communist bird hatched” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.3, p.14). This is the strategic organizational preparation of leader Nguyen Ai Quoc, in which he attaches great importance to training and cadre training, preparing people for the organization and revolution. The Association publishes the newspaper *Thanh Nien (Youth)* as a mouthpiece, an important means of disseminating Marxist-Leninist theory and revolutionary lines (printed in both Chinese and national script, 208 issues); announce the program, charter and purpose of the Association. Along with the expansion of the “Vietnam Youth Revolutionary Association”, Marxism-Leninism was also spread widely, the sense of enlightenment and stance of the Vietnamese working class changed drastically, and at the same time, promote the patriotic struggle movements of the masses to develop in the direction of the proletariat. Nguyen Ai Quoc not only proactively prepared the ideological, political and organizational conditions for the establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam, but as an envoy of the Communist International, he also played a key role in the establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam. He was active in convening and presiding over the Conference on Unification of Communist Organizations, establishing the Communist Party of Vietnam in February 1930.

The birth of the Communist Party of Vietnam is associated with the decisive role of leader Nguyen Ai Quoc. He creatively applied the birth rule of a proletarian political party of Marxism - Leninism and pointed out the birth law of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Point out the path of national liberation, in accordance with practical conditions, meeting the requirements and aspirations of the people.

### **Determined to Lead the People to Achieve National Independence**

Winning national independence, bringing freedom and happiness to the people is the aspiration and goal throughout the life of leader Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh. Therefore, as soon as he found the way to save the country, he wishes to “return to the country, go into the masses, awaken them, organize them, unite them, train them, send them out to fight for freedom and independence” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol.1, p.209). However, it was not until two decades later, on January 1, 1941, that Nguyen Ai Quoc set foot in the country to directly lead the people to fight for national

independence. Nguyen Ai Quoc's determination to lead the people for national independence is reflected in:

***Firstly, actively and directly plan the right revolutionary strategy, direct the construction and prepare the conditions for the General Uprising to win the government.***

Throughout his three-decade journey in a foreign land, life has experienced enough bitterness and hardship, but Nguyen Ai Quoc has never wavered, he has always remained steadfast in his chosen goal and path. After months of hardships and hardships, with the help of the Communist International, and Chinese friends, on January 28, 1941, Nguyen Ai Quoc returned to Pac Bo, Cao Bang, starting his direct years, Vietnamese revolutionary leader. In May 1941, as an envoy to the Communist International, Nguyen Ai Quoc convened and chaired the 8th Party Central Committee Conference in Pac Bo, Cao Bang. The conference completed the process of changing Vietnam's revolutionary strategy, which was an important factor contributing to the victory of the August Revolution (1945). This is the first conference taking place on the land of the Fatherland that Nguyen Ai Quoc chaired and discussed the destiny, the way to liberate the people and the country from the miserable life of slavery.

Under the chairmanship of Nguyen Ai Quoc, the 8th Plenum of the Party Central Committee definitively affirmed the shift in revolutionary strategy. These are: 1. The policy of putting the task of national liberation on the top, redefining the nature of the Indochinese revolution as a national liberation revolution. This is a fundamental change in the Party's perception of the current task of the revolution. Decisive change is the source and foundation for the Party and Nguyen Ai Quoc to have the right and next appropriate orientations and decisions to bring the revolution to complete victory. 2. Regarding the gathering of revolutionary forces, the policy was to establish the Viet Minh Front to unite all individuals, classes and organizations with a national spirit and solve national problems within the framework of each Indochinese country. This is the policy that lays the foundation for the policy of great national unity, building and promoting the internal strength of the revolutionary cause and the construction of the country in the following years and even today. 3. To clearly define the method and form of conducting the national liberation revolution as “armed insurrection”, going from a partial uprising to a general uprising to seize power in the whole country... On that basis, propose specific solutions to ensure the successful implementation of the national liberation revolution: building armed forces, political forces, revolutionary bases,



international solidarity, etc. At the same time, prepare internal contents force, ready to seize the favorable opportunity when the opportunity appears. 4. Determining the institution and form of the state after a successful revolution - The People's Democratic State in which the mastery belongs to all Vietnamese people does not go against the independence and freedom of the Fatherland. Implementing the policy of the Conference, the revolutionary movement developed strongly, the Party directed to urgently build the armed forces and political forces, build revolutionary bases, actively take advantage of cooperation with the armed forces... create synergy to win when the time comes. The conference laid the basis for the victory of the August 1945 revolution. The value, victory and success of the Conference are associated with the particularly important role of leader Nguyen Ai Quoc.

***Second, properly perceive allied forces and persistently look for opportunities to cooperate and strengthen the revolutionary forces.***

Nguyen Ai Quoc soon determined that the Vietnamese national liberation revolution must necessarily stand in the world revolutionary movement and must be part of the allied forces against fascism, considering it an important condition. guarantee the success of the revolution. This is Ho Chi Minh's creative and practical thinking in solving the problem of the national liberation revolution with the common proletarian revolution of progressive mankind in the world according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the whole world. theory and practice. Events at the end of 1944, Ho Chi Minh continued to go to Kunming, China to seek international support and help for the Vietnamese revolution. On this trip, Ho Chi Minh brought along Lieutenant Colonel William Shaw<sup>4</sup> - an American pilot who was rescued by Vietnam, both to return it to the US Air Force on the ground (AGAS) relief agency, and to create chance to meet with American staff in Kunming, showing Vietnam's goodwill to cooperate, siding with the Allies against Japanese fascists... Ho Chi Minh's perseverance and patience led to an important and meaningful cooperation between the Viet Minh and the US Allies<sup>5</sup>, contributing to the victory of the August Revolution and affirming the personal role of Ho Chi Minh.

***Third, determined, resolutely seize the opportunity, leading the people to successfully conduct the General Uprising***

Talking about the story of taking that opportunity is a long journey in synthesis, contemplation of practical activities, observations, etc. to get the right perceptions, evaluations, practical

compatibility, enough power and strength. ... can seize the opportunity to succeed. As early as April 1945, while still in Bach Sac, Ho Chi Minh said to Hoang Quoc Viet: There are changes in the country, the world situation is also evolving... The war is about to end. Japan will be defeated. Using this opportunity, we will rebel to take power. However, the interesting thing here is that thanks to the radio equipment that the US aided the Viet Minh<sup>6</sup>, Ho Chi Minh was able to catch more timely news of important and rapid changes of the second world war, especially is related to the process of Japan's declaration of surrender to the Allies... from which there were soon decisive comments, assessments and decisions to seize the opportunity to lead the Uprising to seize power in the country.

On the evening of August 12, 1945, Ho Chi Minh and the Standing Committee of the Central Committee decided to immediately launch the General Uprising nationwide and immediately open the National Party Conference. At the same time, it is also required that some “comrades attending the Central Conference must immediately return to their localities, take the opinions of the Standing Committee and bring them back and implement them” (Watershed, 1975, page 30). This is the very decisive, flexible and creative direction of Ho Chi Minh. On the night of August 12, 1945, the Provisional Command Committee of the Liberation Zone issued the Order of Uprising consisting of 10 points, which clearly stated: “To ensure the success of the uprising, comrades, please execute this order quickly, resolutely, heroically and cautiously” (Communist Party of Vietnam, vol. 7, p. 420). At the same time, he ordered all the armed forces and people in the region to rise up in rebellion. On August 13, 1945, the Party Central Committee and Viet Minh Headquarters established the National Uprising Committee (Truong Chinh (directly in charge), Vo Nguyen Giap, Le Thanh Nghi, Tran Dang Ninh, Chu Van Tan). At 23:00 on August 13, 1945, the Uprising Committee issued the Uprising Order (Military Order No. I). On August 14, 1945, the National Conference of the Party opened in Tan Trao, Son Duong, Tuyen Quang, unanimously determined that the conditions for insurrection were ripe. The whole people are boiling with enthusiasm waiting for the time of the uprising to gain the right to independence... In the spirit of his opinion, the Conference decided to launch the climax of the uprising from the North to the South. Agreeing with the spirit of Military Order No. I issued by the Standing Committee of the Party Central Committee, resolutely and promptly launched a general uprising for national independence.

Right after the National Conference of the Party had just ended, on August 16, 1945, the National Congress took place at Tan Trao, Ho Chi Minh attended, delivered speeches and gave specific instructions related to the issue foreign policy when we interact with our allies the US, the Republic of China, about the attitude towards the Allied troops entering Vietnam to disarm the Japanese fascists... He emphasized that they must revolt and seize power before the Allied forces enter the country. Indochina and welcoming the Allies as owners... That was Ho Chi Minh's outstanding determination and vision.

Ho Chi Minh closely grasped the situation and correctly assessed the revolutionary opportunity. So even though he was very sick, when Vo Nguyen Giap came to visit, he affirmed as a definitive command, an iron determination: *Now, a favorable time is coming, no matter how much you have to sacrifice, even if you have to burn down the entire Truong Son Mountain range, you will still be determined to gain independence.* That was his painful desire, an iron determination that must be achieved because national independence is the most precious thing, a goal he pursues all his life.

Victory of the Revolution August 1945 played an important decisive role of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh. But as he told comrade Hoang Quoc Viet: "...the victory of the revolution depends on the people's forces. Individuals will not do anything without the people" (Hoang Viet, 1990, p. 93). That thought is completely correct, reflecting the personality and wisdom of Ho Chi Minh. The August Revolution of 1945 was victorious, the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam proved the main proof.

## CONCLUSION

The journey to independence for the nation is a journey of more than three decades of Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh. That journey was associated with hardships and hardships, but with a strong will, a burning desire to gain independence and freedom for the Fatherland and people of a great man and man Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh. He was the one who found the way, opened the way, led the Vietnamese Party and people to use our strength to liberate ourselves, gain independence and freedom for the Fatherland and people. Up to now, Vietnam is firmly on the path of renewal and international integration, becoming a responsible member in the international community. But his thought is still the spiritual foundation, internal strength, invaluable asset of the country and people of Vietnam. Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh is forever the pride of every

Vietnamese, his thoughts and aspirations have always accompanied the Vietnamese people and are on par with international friends.

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<sup>1</sup> The Comintern sent Nguyen Ai Quoc to Guangzhou (China) to act as an interpreter for the Soviet advisory delegation (led by Borodin) to assist the Government of the Republic of China. and was the representative of the Oriental Ministry of the Communist International in Guangzhou in charge of South Asian affairs.

<sup>2</sup> A collection of lectures by Nguyen Ai Quoc for staff training classes of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association, held in Guangzhou in the years 1925-1927. The work was compiled by the Propaganda Department of the Union of Oppressed Peoples and republished as a book.

<sup>3</sup> The original headquarters of the Association was a space on the 2nd floor of building 13, after a while the Association rented two more rooms 3 of houses 13 and 13B (now 248-250) Van Minh street, Guangzhou city, Quang province, China.

<sup>4</sup> At the end of 1944, an American plane was shot down by the Japanese at Nuoc Hai, Cao Bang, and American pilot William Shaw was rescued by the people of the Viet Minh Front according to Ho Chi Minh's previous instruction and policy "US Army" is my friend. Saving the American pilot is my friend".

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<sup>5</sup> The US sent a team of *Con Nai* (Deer) to parachute to Tan Trao base to help train the military, and at the same time to provide some medicine, weapons, technical equipment... Especially, it established a mixed company of Vietnam - The Americans were about 200 men and on August 16, 1945, the company held a ceremony to leave the army at Tan Trao and then went down to liberate Thai Nguyen town and headed to Hanoi.

<sup>6</sup> After returning from Kunming with a number of technical and radio technicians supported by the US, Ho Chi Minh built a shack in Tan Trao and Tuyen Qunag for American forces to work and live, called "" Allied shack" right next to his workplace. The day after each working session, he often went to the Allied shack to talk and visit them, but mainly to monitor and listen to news from their means. Therefore, he knew specifically when Japan surrendered to the Allies and Allies, which forces would enter Vietnam to disarm the Japanese army.