

Chapter 2

The Nationalist Movement in Indo-China

Write in Brief

Q.1A Write a note on:

What was meant by the 'civilizing mission' of the colonizers?

Ans.: The Europeans acquired colonies in Asian countries to use their resources on the name of bringing modern civilization to the backward countries. So they propagated the idea of a 'civilizing mission'. It also meant the spread of western culture, thoughts, education, science, logic and language in colonies. Like the British in India, the French also claimed that they were bringing modern civilization to the Vietnamese. The French wanted to change the local cultures, religions and traditions as French believed they were outdated prevented modern development. So, they wanted to educate the 'native' to civilize them. They also established many schools in Vietnam in which science philosophy and French were taught. This they also did because they required educated local labour force.

Q.1B Write a note on:

Huynh Phu So

Ans.: Huynh Phu So

(i) Huynh Phu so was a revolutionary leader, Vietnamese philosopher, and Buddhist religious scholar born in 1919 and died in 1947.

(ii) He started an anti-French movement called the Hoa Hao movement in 1939. The movement drew on religious ideas popular in anti-French uprising of the nineteenth century. The French tried to suppress the movement.

(iii) He was declared “mad banze” and put in mental asylum by French. Interestingly in 1941 he was announced sane, but exiled him to Laos and sent his followers to concentration camps, after the doctor treating him became his follower.

(iv) Phu So performed miracles and helped the poor. He opposed the sale of child brides, gambling and the use of alcohol and opium.

Q.2A Explain the following:

Only one-third of the students in Vietnam would pass the school-leaving examination.

Ans.: French doesn't want Vietnamese to compete with them for better-paid jobs in Vietnam so, they plan the education system in the manner that only one-third of the students in Vietnam would pass the school-leaving examination. It was most announced by the French that those who would learn French and accept French culture would be rewarded with French citizenship. However, only a few elite Vietnamese could enroll in the schools, and among those admitted only a few ultimately passed the school-leaving examinations. So, they deliberately failed students, mainly in the final year, so they can't compete with French. Usually, as two-third of the students failed and in 1925, out of population of 17 million, less than 400 passed the examination. School textbooks glorified the French and justified colonial rule and represented the Vietnamese as primitive and backward, capable of manual labour only. School children were taught that only French rule could ensure peace in Vietnam.

Q.2B Explain the following:

The French began building canals and draining lands in the Mekong delta.

Ans.: The French began building canals and draining lands in the Mekong delta as Vietnam had fertile land which was suitable for rice

production and plantation crops. For the constant supply of natural resources and other essential goods colonies used to annex other countries and the custom was followed by French also. To increase cultivation in Vietnam the French started to expand its territories and began building canals and draining lands in the Mekong delta. The vast system of irrigation works-canals and earthworks-built with forced labour, increased the production of rice cultivation went up from 274,000 hectares in 1873 to 1.1 million hectares in 1900 and 2.2 million in 1930. By 1931, Vietnam became the third largest exporter of rice in the world. This was the main reason for French to build canals and draining lands.

Q.2C Explain the following:

The government made the Saigon Native Girls School take back the students it had expelled.

Ans.: The government made the Saigon Native Girls School take back the students it had expelled as protest broke out the government forced the school to take the children back. The protest began in 1926 in the Saigon Native Girls School, when a Vietnamese girl sitting in one of the front seats was asked to vacate the seat for a local French student and when she refused, she was expelled from the school. Other students supporting her were also expelled. Now open protests started. To control the situation the students were taken back. These kinds of incidents only inspired the people and students of Vietnam to come together so, by the 1920s, students started forming various political parties, like the Party of Young Annam, and published several nationalist journals such as the Annamese Student. Thus Schools become important place for political and culture battles. The battle against French colonial education system became part of the larger battle against colonialism and for independence.

Q.2D Explain the following:

Rats were most common in the modern, newly built areas of Hanoi.

Ans.: When the French set about creating a modern Vietnam, they decided to rebuild Hanoi using modern engineering skills. The city was famous for its drainage and sewer system. These sewers became the hiding and breeding points for rats. Because of these sewers they can travel from one part to another and entered well cared homes of French. Apart from education, deteriorating health and hygiene in the country also agitated Vietnamese and inspired the nationalist feelings among them. In 1903, the modern part of Hanoi was struck by bubonic plague.

Reasons for the plague are:

(i) The French part of Hanoi was build beautifully with wide streets and a well-laid-out sewer system, while the 'native quarter' was not even provided with any necessary facilities.

(ii) The waste and rubbish was drained straight out into the river so during the heavy rains or floods it would overflow into the streets.

(iii) Thus, the sewers which were built to create a hygienic environment become the hiding and breeding point for rats and cause of the plague. As these sewers served as medium of transfer of rats into the city.

(a) A 'Rat-Hunt' was started in 1902, to get rid of these rats.(b) The French hired Vietnamese workers for this work and paid them for each rat they caught.

(c) Rats began to be caught in thousands but the money wasn't enough for the work Vietnamese doing. Those people who did the dirty work of entering sewers thought that if they came together, they could earn more money.

(d) The bounty was paid when a tail was given as a proof that a rat had been killed. So, to earn more money the rat-catchers took to just clipping the tails and releasing the rats, so that the process could be repeated, over again.

(e) Ultimately, the French were forced to stop the bounty programme. Besides this arrangement, the plague swept through the area.

Q.3 Describe the ideas behind the Tonkin Free School. To what extent was it a typical example of colonial ideas in Vietnam?

Ans.: The ideas behind the Tonkin Free Schools were basically dominated by the westernization of locals by providing them necessary education and to look modern.

This was meant to break the Vietnamese from their tradition of keeping long hair. To bring about a total change, the Vietnamese were told to drop their local practices, study western customs and ideas and speak openly and frankly.

(i) The Tonkin free school was started in 1907 to provide a western style education to Vietnamese with classes on science, hygiene and French.

(ii) People were not only encouraged to learn western ideas and education but also to look modern by adopting western styles such as having a short haircut. In Vietnam the tradition was of keeping the long hairs.

(iii) French education system and their text depicted French as superior and Vietnamese as backward and old fashioned.

(iv) Many Vietnamese teachers and students opposed the text which glorifies French. They did not blindly follow the curriculum and the teachers started modifying the text and criticizing what was stated about Vietnamese.

(v) In 1920s, students started forming various political parties, like the Party of Young Annam, and published several nationalist journals such as the Annamese Student.

(vi) The battle against French colonial education became part of the larger battle against colonialism and for independence.

So, the school was a typical example of colonial ideas as it only glorified the French and justified their colonial rule. It represented Vietnamese as inferior to the French and backward, old fashioned and skilled copyists but not creative.

Q.4 What was Phan Chu Trinh's objective for Vietnam? How were his ideas different from those of Phan Boi Chau?

Ans.: Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh's were great nationalist of Vietnam. Both have same visions of Vietnam's independence, but they differed in thinking to achieve those visions. Both pursued the same goal i.e. liberation of Vietnam from the French rule but with different means. Their differing views are given below:

| Phan Boi Chau | Phan Chu Trinh |
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| (i) He believed that first the foreigners should be driven out of the country and after their independence they could laid about other things. | (i) He supported the western civilization. He also wanted to overthrow the foreign rule but at the same time he was not against the setting up of French legal and educational institutions in Vietnam. |
| (ii) His was in favor of monarchy. He wanted to raise up the Vietnamese to end monarchy in due course of time. | (ii) He was against Phan Boi Chau's monarchy theory. He believed in overthrowing the |

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| <p>(iii) He was greatly influenced by China and accepted a political framework headed by a monarch.</p> <p>(iv) He advocated for the help of the court to resist the French.</p> | <p>monarchy to promote popular rights.</p> <p>(iii) He wished to establish democratic republic in Vietnam. He was deeply influenced by the democratic ideals of the west and also demanded the legal and educational institutions along with the development of agriculture and industries.</p> <p>(iv) He opposed the idea of resisting the French with the help of the court.</p> |
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Discuss

Q.1 With reference to what you have read in this chapter, discuss the influence of China on Vietnam's culture and life.

Ans.: China influenced Vietnam's culture in many ways even before the French conquered Vietnam. Nationalism in Indo-China developed in a colonial environment. Indo-china comprises the modern countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Its early history shows many different groups of people living in this area under the shadow of powerful empire of China. Though Vietnam gained formal independence in 1945, before India, it took 3 decades to attain republic. Even when an independent country was established in what is now northern and central Vietnam, its rulers kept on maintaining the Chinese system of government as well as Chinese culture. In Vietnamese, Chinese was the language of elite. Confucianism, the religion of china, was followed by Vietnamese. Vietnam was well linked to the maritime silk route. The maritime silk route made an important contribution in exchange of goods, people and

ideas. The French found it difficult to dislodge the influence of Chinese culture on Vietnamese.

Q.2 What was the role of religious groups in the development of anti-colonial feeling in Vietnam?

Ans.: Vietnam's religious beliefs were a mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism, and local practices. Confucianism was followed by elite class and peasantries were shaped by the Buddhism and local practices. The French missionaries introduced Christianity and tried to convert Vietnamese to Christianity. This was seen as an interference in the religious beliefs of the Vietnamese. This helped to unite them against a common cause and developed a sense of nationalism.

(a) The Scholars' Revolt:

(i) Started in 1868 and was led by officials at the imperial court against the French domination.

(ii) These officials were angered by the spread of Catholicism and French Power on Vietnamese.

(iii) They led a general uprising in Ngu An and Ha Tien provinces where over a thousand Catholics were killed.

(iv) The movement was crushed by the French but it inspired other patriots to rise up against them.

(b) Hoa Hao Movement:

(i) Another movement called the Hoa Hao movement, started in 1939 in the fertile Mekong delta area by Huynh Phu So.

(ii) It drew on religious ideas popular in anti-French uprising of the nineteenth century. He opposed the sale of child brides, gambling and the use of alcohol and opium.

(iii) The French tried to suppress the movement inspired by Huynh Phu So. They declared him mad. But when in 1941, even the French doctors declared that he was sane, the French authorities exiled him to Laos.

(iv) These movements were of great significance in arousing anti-colonial sentiments in Vietnam.

Q.3 Explain the cause of the US involvement in the war in Vietnam. What effect did this involvement have on life within the US itself?

Ans.: The US got involved in this war in Vietnam because they feared that a communist government would come in power after the national liberation front formed a coalition with Ho Chi Minh government in the north, against the Ngo Dinh Diem's regime.

The following were the causes of the US involvement in the war in Vietnam:

(i) To prevent the spread of communism: The US policy planners got afraid of the victory of the Ho Chi Minh government. Communist

government would be established in other countries in the area. The US could not tolerate the spread of communism and decided to intervene decisively.

(ii) Humiliation: France had to face great humiliation in Vietnam. America, therefore, wanted to crush this country forever in order to save the prestige of the capitalist countries like France.

(iii) Establish democracy: US wanted to establish democracy in Vietnam but North Vietnam was led by communist party so they tried to influence the southern Vietnam. America did not want the unification of South Vietnam gladdened America. But when the heads of the two parts (North Vietnam and South Vietnam) tried to unify them the US could not tolerate. It sent troops and arms in Vietnam to crush its power.

But US into the war proved costly to the Vietnamese as well as the Americans.

Effect of involvements on life within the US

(i) The widespread attack caused huge killing of civilians and armed forces. Several people became critical of the US government for getting involved in a war that they saw as indefensible. American youth highly rejected to participate in war.

(ii) Even though the US had advanced technology and good medical supplies, casualties were high.

(iii) When the youth were drafted for the war, the anger spread. Compulsory service in the armed forces was waived for university graduates. This meant that many of those sent to fight belonged to working-class families.

(iv) Use of advanced technology and weapons increased the expenses of US which led to increment in taxes and public debt. Due to large supply of food to army troops, inflation increased that effected US economy badly.

(v) US was criticized by its political leader, media and other nation for brutal war in Vietnam. For underestimating the power of small country, US had to pay cost by losing the war.

Q.4 Write an evaluation of the Vietnamese war against the US from the point of

(a) A porter on the Ho Chi Minh trail

(b) A woman soldier

Ans.: (a) A porter on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

The evaluation of Vietnamese war from the point of view of a porter on the Ho Chi Minh trail. The war was disastrous for both the countries. The Vietnamese had to suffer a lot but even then they did not gave up and continued the war against US. Ho Chi Minh trail was an important link to understand the real nature of war between Vietnam and the US. As a porter on that trail porters felt proud because it was the matter of great honor. With a very limited resource the Vietnamese could resist against the US forces. This trail was an immense network of footpaths and roads. It was used to transport men and materials from the north to the south. It had also support bases and hospitals. In some parts supplies were transported in trucks but mostly they, the porters, did these jobs. They

used to carry about 25 kilos on their backs or about 70 kilos on their bicycles. The trail was bombed regularly by the US forces in order to disrupt supplies but they were so prompt that they could rebuild the damage very quickly. It was their confidence and devotion to the nation that made them to do so and they could fight such a super power.

(b) A woman soldier.

During US-Vietnam War I Vietnamese woman displayed indomitable courage in US-Vietnam war. They joined the struggle with the men and fought for the country. Their prime duty was not only as a fighter but we also nursed the wounded, constructed underground rooms and tunnels. They did everything with complete devotion for the nation. They were undoubtedly of the view that the operation of the US military forces could not calm down their aspiration and they strongly believed that their victory over US was certain.

Q.5 What was the role of women in the anti-imperial struggle in Vietnam? Compare this with the role of woman in the nationalist struggle in India.

Ans.: Women played a crucial role in the anti-imperial struggle in Vietnam. Women who rebelled against social conventions were idealized and rebel women of the past were likewise celebrated.

(i) Women in as rebels:

Women played a crucial role in the anti-imperial struggle in Vietnam. Women who rebelled against social conventions were idealized and rebel women of the past were likewise celebrated. Women in Vietnam traditionally enjoyed greater equality in comparison to that in China. They had only limited freedom to take decision about their future. They had no public life. But with the growth of nationalist movement the status of women improved. Writers and political thinkers began idealizing women who rebelled against social norms. This rebellion against social

conventions marked the arrival of the new woman in Vietnamese society. They participated in wars with the men for the freedom of their nation. A play was written by the nationalist Phan Boi Chau in 1913 on the lives of the Trung Sisters who had fought against Chinese domination in 39-43 CE. In this play, he depicted these sisters as patriots paintings, plays and novels as representing the strong will and the deep patriotism of the Vietnamese.

(ii) Women as warriors/ fighters:

The new woman was inspired to action by early woman revolutionaries. In the 1960s, women were represented as brave fighters by magazines and journals. They were portrayed as young, brave and dedicated. Nguyen Thi Xuan was reputed to have shot down a jet with just twenty bullets. Trieu Au was a popular figure in nationalist tales.

(iii) Women as workers:

Women were also represented as workers. Many women joined the resistance movement in Vietnam as fighters and warriors when casualties increased in the 1960's. They assisted in nursing wounded soldiers, constructing underground tunnels and fighting the enemy. Interestingly, between 1965 and 1975, 70-80% of the youth working on the Ho Chi Minh trail were women.

(iv) Women in times of peace:

By the 1970s, as peace talks began to get under way and the end of the war seemed near, women were no longer represented as warriors. Now the image of women as worker begins to predominate. They were shown working in agricultural cooperatives, factories and production units, rather than as fighters.

Comparison between the role of women in the anti-imperial struggle in Vietnam and that in the nationalist struggle in India-

In India women like Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Nehru and Kasturba Gandhi were keenly involved in politics but compared to the direct and active participation of Vietnamese women in the anti-imperial struggle, India women did not play a very dynamic role in the nationalist struggle of India against Great Britain. They followed Gandhian ideals of boycotting foreign goods and picketing liquor shops, but mainstream politics was controlled by men only.

Still there are some similarities such as:

- (a) During the launch of the civil Disobedience Movement Indian women participated in it on a large-scale.
- (b) During Gandhiji's salt march, thousands of women came out of their homes to listen to him and to walk with him.
- (c) They participated in protest marches and manufactured salt.
- (d) They boycott foreign cloth and liquor shops. Many women went to jail also.
- (e) They began to see service to the nation as a sacred duty of women.