

ИСТОРИЯ И КУЛЬТУРА

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LEGITIMIZING INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP IN PROLETARIANIZATION MOVEMENT IN EARLY FORMATION OF THE VIETNAMESE MARXISM, 1928–1930¹

Abstract. Scholarship on Vietnamese Communism conventionally regarded workers and peasants as the leading force of the proletarian revolution, whereas intellectuals stood as the observers. The author argues that succeeding to the legacy of the patriotic Confucian literati in the struggle for national independence, new intellectuals hoisted the flag of national liberation under the guidance of Communist ideology, which awarded the leading role to the working class. Being the intermediary in the transition of power from the scholar-gentry to the working class, Vietnamese Marxism-following intellectuals sought ways to promote and to propagandize Communist ideology in masses, and also to “proletarianize” themselves. In order to prove the legitimacy of the intellectual leadership, revolutionary intellectuals hid their intellectual origins by adopting the working-class appearance and language. This process launched the movement called “proletarianization” that lasted from 1928 to 1930 as a practical preparation for the formation of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

Keywords: colonial education, vocational schools, proletarianization, intellectual leadership.

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РОЛЬ ИНТЕЛЛИГЕНЦИИ И ДВИЖЕНИЕ ПРОЛЕТАРИАЗАЦИИ НА РАННЕМ ЭТАПЕ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЯ МАРКСИЗМА ВО ВЬЕТНАМЕ (1928–1930 гг.)

Аннотация. Исследования по вьетнамскому коммунизму традиционно называют рабочих и крестьян ведущей силой пролетарской революции, тогда как интеллектуалы выступают в качестве наблюдателей. Автор утверждает, что, следуя заветам патриотических конфуцианских литераторов, боровшихся за национальную независимость, новые интеллектуалы подняли флаг национального освобождения под руководством коммунистической идеологии, которая присвоила ведущую роль рабочему классу. Будучи посредниками в переходе власти от ученого к рабочему, последователи вьетнамского марксизма искали пути продвижения и пропаганды коммунистической идеологии в массах, а также «пролетаризации» самих себя. Чтобы доказать легитимность своего интеллектуального руководства, революционные интеллектуалы скрыли свое происхождение, приняв вид и язык рабочего

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класса. Этот процесс положил начало движению под названием «пролетаризация», которое продолжалось с 1928 по 1930 г. как практическая подготовка к формированию Коммунистической партии Вьетнама.

Ключевые слова: колониальное образование, профессиональные училища, пролетаризация, интеллектуальное лидерство.

By the 1920s, the Vietnamese nationalist movement had become multi-faceted due to a number of factors: exposure to ideas and to theories of Communism, the rise of new intellectuals, and the growth of the substantial working class. In the period of 1928–1930, prior to the establishment of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the movement called “proletarianization” launched to promote Communist ideology in the working class, and, more importantly, to bring intellectuals to a challenging experiment to deprive them of their conventional arrogance and charisma. A new force needed to establish power of the emerging working class, which was still weak but believed to be strengthened by the help of intellectuals, and reciprocally, the penetration in the working environment would train the intellectuals, who were not loyal revolutionaries, according to the Communist principles. It was a binary game: in order to legitimize their role, intellectuals hid their intellectual origins by adopting a working-class appearance and language. On the other hand, they needed to show their intellectual “competence” to reach a power in the organization. Students of vocational schools seemed to have more advantages in the intellectual-worker alteration because they were trained to be workers rather than intellectuals, but the knowledge, industrial skills, and discipline they acquired in school could facilitate their propaganda campaigns, thereby ensuring their leadership.

Scholarship on the leadership of the anti-french colonialism revolution in Vietnam

The Vietnamese Marxist historians attempt to demonstrate the importance of the peasant-worker coalition whose leadership led to the August Revolution triumph resulting in the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. An institution for historical studies called *the History-Geography-Literature Research Department* (Ban Sử-Địa-Văn) was established in 1953 aiming at connecting historiography with revolutionary activity.¹ A cohort of Vietnamese historians began studying the origin of the Vietnamese working class and its contribution to the building of the Vietnamese nation [Trần Huy Liệu 1954; Trần Văn Giàu 1958, 1993; Cao Văn Biền 1970; Quốc Anh 1975; Ngô Văn Hoà, Dương Kinh Quốc 1978]. Trần Huy Liệu rejected the doctrine of the three-staged development of the Vietnamese revolution during the French colonial period. Consequently, at the first stage of the resistance against the French (1858–1918) the leadership belonged to the Confucian literati (in the King-aid movement); at the second stage (1918–1930) the leading role belonged to bourgeoisie; and at the third stage (1930–1945) the leadership passed to the proletariat. The historian suggested that the two last stages of the revolution were under the leadership of proletariat and justified the proletarian power: “One can argue that the proletariat at that time was not very mature and the number of workers who participated in the revolution was small. But history has proved that at the beginning [the proletariat Party] consisted but partly of proletariat, remaining petit-bourgeois in its membership and characteristics [Trần Huy Liệu 1954: 25–26].

¹ Its scientific publication was Bulletin Historiography – Geography – Literature (Tập san Sử ký – Địa lý – Văn học), first issued in 1954. In No.1 of the Bulletin, on the cover page appeared the motto “Historical science and Revolutionary work” indicating the targets of this institution. See Ban Nghiên cứu Sử Địa Văn (Department Historiography – Geography – Literature), Tập san Nghiên cứu Sử ký – Địa lý – Văn học (Bulletin Historiography – Geography – Literature), No. 1, June 1954.

Instead of describing Vietnamese workers as a revolutionary self-conscious class, historian Cao Văn Biền emphasized their hard life in the colonial industrial context, especially in the labor consuming industries such as mining, plantation, textiles [Cao Văn Biền 1970: 53–64]. The rebellions of workers, peasants by origin, are similar to what James Scott [1985: 29] called “everyday form of peasants resistance” which was supported by ‘ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups’ with a numerous activities such as ‘foot-dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilferage, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth’.

In his generally neglected article, Trần Huy Liệu [1966] took up intellectuals, claiming their active support of the working class when they refused to follow the bourgeoisie, therefore facilitating the proletarian revolution to win. However, further research concerning the intellectuals and their contribution to the revolution was postponed till the early 1990s. Several research-works concentrated mostly on the literati and intellectual groups who pioneered the anti-French front, seeking and cultivating new ideas to build both a new Vietnamese society and a new force to lead the struggle against the French [Huỳnh Kim Khanh 1982; Marr 1984; Tai 1992, 2010; Nguyễn Văn Khánh 2004; Quin-Judge 2011]. The emergence of new intellectuals has been proved by the search into development of the French-style education in Vietnam and the contribution of its students to the Vietnam’s nation building [Kelly 1971, 2000; Altbach and Kelly 1978; Trịnh Văn Thảo 1990; Trần Thị Phương Hoa 2012].

The shift from literati to the peasant-worker coalition in the revolutionary leadership has been put forth in scholarship. However, this process deserves scrutinizing. The process of “proletarianization of intellectuals” that took place in 1928–1930 in order to legitimize the intellectual leadership in the proletarian revolution would help better understand this transformation.

The transition of revolutionary forces in Vietnam’s colonial society in the 1920s

In early 20th century, the Đông Du movement developed by Phan Bội Châu resonated with the Vietnamese compatriots with landslides. The outstanding scholar-patriot had spent five years (1900–1904) travelling through North, Central and South Vietnam to seek the intellectual comrades, mostly among scholars and mandarins, then planned to send them to get military training in Japan, an admirable Asian superpower in the eyes of Vietnamese contemporary literati. During his journey, Phan Bội Châu extensively utilized his title as a scholar, who ranked the first in the regional examination (thi Hương), and the status as a Royal University student (Quốc Tử Giám); therefore, he created a wide network among scholars. Another scholar-reformer, Phan Chu Trinh, who gained a higher rank than Phan Bội Châu, in the Confucian examination system, chose the path to national independence by strengthening education, improving economy and intensively required social justice through his demands to the French authorities. The echo of the heroic rhapsody the two scholars left in the anti-French colonial history silenced in 1925 when Phan Bội Châu was arrested and Phan Chu Trinh passed away after a severe depression in Paris. Taking over the flag, Nguyễn Ái Quốc reformatted the revolutionary path, when he had definitely discovered the way for national liberation after striking encounter with *Theses on the National Question* by V.I. Lenin, the work which encouraged the consolidation of Communist parties in capitalist countries and worldwide to help eliminate colonialism and imperialism thereby bringing freedom to colonial nations.

The emergence of the working class in Vietnam in the 1920s as the main revolutionary force was foreseen by Nguyễn Ái Quốc and then confirmed in the Vietnam Communist Party’s (VCP) strategy. In its manifest, the Indochinese Communist Party states: ‘... the proletariat must hold the revolutionary leadership, so that to ensure the ultimate victory of the revolution. The strongest ally of

the proletariat is the peasantry' [Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam 2002: 190]. Prior to that, the Hội Việt Nam Cách mạng Thanh niên (the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League), the predecessor of the VCP, had been organized: "in the League there are mostly petits bourgeois, intellectuals, while peasants and workers are few. The task is to strengthen the internal organization by more proletarian composition of the League" [Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam 2002: 110]. In the Vietnamese agricultural society governed by the totalitarian imperial power with the prevailing Confucian doctrine, peasants and workers were ranked the lowest strata. Since the real power belonged to the Confucian scholars-gentry, how could workers and peasants take the leadership?

In fact, despite the rise of the new intellectuals, the Confucian literati still maintained their social prestige for their high educational titles and strong will to preserve the Vietnamese spirit against the French invasion. In early twentieth century, the literati became aware of the need to modernize by removing backward and old-fashioned thought and doctrine. Also, they were ready to give up their hegemonic guidance of scholarship that they had been building for centuries. However, the literati failed to compete with the French expansion because they, though with fervent patriotism, were not capable enough to modernize and win the masses. The inability of the patriotic scholars united in the Duy Tân and Đông Du movements has been generalized as the end of the power of Confucian elites whose feeble symbolic influence lasted until mid-1920s. Meantime, the Western-styled intellectuals were subject to fragmentation and could not unite into a strong resistance camp against the French. The French-educated men like Phạm Quỳnh, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh tried to launch a campaign to preserve the Vietnamese language as an act of patriotism, while recognizing the advantages of the French civilization.

In the post-World War I context, the French increased their influence by raising investments into social interest. The ratio of expenses for education in the general budget increased in 1918–1930 from 3,5 to 6,1% in Indochina; from 5,5 to 14,2% in Tonkin, from 3,4 to 14,5% in Annam and from 10,0 to 12,5% in Cochinchina [Exposition coloniale internationale 1931: 139]. The new educational system became accomplished with the 13-year-general education, university, and professional schools. The number of students of French-Vietnamese schools in Vietnam increased from app. 100 thousand in 1918 to 200 thousand in 1925 and 300 thousand in 1929 [Gouvernement Général de l'Indochine (GGI) 1922; GGI 1925; GGI 1929]. Meantime, the number of workers in Vietnam in 1929 was 221.052 [Ngô Văn Hoà, Dương Kinh Quốc 1978: 203]. In view of Marxists, intellectuals were 'an intermediate class, ideologically dependent on other classes'. In the road to the Communist revolution, they had many shortcomings such as 'hesitation, individualism, lack of collective discipline' [Vô sản hoá 1972: 7]. So, to join the revolution, they have to 'give up their own stand to gain the position of the proletariat' [Nguyễn Văn Khánh 2004: 16].

Prior to the establishment of the VCP in 1930, a campaign 'Vô sản hoá' (Proletarianization) had been launched to retrain intellectuals. This term had been used by the Marxist classics to refer to the process in the capitalist society when social strata, particularly workers and peasants, were deprived of all properties and became proletariat. The Tonkinese Headquarter of the Youth League applied this term in a different situation, when the intellectuals were mobilized to work closely with workers to develop party networks in the industrial environment.

Preparing revolutionary intellectuals

The book *Đường Kách mệnh* (The Revolutionary Path), the first Marxist book published in the Vietnamese language determines the role of students.

‘Revolution is the work of masses. To win the victory, the revolutionary must acknowledge workers and peasants to be the radical forces of the revolution; in addition, students, small merchants, small landowners also subjected to imperialist oppression, though not to so brutal one as the formers, are companions of the revolution’ [Nguyễn Ái Quốc 2011: 54]

The building of a new Vietnamese revolutionary force was an urgent need, as a response to the influence of the Comintern, and especially to the rise of the young Soviet Union. Sophie Quinn-Judge [Quinn-Judge 2002, 2011; Duiker 2000] noticed the desire of Nguyễn Ái Quốc to raise the image of Indochina on the international agenda, especially to build up a Party to represent the voice of colonized Indochinese in the Comintern. In 1923, Tâm Tâm Xã (the Like Hearts Society) was created in Guangzhou. This group comprised a handful of radical intellectuals who had a trend of employing violent measures, firstly to make resonance to attract attention of the public so that they would become well-known. The young heroic people, in their 20s, were eager to show their revolutionary enthusiasm. In 1924 Phạm Hồng Thái, one of its charter members, shocked the French colonial authorities by bombing the hotel in an attempt to kill Governor-General Merlin in Guangzhou. In a rumour on his being an alumnus of the School of Practical Industry in Haiphong, his heroic action inspired other students who felt proud to learn at the school. So far, the activities of the members of the group have been presented as a revolutionary myth. Sophie Quinn-Judge [2002] claimed that many contemporary revolutionary leaders influenced this organization, such as Phan Bội Châu, Nguyễn Hải Thần, who did not tend towards Communism. In 1925, Tâm Tâm Xã was dismissed and transformed into the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League (Hội Việt Nam Cách mạng Thanh niên), which had a rather Marxist orientation under the leadership of Nguyễn Ái Quốc, who emphasized the importance of training young people on the long-termed revolutionary path. Another journey to the East (Đông Du) took place, but this time the southern provinces of China were a destination but not Japan as twenty years ago. Guangzhou especially attracted the Vietnamese revolutionary flow, as there were many high schools, universities and academies; also, it was the meeting point of revolutionaries of various nationalities [Goscha 1999].

Focusing on dissemination of Communist ideas, the Youth League published newspaper *Thanh Niên*, with about a hundred copies for each issue and the book *Đường Kách Mệnh*, which were transported secretly from Guangzhou to Vietnam and circulated among population, especially among workers. A network was established to connect Guangzhou with Vietnam and extended to Thailand, channelling for cross-border human and publication flows. In 1925–1927 there were ten classes organized in Guangzhou, training about 250–300 students who came from many provinces of Vietnam [Nguyễn Thành 1985: 97]. Nguyễn Ái Quốc himself participated as a teacher, in addition to the Soviet teaching staff. They gave lessons on history of Communism, history of French colonialism in Indochina and particularly focused on organization of a revolutionary party and a revolutionary network. Nguyễn Ái Quốc concentrated his efforts on strengthening the organizational methods and skills, so that all the members of the Youth League ‘live with the one aim, one style, one language’ [Huỳnh Kim Khánh 1982: 78]. He figured out the lack of knowledge of politics and mass organization as the reason for the failure of the previous revolutionary movement led by the Confucian-gentry [Nguyễn Ái Quốc 2011: 9]. Furthermore, he clearly identified the class characteristics of the Party, which should be based on worker-peasant coalition. The victory of the Russian revolution was used in his guideline book *Đường Kách Mệnh* as a sample of the successful mobilization of this ally.

Nguyễn Ái Quốc knew that Communism was not easy for the public to understand, so he urged to use *quốc ngữ* (Romanized Vietnamese scripts) to convey the political term borrowed from the West.

He knew that propaganda of Communist ideas required creativity, as well as understanding of the mentality and knowledge of the target audience (workers and peasants).

The 'proletarian spirit' was highly encouraged to simplify the writing as much as possible. Nguyễn Ái Quốc taught: "Someone may criticize grumpy expressions. Well, all things need to be expressed in a simplistic way with no decoration. For sixty years French imperialists have been sitting on our top, more than twenty million of people died. We have to scream aloud, do fast, we have no time to polish or manipulate the language" [Thép mới 1984: 39]. To convey knowledge of Communist ideology directly to the masses, the language needed to be simple, sometimes even rough. The determined choice of the workers-peasants coalition as the substantial revolutionary force at the inception of the proletarian revolution and selection of appropriate means of dissemination of revolutionary ideas was then proved to be proper in the country where peasant ratio in population accounted to more than 90%. The Communist leaders, many of them of elitarian intellectual origin, were ready to give up their former nominal power they possessed for hundreds of years and to seize a new power of the proletariat. Nguyễn Ái Quốc's determination to renounce intellectuals and to build the image of the Vietnamese leader who experienced the life of the working class was considered by historian Nguyễn Thế Anh as a mystery in the Vietnamese history [Nguyễn Thế Anh 1985]. According to the historian, Nguyễn Ái Quốc's rejection of his family's mandarin origin and his transformation into a social outcast showed his commitment to the distressed people, who then became the revolutionary's sheet anchor.

Members of the Youth League not only read Marxist documents, but they also learnt to create and expand networks, starting from a 3-person group. According to Nguyễn Ái Quốc's instruction, the school provided a favorable condition for connecting reliable people. Schoolmates were included in the list of available 'comrades', along with siblings, neighbors, friends

– Do you have a sibling?

– Yes

– Classmate?

– Yes

– Neighbor?

– Yes

– Friend?

– Yes

– Excellent! So, we would choose them to disseminate propaganda, to introduce to our organization. We would not spend much time investigating those, who we know well. One can propagandize among two persons that make a three-person team. Then each in the team propagandize another two, then the organization would multiply' [Thép mới 1984: 50].

The network of kinship and friendship was intensively exploited to increase the members of the organisation. Quinn-Judge noticed that the first group of the Youth League founded in Vietnam had been evolved around a core group of fellows who had come from Annam, especially from Nghe An, also the homeland of Phan Bội Châu and Nguyễn Ái Quốc [Quinn-Judge 2002]. Out of 250 fellows sent to Guangzhou from May 1926 to April 1927 there were 180 who had come from Annam and Tonkin.

Historian Hue Tam Tai's story about her aunt's path to the Youth League revealed much about the kinship matrix that led her aunt to meet revolutionary fellows, and in 1927 due to friendship of her father and the members of the organization, the shy and unsociable girl left her home for remote Guangzhou with her new acquaintances [Tai 2010].

In addition to the blood kin relations, ‘schoolmates’ had a significant role in multiplication of the organization when creating internal confidence among its members. More importantly, the school atmosphere, where students learnt sciences and technical innovations, nurtured the flows of new information and ideology, including Marxism-Leninism.

The Youth League was a high intellectual structure, ‘90% of the membership was of intellectual origin’. It functioned as a proto-Communist party that prepared the human resource for the Communist Party of Vietnam founded in 1930. Particularly, in 1928-1929, this organization carried out a project aiming at strengthening the working class, which, in the late 1920s ‘was still weak, even in the industrial centres such as Hanoi, Haiphong, Namdinh, Vinh’ [Vô sản hoá 1972: 7]

Students of professional schools in the three regions of Vietnam, though in much less number than general schools, had more advantages in penetrating the proletarianizing movement. Echoing the first generation of Franco-Vietnamese school students, such as Ngô Gia Tự, Trịnh Đình Cửu, who were *Collège du protectorat*’s students, or Nguyễn Đức Cảnh, Đặng Xuân Khu, who were the *École primaire supérieur de Nam Dinh*’s students, the first Communist-students of professional schools, Hoàng Quốc Việt, Lương Khánh Thiện, also left school to join the revolution, and lived among workers. To erase ‘bourgeoisie traits’, they tried to erase their intellectual appearance by putting on clothes of workers or peasants in order to win the workers’ confidence.

Students of Haiphong Professional School in the proletarianizing campaign – the case of Hoàng Quốc Việt

The French interest in opening professional schools was motivated by Paul Doumer’s policy. This Governor stressed the need to train local human resources for economic programs. Official professional schools were established in all the three regions: two in Tonkin, five in Cochinchina and one in Annam. Each region had at least one school of practical industry (*école pratique d’industrie*). After 2-4 years of learning and completing apprenticeship, about 20–40 students from each school got a Certificat of apprenticeship or Certificat of Professional Aptitude every year. Haiphong school was established in 1913, aiming at training educated native workers, able to become foremen or workshop managers in the main trades. The school had three main sections of industry including ironwork, mechanics and adjustage, with permanent number of students around 150.

Among the reasons leading Vietnamese intellectuals to the revolution, as Vietnamese Communists explained, was their poverty and low status in the society that nurtured in them hatred towards the French invaders. The pyramid-pattern training system built by the French in Vietnam allowed less than 1% elite intellectuals to be able to hold a Diplome or baccalaureat degree. The rest had to do mediocre jobs such as elementary teachers or secretaries. In this trend, technical students held even lower status, as their degrees were not included in the degree system of education what prevented the holders from going on learning in colleges or university. When entering professional schools, their learning mostly focused on practice and manual work. According to the Laws on Technical Education (1921), practice hours increased throughout 3 years, from 24 hours to 36 hours a week, that is, from 50 to 75% of the weekly syllabus (Table 1). Haiphong school was no exception.

Table 1. Program of the school of practical industry, Indochina, 1921–1945

Subject	Hours/week		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
French, dictation, essay	4	3	1h30m

Arithmetics, geometrics, algebra	4h30m	1h30m	0
Physics, chemistry	3	1h30m	
Industrial design	4	4	4
Machine and technology	3	3	1h30
Practice in workshop	24	30	36-42
Physical education	2	2	0
Total	45	45	45

Source: Gouvernement Général de l'Indochine, Direction de l'Instruction publique, (1921),
Règlement Général de l'enseignement professionnel. IDEO, Hanoi-Haiphong.

Schools played an important role in the anti-French movement. In 1925-1926, students-rebels were associated with their respect to the Confucian scholar-gentry rather than under influence of Communism. Hoang Quoc Viet, an alumnus of the Haiphong *école pratique d'industrie*, described the days of student protest in his school:

“The French did not think we dared to leave school. We would lose scholarship, Diploma, which we, students of the third year, would achieve after just one year of apprenticeship. Beyond the school there was unemployment, hunger. But more than three dozen brothers of the third year determined to go away with belongings” [Hoàng Quốc Việt 1985: 25].

These revolutionaries-to-be left school but did not yet determine their path. They heard about a new “ism” but did not know what it was and expected to meet the men of that “ism”. Having left school, they worked in mines and factories. The recruitment was easy for them because they were trained as technicians (when other “proletarianizing” intellectuals should pay a small bribery to be taken to a factory). At work, the members of the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League found the organization and were introduced into it. Hoàng Quốc Việt then became a member of the Youth League through the introduction of Nguyễn Đức Cảnh, an alumnus of the *Collège du Protectorat*, who was also expelled from the school for joining the movement 1926.

Hoàng Quốc Việt described his propaganda activities for Communist ideology and his penetration into the proletarian life: “I lived with workers, also dressed in ragged clothes, my face in daub. The intellectuals, who went on “proletarianizing campaign” had also to apply grease, grime on the face to make themselves dirty to become different from ‘white face’ intellectuals (bạch diện thư sinh)” [Hoàng Quốc Việt 1985: 57].

By changing the appearance, the intellectuals in the “proletarianization” campaign showed their commitment to definitely leave their original group for stand on the workers’ platform, which the Confucian literati or the French-educated intellectuals had never imagined. Many pictures taken in early twentieth century indicated a different image of Tonkinese literati with incredibly long nails. This was one of the important tokens of literati genuineness, not only because of the filial piety that they saved every part of their body as in the status of their origin, but also because they had never engaged in manual works.

Prior to proletarianizing campaign, the ratio of workers in the cells of the Youth League in all parts of Vietnam was small. In 1926, the Hanoi cell had eleven members but there was only one worker; the Quang Nam cell had twenty and two respectively [Nguyễn Thành 1985: 158]. As a result of the campaign, the ratio of workers in cells increased from 5% in 1926 to 10% in 1929 [ibid: 162]. Khuất

Duy Tiến, Hoàng Quốc Việt's brother in law, who went "proletarianizing" in Nam Dinh cotton mill, noted that the factory had 4.400 workers, but there were only 300 trained workers of "blue collar", such as adjusters, mechanics, forgers, the rest were of "brown collar" [Vô sản hoá 1972: 34].

In a letter to the Comintern dated 1931, Nguyễn Ái Quốc complained about the illiteracy of workers and peasants. His strong reliance on intellectuals was subject to criticism by the Comintern [Bradley 2000: 38]. Yet he consolidated around him an echelon of the elite intellectuals, and made them "proletariat" to lead the revolution of workers and peasants.

Conclusion

In 1928–1930 the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League launched the "proletarianization" campaign. The aim of this movement was to propagandize Marxist ideology among the working class, to let this social strata be aware of its power and ability to take leadership in the revolution. Also, this served a practical project for intellectuals to train themselves in hard working conditions to reshape their thought and adapt them to new revolutionary demands. By doing so, the Communist movement in Vietnam would get rid of the "fledgeling" situation and integrate into the international Communist flows, as Quinn-Judge [Quinn-Judge 2011: 695] argues. This plan also recruited a few students of professional schools, at the offset of their revolutionary path. These young men were particularly welcome because of bonds between intellectual and manual labor of their learning. Although the impact of 'proletarianization' campaign on the working class was not clear, it opened a long path where Vietnamese intellectuals tried to leave their 'elite' echelon and adjust themselves to the masses; their far-reaching efforts have gone beyond the colonial era.

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