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The Party v. the People: Anti-China Nationalism in Contemporary Vietnam

This essay examines the recent rise of an anti-China nationalist movement in Vietnam and its antagonistic relationship with the ruling Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP).¹ Since the late 2000s, anti-China sentiments have increasingly been expressed through mass protests. Led by intellectuals and supported mostly by urban youth, this new nationalist movement remains fragmented and fragile. It has neither an organization nor a public leadership. It has launched many online campaigns to gather signatures for petitions that the government regularly ignores. Its most powerful expression thus far has been two dozen street protests over the last six years. The largest protests have involved no more than a few hundred people, and most protests have met heavy-handed crackdown by the government.

Government suppression of popular nationalism in Vietnam may be surprising to many. After all, in the popular image the VCP appears as the exemplar inheritor of Vietnamese patriotism.² Its rise to power and past victories against external interventions are widely believed to have drawn from the tradition of anti-Chinese invasion. The VCP also led a border war with China over Cambodia in the 1980s. If the popular image is true, one has every reason to expect the Vietnamese authorities to welcome the new movement, not suppress it.

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Based on recently available archival materials, I argue that the popular image is misleading. The attitude and policy of the VCP toward nationalism was much more complex than commonly understood. While being genuine patriots, Vietnamese communist leaders frequently condemned nationalism as a bourgeois ideology while viewing national and class interests as being one and the same. In their propaganda, the VCP mobilized both nationalist and internationalist symbols to create popular loyalty to the Party. Since 1991 when its Soviet patron collapsed, the VCP has turned to China for guidance and protection. Hà Nội's close relationship with Beijing out of ideological loyalty and regime survival instincts has naturally put the Party at great odds with widespread anti-China popular sentiments that the new nationalist movement thrives on.

Understanding the historical relationship between the Party and nationalism is essential to deciphering the discourse of the new movement. Under Party leadership since the 1940s, the image of the Vietnamese nation in popular imagination has become mystified by its supposed exceptional beauty and unique people. To channel popular loyalty to the Party, state propaganda has also tied the fate of the nation to socialism and to VCP rule. The new movement has therefore been preoccupied with debunking myths about the Vietnamese nation and with reconstructing modern Vietnamese history freed from the grips of the Party. A few activists have even suggested new concepts of the nation that are not limited to ethnic ties but encompass liberal democratic values.

The body of this essay is divided into three parts. First, I will present the key patterns in the attitude of the VCP toward nationalism. The second part discusses the emergence of the new nationalist movement, its causes, and its key dynamics. Finally, I will examine movement discourse on the nation. The conclusion will speculate about the future of this movement as it confronts the VCP.

Historical Relationship between the Vietnamese Communist Party and Nationalism

Founded in 1930, the VCP has always pursued a double mission: national liberation and socialist revolution. Earlier scholarship views Vietnamese communist leaders as patriots first and communists second. As William

Duiker argues, “communists, like other nationalist groups . . . wanted above all to find a solution to the *national* [italics in the original] problem. . . . Marxism, like democracy or fascism, was a tool in this process.”³ Despite significant variations among individual communist leaders, as a group their attitude and policy toward nationalism were far more complex and involved three discernible general patterns. The first consistent pattern was their repeated denunciation of nationalism as a bourgeois and reactionary ideology. *Thanh Niên* [Youth], a journal edited by Nguyễn Tất Thành (a.k.a. Lý Thụy, Nguyễn Ái Quốc, and Hồ Chí Minh) in southern China in the mid-1920s, dismissed traditional patriotism associated with a sacred “fatherland” as a trick devised by capitalists to fool the proletariat.⁴ Similar statements that denounced nationalism as an ideology appeared in various contexts. While patriotism led Nguyễn Tất Thành to Leninism,⁵ as a new convert to Leninism, he complained in 1922 that:

Ordinary people [in the colonies] have no idea what class struggle is because there is no industry and commerce as well as workers’ organizations there. To indigenous people Bolshevism either means the destruction of everything or the liberation from foreign rule. The first interpretation makes the uneducated and timid masses avoid us. The second interpretation leads them to nationalism. Both are dangerous.⁶

In foreign policy, VCP leaders distinguished between anti-imperialist movements, which they consistently supported, and nationalism, which they frequently denounced. In 1962, for example, Hà Nội sided with China in the Sino-Indian border war, while the Communist Party of India supported the Nehru government and criticized China. Hà Nội thus reproached Indian communists for having “sunken deeply in the bourgeois nationalist mud by colluding with the Indian bourgeoisie to slander a brother communist party.”⁷ In response to the Prague Spring in 1968, a top Vietnamese leader called for vigilance against “all forms of bourgeois nationalism . . . that would isolate our country [from our socialist brothers] and push us into the arms of imperialism.”⁸ In 1981, both Vietnam and the Soviet Union were ostracized by many communist and socialist parties for the former’s occupation of Cambodia and the latter’s of Afghanistan. In an internal document, Vietnamese leaders complained about the “bourgeois and petit bourgeois

nationalism” that existed in the global communist movement. Adherents to that kind of nationalism “distorted Marxism-Leninism [and] joined the bourgeoisie . . . in criticizing the Soviet Union’s helping Afghanistan and Vietnam’s helping Cambodia.”⁹

While they condemned the nationalist ideology, Vietnamese communists did not think of national and class interests in contradictory or mutually exclusive terms. In his 1927 pamphlet, “Đường Kách Mệnh” [Revolutionary Path], Nguyễn Tất Thành wrote that he wanted to launch a revolution that would not only expel the French but also bring power to the masses.¹⁰ In 1936, Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) leaders Hà Huy Tập and Lê Hồng Phong explained to their members: “We believe in internationalism, not nationalism, but in the context of a nation being under two layers of exploitation, we should raise the spirit for national liberation while tying it to the interests of the working masses [–that is, we want our struggle to] appear national on the outside but be internationalist inside.”¹¹ In the same vein, when he advocated rural class struggle in the early 1950s while Vietnam was still fighting France for independence, General Secretary Trường Chinh justified the policy by arguing that:

[n]ational democratic revolutions are [essentially] peasant revolutions. Wars of national liberation are essentially peasant wars . . . Leading peasants to fight feudalism and imperialism is class struggle and national struggle at the same time. It is class struggle within a national struggle and under the appearance of a national struggle.¹²

As the North Vietnamese government implemented the First Five-Year Plan in the late 1950s, Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng declared that “to be patriotic is to build socialism.”¹³ When the United States escalated the war in 1964 to 1965, Trường Chinh argued that war, however long and painful, was necessary for the Vietnamese revolution to move forward. Revolutionary goals had long been set, which were to “win national independence, establish a people’s democracy, then advance to socialism and communism.”¹⁴ After Hà Nội’s victory in 1975, First Secretary Lê Duẩn declared:

Socialism is [now] the immediate goal of the Vietnamese revolution and the inevitable evolutionary path for Vietnamese society, in accordance with the [Marxist] law of development of human society during the transition period

from capitalism to socialism on a global scale . . . Since the birth of our Party, we have always raised the two flags of national independence and socialism. . . . Now that our Fatherland is fully independent, the nation and socialism are one.¹⁵

Note that nationalist goals (independence and unification) were mentioned first and followed by ideological goals (socialism), but the emphasis was really on the latter. It is wrong to deny that Vietnamese communist leaders were patriots, but it would be equally wrong to assume that they thought of socialism simply as an instrument to solve the national problem. Nguyễn Tất Thành emphasized that he wanted a complete revolution that would achieve both goals, not just the national one. In the minds of Hà Huy Tập, Lê Hồng Phong, and Trường Chinh, national liberation was simply the appearance, while class struggle was the heart of the revolution. Phạm Văn Đồng's formula that equated patriotism with building socialism made patriotism serve socialism, not vice versa. In Lê Duẩn's view, socialism was both the means and the end.

The third pattern was that Vietnamese communist leaders made conscious efforts to mobilize both patriotic and internationalist sentiments. North Vietnamese propaganda suggested a mixture of internationalism and nationalism with the former more emphasized than the latter, at least up to the mid-1960s. From 1955 to 1959, for example, the most frequently published authors in North Vietnam were Lenin (forty titles), Stalin (twenty-nine titles), Mao (twelve titles) and Hồ Chí Minh (eleven titles).¹⁶ One out of every hundred copies of printed books was a work by Lenin.¹⁷

An examination of the 1956 *First-Grade Reader* [*Tập Đọc Lớp Một*], a textbook that taught kids how to read, shows that eighty-four of 328 lessons (25.6 percent) had political contents.¹⁸ Among those eighty-four lessons, 32 percent taught students about communist military heroes, 19 percent about "Uncle Hồ," 10 percent about revolutionary and socialist life, 7 percent each about South Vietnam, socialist brother-countries (one about young Lenin), and peasants' and workers' lives. Only two out of 328 lessons were focused on general patriotism and one on a historical hero (Trần Quốc Toàn), compared to two lessons on land reform. The contents of this textbook suggest that Vietnamese students were taught less about patriotism linking to Vietnamese history than about socialism with its international connections.

Following the Sino-Soviet split and especially after American direct intervention, Vietnamese communists placed greater emphasis on patriotic mobilization. Significant differences between the 1956 and the 1972 editions of the *Reader* demonstrate this.¹⁹ In the 1972 version, sixty-nine of 236 lessons (29 percent) had political contents; 55 percent of those sixty-nine lessons were about Communist military heroes, 14.5 percent about “Uncle Hồ,” 11.6 percent about unification or South Vietnam, 10 percent about revolutionary and socialist life, and three percent about “socialist brothers.” The higher percentage of lessons with political contents reflected a more politicized society due to the war. The higher number of lessons about communist heroes was due to the protracted war that had produced a longer list of heroes. The wars these heroes and heroines died for were framed as a struggle for both patriotic and internationalist goals. Significantly, the lessons about unification were now three times more than those about socialist brothers. At the same time, the number of lessons on general patriotism (two) and historical heroes (one) remained the same.

With massive and systematic efforts devoted to propaganda,²⁰ Hà Nội leaders skillfully molded public imagination in such a way that the ethnically-based Vietnamese nation became totally identified with the VCP and its mission to battle imperialism and build socialism together with the Soviet bloc. In the minds of many North Vietnamese at the time, the fate of the nation rested with communism and Party leadership. This fact resonates in the diaries of young soldiers from North Vietnam who fought and died in the South. While wishing for her country’s independence, Đặng Thùy Trâm, in her posthumously published diary, often wrote about the ideals of being a communist serving the Party and the working class.²¹ Caring for wounded communist soldiers and witnessing their excruciating pains, the 26-year-old medical doctor wrote: “My comrades, in the future if [we live to] enjoy the fruits of socialism, [let’s] . . . not forget the sacrifices in blood people have made for [our] common cause, not forget the reason why our lives are so difficult today is because the devils are still occupying our country.”²² In her thoughts, the war was in the true interest of her country whose imagined future could not be anything but socialism.

After unification, the Party continued to mobilize patriotic sentiments—this time under the “constructing socialism and defending the socialist

fatherland” banner. Soon Vietnam was back at war with Cambodia and China in 1978-1979. Again, Vietnamese leaders framed these two wars in terms of national independence and ideological principles:

Until today some Westerners still maintain that [the Sino-Vietnamese conflict] was “a war between communist countries,” [and that] it is evidence that “conflict over national interests overshadows ideological unity among socialist countries.” That’s not true! . . . the Sino-Vietnamese war in February 1979 was not a conflict among communists, but essentially a fierce struggle between national independence and socialism on the one hand and aggression, expansionism, and chauvinism on the other, between Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and Maoism on the other.²³

However, grave economic problems and the late 1980s collapse of the Soviet bloc outweighed the threat posed by China and Cambodia. In response, the Party abandoned central planning and opened up the economy for Western trade and investment. Vietnam also normalized relations with the U.S. and joined many international and regional organizations. Notwithstanding the shift to a market economy, Hà Nội rejected any significant political reforms. It restored relations with Beijing and continued to pledge its loyalty to socialism.²⁴ In public, Hà Nội pledged to be friends of all countries even as Vietnamese leaders still evaluated foreign relations through an ideological lens. At the special midterm Party Congress in 1994, the VCP’s politburo issued the following remarks:

In international relations, [our policy] “to be friends of all nations in the world community” is designed to take advantage of shared interests . . . with other nations . . . within the framework of “collaborating while struggling” . . . In order to build socialism and defend our fatherland, we place friends in different categories, with some closer than others. By their nature, our long-term allies are the socialist countries, the communist and worker parties, and movements for national independence and revolutionary/progressive causes. We affirm solidarity and mutual support with those forces and movements through clever and adaptive [*linh hoạt*] measures that are suitable to objective conditions and to our own and our friends’ subjective capacity.²⁵

In this spirit, victories against France and America continue to be proudly commemorated while the Party seeks to erase the 1979-1989 Sino-Vietnamese conflict from public memory.²⁶

By the early 2000s, market reforms brought Vietnam not only significant economic growth but also deepened social inequality, religious tension, and ethnic unrest. Labor strikes and farmer protests against land grabbing by state officials intensified. In response, VCP leaders formulated a new “strategic line” aimed at building “great national solidarity [*đại đoàn kết dân tộc*] based on the alliance of workers, peasants, and the intelligentsia under the leadership of the Party.”²⁷ This new line aimed to counter certain pernicious “hostile forces” (read: Western powers) that “use ‘democracy, human rights,’ ethnicity, and religion to divide the Party, the State, and the people.”²⁸ It appears that the leadership still hoped that the people would continue to identify the nation with the Party. That hope would soon be put to test by three important events during 2005-2006 discussed in the next section. These events foreshadowed the emergence in 2007 of the first ever anti-China demonstrations in communist Vietnam.

The thoughts and practices of Vietnamese communist leaders thus followed complex but identifiable patterns. They heaped scorn on nationalism as a bourgeois ideology and viewed national and class interests as one and the same. They sought to mobilize patriotic and nationalist sentiments, but even during times when such sentiments were emphasized they did not neglect the internationalist dimensions of the revolution. Significantly, Vietnam was not distinct from other communist states in these aspects. Recent studies based on new archival sources have dispelled the myth that nationalism was suppressed in the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe.²⁹

The VCP’s complex relationship with nationalism helps explain the politics of nationalism in Vietnam today. On the one hand, the Party’s consistent ideological loyalty and its dependence on China for support since the 1990s suggest the reason why it is hostile toward the anti-China nationalist movement. This movement threatens Hà Nội’s cozy relationship with Beijing and challenges the Marxist-Leninist ideology on which that relationship in part is based.³⁰ On the other hand, the Party’s success in mobilizing patriotism popularized many myths and provided it with significant nationalist credentials. As will be seen, the discourse of the movement has largely focused on questioning those myths and credentials.

The Birth of a Spontaneous Nationalist Movement

The birth of the new movement can be traced to three events that took place during 2005-2006. These events did not cause the movement but together they signaled the arrival of a nascent political civil society with broad geographical spread and social links that challenge the VCP on a wide range of issues.³¹

In January 2005, Chinese Coast Guards killed nine Vietnamese fishermen and arrested several others in the Gulf of Tonkin. Not since 1988, when Chinese warships sank Vietnamese ships and seized several of the Spratly Islands, had such bloodshed occurred. Yet the Vietnamese government remained silent and issued a diplomatic complaint only six days later, after a local newspaper had leaked the news. This event sparked many anti-China protests by the Vietnamese diaspora, but what was really unprecedented was the move by Vietnamese graduate students studying abroad to form a group to condemn China's "brutalities" and express sympathy with their "compatriots." This group raised donations for victims' families, collected signatures for letters to be sent to Chinese embassies worldwide, and founded a website to publish relevant information and analyses. Their manifesto highlighted "respect for humanity" and denounced "violence," but made clear that the group was not interested in promoting revenge or Vietnamese hatred against Chinese.³²

The second critical event was the founding of the "8406 bloc" in April 2006 by a group of 118 people that included Catholic priests and other religious leaders, teachers, doctors, writers, other professionals, and several retired military officers.³³ Among the leaders of this bloc was Father Tadeo Nguyễn Văn Lý, who had been in and out of prison in the previous two decades for anti-government activities. The bloc denounced communism and called for multi-party democracy and the protection of basic freedoms and human rights in Vietnam. Never before had such a large number of people from across all three regions of Vietnam gathered for such a venture. Also unprecedented was the fact that the group existed for several months before its leaders were arrested. The government moved cautiously in this case because it feared international sanctions. So much was at stake as Vietnam would play host to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting later in the year and Vietnam's application to join the World Trade Organization was being negotiated.

The third event was the vigorous, partly public debate leading to the VCP's Tenth National Congress held in April 2006. Not since the end of the 1980s had such a debate occurred. Over several months in late 2005 and early 2006, pro-reform writers inside and outside Vietnam battled Party ideologues over the agenda of the Congress in major Vietnamese presses and online venues. Ideologues such as former Party General Secretary Đỗ Mười and Politburo member Nguyễn Đức Bình defended socialism and argued that the nation's future was still tied to it.³⁴ Nguyễn Đức Bình was particularly against the idea that Party members would be allowed to engage in commercial pursuits and entrepreneurial activities because that meant exploitation. Their opponents, by contrast, called on the Party to take bolder steps in economic and political reforms. Some argued that the Party should abandon Marxism-Leninism and place "national interests" above ideological principles. Others advocated more effective laws, checks and balances in the political system, intellectual and press freedom, respect for international norms of human rights and democracy, and even toleration of opposition parties.³⁵

While Chinese brutalities and popular discontent posed serious challenges to the VCP, the boom in social media in the mid-2000s offered activists a new tool for horizontal mobilization.³⁶ Prior to 2005, those who lived in Vietnam participated frequently in foreign-based online political forums such as *talawas.org* (founded in 2001, closed in 2010), *danchimviet.org* (established 2003), and *ykien.net* (date founded and closed unknown). An influential domestic site was *x-café.org* (from which *danluan.org* would later be spun off). When Yahoo offered *Yahoo! 360°* service in early 2005, many Vietnamese opened their personal blogs and some, such as those of Anh Ba Sàm, Huy Đức, Trương Duy Nhất, and Nguyễn Quang Lập, quickly became influential.³⁷

Early online activities facilitated mobilization for the first anti-China protests within Vietnam, which occurred in late 2007 and early 2008 in both Hà Nội and Hồ Chí Minh City with the participation of many bloggers. The direct cause for the protests was the Chinese government's announcement about the creation of a new district out of the Paracels and Spratlys. In summer 2008, when the Beijing Olympic torch relay passed through Hồ Chí Minh City, another anti-China protest briefly took place. On both

occasions, Vietnamese authorities responded swiftly with force. Bloggers *Điêu Cày* (Nguyễn Văn Hải) and Anh Ba Saigon (Phan Thanh Hải), who founded the Club of Free Journalists in September 2007 and who led the first demonstrations, were arrested along with others. Anh Ba Saigon was released in September 2013 and *Điêu Cày* in October 2014.

Besides violent crackdowns, the government is known to have set up firewalls and employed tens of thousands of security personnel to monitor online communication, hack into blogs and websites, and defend the government in spontaneous online discussions.³⁸ Yet government suppression failed to stem the growth of the movement. In summer 2011, hundreds of protesters marched in Hà Nội for eleven Sundays. They were reacting to the incident involving the cutting of seismic cables of Vietnamese ships by Chinese boats in areas claimed by Vietnam. The protests attracted people from many social strata and across various age groups. Many former government officials and well-known writers and scholars also joined. All except the first protest were confronted by a large security force, which threatened protesters' families, encircled their houses on Sundays to prevent them from leaving, and arrested them on site. Many protesters were severely beaten, fired, expelled from school or from their apartments, and placed under police investigation or detention for weeks. *Bùi Thị Minh Hằng*, one of the most vocal, was singled out to be sent to a detention center for prostitutes for nearly one year. Still, such violence did not prevent demonstrations in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

A notable development for the movement was the birth of the "bauxite group" as an influential voice in the rapidly flourishing virtual networks of the Vietnamese educated public. In 2009, when it was reported that Chinese companies had been given licenses to exploit mineral and forest resources in many strategic locations in Vietnam, three intellectuals founded *boxitvn.net*, which published critical analyses of state-sponsored bauxite mining projects and collected thousands of signatures for a petition against those projects.³⁹ The bauxite group grew due in part to support from an influential group of public intellectuals and former technocrats such as *Hoàng Tụy*, *Chu Hào*, *Nguyễn Trọng Vĩnh*, *Nguyễn Ngọc*, and *Nguyễn Quang A*. Some members of this group are retired high-ranking officials who had served as cabinet members or as advisors to former Prime Ministers *Võ Văn Kiệt* and *Phan*

Văn Khải. They are public intellectuals mostly loyal to the Party who have benefitted from market reforms and who no longer depend on the government for a living. However, Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng turned down their service when he succeeded Phan Văn Khải. This group reacted by establishing in 2007 the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), a quasi-private think tank under whose name they issued many analyses and comments critical of Nguyễn Tấn Dũng's policies. The 2009 issuance of Decree no. 97 banning all research institutions from making public criticisms of government policy forced IDS to dissolve or face legal consequences.

Since then, the website has published numerous critical analyses of government policies and submitted petitions on a wide range of issues, including policies toward China, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, nuclear power and high-speed rail projects, human rights, constitutional reform, and legal restrictions on the press and Internet freedom. Some petitions involved prominent political prisoners such as Cù Huy Hà Vũ and Nguyễn Phương Uyên. Others were on behalf of farmers like Đoàn Văn Vươn who was arrested for defending his land against government requisition. The group's petition on the Văn Giang land requisition case in May 2012 gathered more than three thousand signatures, about half of which appear to be from farmers in Văn Giang.⁴⁰

Besides disaffected intellectuals, another active group includes marginalized veterans and former student leaders of the anti-American movement in South Vietnam. Disaffection runs even deeper in this group, whose sense of guilt and betrayal results from their observation of a stark contrast between the ideals they fought for and the realities of a corrupt and oppressive regime that, in their view, kowtows to China.⁴¹ Still another group includes journalists and writers, whether independent or formerly affiliated with the state-owned media. These journalists have done well in a market economy that values their talents. As a result, many have abandoned their jobs in the state-run media and turned to the blogosphere to express dissatisfaction with the current regime.⁴²

From established scholars to veterans to young professionals, becoming an activist has been a gradual process and unexpected event. Many started out with general concerns about some issues and almost accidentally came into contact with like-minded people.⁴³ For scholars and veterans, existing

networks and their own reputation drew them into action despite initial reluctance.⁴⁴ The motives are more spontaneous and idealistic among youths. Many were angered by the killing of Vietnamese fishermen and acted out of their conscience.⁴⁵

No doubt the presence of diverse groups and political tendencies has brought tension within the movement over personalities, strategies, and attitudes. For example, Bùi Thị Minh Hằng's nomination in 2012 as "woman of the year" for her brave participation in the anti-China protests prompted debates. Critics argued that her use of vulgar language when addressing the security officers who arrested her should disqualify her from being bestowed such a title.⁴⁶ Tension has also emerged between those who advocate reforms and those who do not believe in the Party's ability to implement reform and thus prefer regime change.⁴⁷ Former student leaders from South Vietnam, such as Lê Hiếu Đằng and Tiêu Dao Bảo Cự, have been attacked by those who wanted them to publicly apologize for their "mistakes" in helping communists win the civil war.

Although the new nationalist movement in Vietnam is young, it has embraced a broad agenda that links national independence to economic, social, and political reforms. That agenda reflects the deep and complex problems facing Vietnam after two decades of market reform without corresponding political reform. As a result, Vietnam now lacks effective political institutions to sustain economic growth, while powerful special interests benefitting from the status quo have joined forces to block necessary political reforms.⁴⁸ Sociologically, the emergence of the bauxite group suggests that market reform has created a more independent intelligentsia who, paradoxically, are increasingly marginalized by the regime. This intelligentsia is joining forces with former enemies and long marginalized "fellow travelers" of the VCP in promoting political change. These are the currents that powered the nationalist movement.

The perceived threat from China no doubt ignited the protests, but in addition to triggering age-old Vietnamese patriotism as commonly interpreted,⁴⁹ those acts also exposed the VCP's vulnerabilities, particularly its ideological dependence on China and its program of "market reform with socialist orientations." Market socialism has helped the VCP retain power and privileges following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. At the same time,

that formula compels the Party to remain close to China for ideological support. Market socialism has also made it difficult for Vietnam to quickly and deeply integrate its economy into a global economy dominated by the capitalist West.⁵⁰ As the Chinese economy rose to become the world's second largest economy, the much weaker and smaller Vietnamese economy has unsurprisingly been pulled into China's orbit.⁵¹ As will be seen below, protesters were enraged not only by Chinese acts in the South China Sea but also by the VCP's dependence on China, which they saw as having disastrous consequences for Vietnam's national interests.

Movement Discourse

Interacting closely with anti-China street protests are massive online traffic in comments and debates. In the virtual discourses about the nation, activists strive primarily to debunk myths about the Vietnamese nation and to rescue its history from the Party's grip. At stake are not only the Party's nationalist credentials on which its legitimacy rests but also the quest for new visions of the nation.

DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT THE NATION

Confronted by the colonized status of their nation, many Vietnamese nationalists in the early twentieth century sought to construct a glorious precolonial past in which their nation had enjoyed great wealth and freedom. In the process, they helped create or popularize national myths about Vietnam's *exceptional* beauty and wealth and certain *unique* qualities of Vietnamese such as diligence and heroism. Vietnamese communists have also contributed to the myth-making enterprise in their own way. Statements such as "our country is rich and beautiful; our people are heroic" and "our country has golden forests and silvery seas" have been taught to children of many generations and have become clichés.⁵² During the civil war, the VCP expended considerable resources to construct myths of the Hùng kings as the founder of the Vietnamese nation today.⁵³ Stories of "heroic" struggles against and "glorious" victories over foreign invaders saturated textbooks and propaganda. Of course, Party leaders never failed to stress that, while the Vietnamese nation was built on an ethnic base, the mandate had been passed to the VCP and that socialism was now the chosen path for Vietnam.⁵⁴

The mythical nation built by nationalists and communists of Hồ Chí Minh's generation has been viciously attacked in the last decade. These attacks all share a deeply pessimistic view of Vietnam in the past and at present. As novelist Phạm Thị Hoài—founder and editor of *talawas* who grew up in North Vietnam during the war but now lives permanently in Germany—writes:

After at least two thousand years of existence as a community, a people, a culture and a nation of Vietnam . . . we are still one of the poorest and most backward countries in the world. But the problem is not only poverty and backwardness, because that's not as frightening to me [as the following two things]. The first is that [our country] has never been anything but poor and backward. It was like that when I was born. It was like that when my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were born. . . . Greece is now the poorest country in Europe, but that has not always been the case. Russia is now beset with problems, but that has not always been the case either. Only Vietnam. . . . The second is that poverty and backwardness are a cause for sadness but not despair. . . . [What frightens me is that] Vietnamese society [today] is [only] a fragmented, inorganic, and shifting collection of insecure and confused individuals.⁵⁵

Phạm Thị Hoài's article aims to critique the Vietnamese intelligentsia whom she blames for the sorry state of the nation. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, who is over twenty years older than Phạm Thị Hoài and has lived in France since 1980 after serving as a banking official under the Republic of Vietnam and four years in prison after the war, offers the most significant and sophisticated reflection on the Vietnamese nation in his 600-page book, *The Fatherland Repents*. Founder of the Thông Luận group and active advocate of democracy in Vietnam, Nguyễn Gia Kiểng feels despondent about the Vietnamese nation:

I was born in the midst of World War II, when [our] country was still under foreign rule . . . A small number of French people who had lost their own country [to Germany] were still able to maintain an oppressive regime. They were eventually overthrown, not by Vietnamese but by the Japanese army. . . . When I am writing this book, the country's conditions are the same as when I was born. A small group of people who believe in a completely bankrupt ideology and who take as their model and patron a regime that has collapsed

are still able to keep their brutal control and block the future path of the nation without much opposition. I still can't be proud of being a Vietnamese.⁵⁶

Most of Nguyễn Gia Kiểng's wide-ranging book aims to destroy some of the most common myths that many Vietnamese believe about their nation. He tries to prove that Vietnam is not rich in natural resources by comparing ore deposits between Vietnam and other countries of the same size. According to him, Vietnamese people may be serious students but lack imagination and creative thinking. Vietnamese are not particularly more intelligent than people from other nations, but often lack modesty and collaborative spirit. He reviews historical sources to show that his childhood hero and perhaps the most revered historical Vietnamese figure Nguyễn Huệ was a brute bandit with no significant military talent or visionary leadership. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng argues that Vietnam was able to avoid annexation by China because of the physical barriers between the two countries, not the uniquely strong heroism or patriotism of the Vietnamese. "If Vietnamese culture today differs at all from Chinese culture," he asserts, "it is because the Vietnamese have tried but not been able to imitate everything."⁵⁷ While seeing patriotism as offering the only way out for Vietnam, he marshals numerous anecdotes and historical evidence to show that Vietnamese have historically lacked strong national pride and a sense of patriotism.

Inside Vietnam, Phạm Thị Hoài and Nguyễn Gia Kiểng are joined by Vương Trí Nhàn, a prominent cultural and literary critic of Nguyễn Gia Kiểng's generation. Vương Trí Nhàn points out that the Vietnamese as a people neither understand their history nor bother to think about who they are and where they come from. They tend to be self-centered and lack modesty despite their low level of development.⁵⁸ Vương Trí Nhàn calls the Vietnamese nation "a giant formless mass."⁵⁹ By this he means that for Vietnamese, emotions rather than rational thinking controls their behavior. This makes them act spontaneously or instinctively according to their habits as well as in response to immediate circumstances.

Interestingly, for over a year Vương Trí Nhàn collected and published negative comments about the general character of Vietnamese people; these comments mostly came from Vietnamese nationalists and intellectuals of the early twentieth century, such as Phan Bội Châu and Phan Châu Trinh.⁶⁰

Vương Trí Nhàn shows no awareness of the ironical parallels between the situation in Vietnam today and what it was a century ago. He simply hopes to avoid criticism by speaking through the mouths of revered historical figures.⁶¹ Still, his writings became so popular and controversial that one of the largest newspapers, *Tiền Phong* [Pioneer], opened a special daily column to publish comments from readers on the “bad habits and ugly customs of the Vietnamese.”⁶²

RECONSTRUCTING NATIONAL HISTORY AND IDENTITY
INDEPENDENT OF THE PARTY

Vietnamese writers and activists not only try to debunk national myths but also labor to reconstruct national history independent of the VCP. Their arguments reflect the cleavage within the VCP and between the VCP and society. Within the VCP, many retired officials who no longer believe in communism seek to challenge their conservative comrades who still uphold ideological principles for whatever reasons. For example, Tống Văn Công, former editor of the newspaper *Lao Động* [Labor], argues that Hồ Chí Minh used socialism merely as a tool to achieve Vietnam’s national independence and that Hồ Chí Minh was a genuine democrat.⁶³ Tống Văn Công cites many foreign scholars and numerous statements by Hồ Chí Minh during his career, such as: “If the country is independent but the people don’t enjoy freedom and happiness, then that independence does not mean anything.” But why was Hồ Chí Minh’s democratic view, if indeed genuine, never realized in communist Vietnam? The reasons were, Tống Văn Công argues, that “imperialist powers” forced Hồ Chí Minh to lean on the Soviet camp,” and that “the Soviet model was not able to accommodate republican ideas about individual freedom.”

By appealing to the founder of Vietnamese communism and to Hồ Chí Minh’s ostensibly republican ideas, Tống Văn Công reminds the Party that it has not fulfilled its promise of national independence which must include not only sovereignty but also democracy. The notion that the Party still owes the nation a promise is also expressed by the late Lê Hiếu Đằng, a former leader of the student movement in South Vietnam during the civil war. In an emotional article written before his death, Lê Hiếu Đằng recounts how he became a member of the VCP in 1966:

Patriotism and national pride urged [Vietnamese] people to take part in the August revolution [in 1945] and in the resistance [against France]. [In the 1960s] my friends and I were motivated by similar feelings: love of our country and desire to resist foreign invasion to achieve independence, freedom, and democracy for our Fatherland, and to build a better society.⁶⁴

Yet, such hopes were betrayed by the Party in the postwar period, as Lê Hiếu Đằng describes:

For a long time the Party and the government imposed a central planning system, copying the Soviet and Chinese model [that was] against natural laws. [This made] the people cry in hunger. Anti-capitalist campaigns code-named X1 and X2 destroyed so many families and forced them to leave the country. Many families died during the trip across the ocean, including that of the journalist Trần Triệu Luật who had joined the *maquis* with me and [was killed] on October 11, 1968. . . . [During their trips many women] were raped in front of their husbands and children. All those sufferings were undeniably the crimes of the Party and the Vietnamese government.⁶⁵

To Lê Hiếu Đằng, the Party owes the nation not only democracy but also prosperity to those who fought for it and an admission of its mistaken policies in the postwar period.

In contrast to its enormous debt to the nation, the Party owes its old Chinese comrades nothing. This argument has been made in response to party ideologues who frequently call on Vietnamese to remember China's "generous aid" to North Vietnam during the civil war. According to party propaganda, China may have violated Vietnam's territorial waters but it remains a reliable ideological comrade.⁶⁶ In contrast to Tổng Văn Công, who wants to play up the patriotic roots of the VCP, Vũ Cao Đàm, a retired professor who is a former student in China and who lived in North Vietnam during the war, argues that after around 1950 the VCP became openly committed to socialism, which he believes turned the war for independence into an ideological war. This led to the division of the nation into two camps, with the North importing the "inhumane" model of rural and capitalist reform from the socialist camp.⁶⁷ During the civil war that ensued, Vũ Cao Đàm claims that North Vietnamese indeed viewed their country as an outpost of the socialist camp and were truly fighting in the interest of the camp, including China. According to him, the belief that "the war was

fought not only for thirty million Vietnamese but also for three billion people worldwide”⁶⁸ “kindled a noble pride [in the minds of his] whole generation [who thought that their] sacrifices were to achieve the goal of the international communist movement to liberate mankind.”⁶⁹ Vũ Cao Đàm cites many statements by Chinese leaders at the time who thanked Vietnamese communists for their vanguard role in protecting China and the revolutionary camp. Because communist Vietnam fought the US so that China could enjoy peace, Vũ Cao Đàm declares that Vietnam owes China nothing.

The group of former officials that include Tống Văn Công, Lê Hiếu Đằng, Vũ Cao Đàm, and many others represents the fault line *within* the VCP. This line pits them against communist ideologues and incumbent officials who favor the status quo. The two groups promote two different versions of history. To ideologues and incumbents, the modern Vietnamese nation owes the Party its liberation and its fate must remain tied to socialism, which mandates continuing solidarity with China. This official version of history is now challenged by another version which separates the nation from the Party and which claims that the Party still owes the nation a huge debt.

But another fault line exists between the VCP as an entity and the broader society represented by ex-, non-, and anti-communist intellectuals. These activists and intellectuals go much further than the retired officials in denouncing the Party for its “crimes against the nation.” Such intellectuals have always existed in communist Vietnam but the new voices are having greater echoes now for being part of a broad movement. Of the ex-communists, Phạm Đình Trọng, a retired colonel and writer of Tống Văn Công’s generation who volunteered to fight in the South as a young man, is perhaps the most prominent contributor to this debate. In a recent lengthy essay, Phạm Đình Trọng reviews the history of the Party since 1930 and passionately makes the case that the Party has always sacrificed national interests for its own interests. His conclusion quoted below is a ringing indictment of the crimes committed by the VCP against the nation:

[The Party] relied on a class to oppress the nation; launched class struggles that divided and harmed the nation; used inherited national treasures to exchange for class and ideological alliances as evidenced in the division of the country and the nation into two opposing halves which slaughtered each

other. . . . And still countless other pieces of evidence demonstrate that the history of the VCP is a history in which enormous interests of the Vietnamese nation were sacrificed for the sake of the Party's own narrow interests.⁷⁰

Interestingly, Phạm Đình Trọng has not abandoned his respect for Hồ Chí Minh.⁷¹ For the brothers Huỳnh Nhật Hải and Huỳnh Nhật Tấn, who were leaders of the student movement in the South during the 1960s and who abandoned their top positions in Lâm Đồng province and left the Party in the late 1980s, Hồ Chí Minh must share the blame with the Party. Witnessing the “lack of freedom and the oppressed and tormented life of intellectuals and the people in South Vietnam after the [communist] victory of April 30, 1975,” they concluded that the conditions then “simply replicated what happened in North Vietnam after the Điện Biên Phủ victory in 1954 when Hồ Chí Minh was still in command.” As Huỳnh Nhật Tấn confided in a recent interview:

I once asked myself what Hồ Chí Minh's motives were. Given what happened while he was still alive, I think his primary goal was political power. He took the goals of national independence or liberty and democracy for the Vietnamese nation lightly. Those noble goals were simply the slogans for the VCP to attract people and intellectuals to help the Party take power. In reality the government under Hồ Chí Minh acted against those goals. . . . It is possible to say that Hồ Chí Minh ended French rule while allowing it to be dependent on and controlled by communist China.⁷²

If the analyses by ex-communists are emotional and sometimes contradictory due to their inability to completely disown their past, for non-communists and anti-communists the same conclusions are reached with greater clarity and determination. An example is found in the article “Dissecting the [Party's] strategems” by Phạm Hồng Sơn, a medical doctor born in the late 1960s who was imprisoned for four years for his democratic views. Phạm Hồng Sơn analyzes the history of the VCP and cites numerous party documents to argue that the Party “has seized and monopolized power by manipulating [*thao túng*] the slogan against foreign invasion.”⁷³ As he concludes:

Since the Eighth Central Committee Plenum in May 1941 in Pắc Bó with the decision to establish Việt Minh to gather [anticolonial] forces, the

Party . . . has always raised the slogan of struggle against foreign invasion. Until today the Party has never dropped that flag but always tied the nation's famous struggles against foreign invasion to the leadership of the Party. Moreover, the Party assumes the authority to define which country in the world is a "foreign invader" . . . or "precious friend" . . . regardless of whether that foreign country is friendly, useful, hostile, or inimical to national survival and territorial integrity. . . . The historical development of the VCP since 1941 shows that, externally the Party has been quite flexible in its tactics, including making concessions, turning foreign enemies into friends or vice versa. But since the Party took power, it has never shown any thoughts of collaboration or made compromises in dealing with other Vietnamese who hold different political views.

Taking the same approach as Phạm Hồng Sơn in meticulously citing historical documents, Trần Trung Đạo dwells on two events that, according to him, unambiguously demonstrate Vietnam's dependence on China: Phạm Văn Đồng's diplomatic note to Zhou Enlai in 1958 and the meeting in Chengdu in 1990 between Vietnamese and Chinese leaders. In the 1958 note, Đồng essentially concurred with China's claims in the South China Sea.⁷⁴ At the 1990 meeting, Vietnamese leaders offered to create an alliance with China to defend socialism.⁷⁵ Trần Trung Đạo, who left Vietnam by boat in 1981 and who is now a US-based poet and writer, writes with particular acuity and verve:

Half a century ago, the Politburo and the Central Committee of the VCP dreamt of an international proletarian paradise in which people with Chinese or Vietnamese nationality were not much different. [They sincerely believed that] China took the Paracels only to hold those islands for Vietnam, and that was better than letting the Americans occupy them. This sounds funny today but it is the truth. The VCP is deeply indebted to the Chinese Communist Party. . . . To excavate the 1958 note by Phạm Văn Đồng [today] is for the young generation to see the real face behind the mask of "national liberation" of the VCP leadership. The Party has kept quiet about [the note] not because it cannot think of solutions such as those I have proposed above, but because the note is a symbol for the nationless [*vong bản*] belief of a generation of communist leaders who are now idolized in Vietnam. . . . The Party dares not to publicly disown the note because doing so would amount to admitting its idiocy [*u mê*] and its traitorous, anti-nation nature.⁷⁶

As Hồ Chí Minh and Phạm Văn Đồng go down in the new nationalist history as disloyal and even traitorous to the nation, Phan Châu Trinh is rehabilitated for his conception of the nation not simply as an ethnic community but also as an enlightened and democratic one. Long dismissed by communist historians for not being revolutionary enough, Phan Châu Trinh now enjoys great admiration among writers and activists as being much more far-sighted than Hồ Chí Minh. Mai Thái Lĩnh, a former deputy mayor of Đà Lạt who has contributed the most to reintroducing Phan Châu Trinh's ideas to contemporary readers, argues that Phan Châu Trinh preferred a nation that opened up to the world to one that was insular.⁷⁷ Phan Châu Trinh also supported socialism but rejected communism.

Phan Châu Trinh's conception is now widely accepted by those at the forefront of the movement even though they express it in slightly different ways. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, for example, defines the nation as “a shared space for people who jointly endeavor to bring prosperity and pride to all.”⁷⁸ For people to be prosperous and proud of their nation, respect for human rights and democracy—“mankind's general values”—are necessary. For Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, the ethnic core is important but not adequate for a nation to survive in the twenty-first century; continuing survival requires it to accept the values of the global community.

A similar view is found among Vietnamese from different backgrounds. An example is Anh Ba Sàm (pseudonym of Nguyễn Hữu Vinh), son of a former Vietnamese ambassador to the Soviet Union and once a member of the public security apparatus. In the manifesto of his popular *basam.info*, Ba Sàm declares that his blog aims to “break the shackles of slavery” [*phá vỡ vòng nô lệ*].⁷⁹ Citing Phan Châu Trinh's teaching that a people would forever be enslaved if their minds remained uneducated, Ba Sàm explains that, by “slavery,” Phan Châu Trinh meant not just a nation being enslaved by foreign countries but also a government enslaved by its own ignorance and a people enslaved by an oppressive government.⁸⁰ Besides self-rule, democracy and enlightenment also constitute Ba Sàm's concept of an ideal nation.

A more radical concept of the nation is found in Phạm Hồng Sơn's writings. In thinking about a basis for solidarity which is necessary for collective action, Phạm Hồng Sơn dismisses patriotism as being too narrow and susceptible to manipulation: “Not only is patriotism limited to people

within certain borders but evil forces may also manipulate patriotism [for evil purposes].” The best foundation for solidarity to Phạm Hồng Sơn is not patriotism but respect for human dignity or human rights:

[H]uman dignity cannot be separated from basic human rights, including the freedom of thought, freedom of speech, [and] the freedom to publish. . . . If human rights serve as the basis of solidarity, such solidarity can bring people out of the narrow realm of friends, families, parties, and nations into a vast and harmonious world.⁸¹

Demystifying the nation and reconstructing national history have preoccupied most spokespeople of the new nationalist movement because they must confront decades of state-led nationalism that has bound the nation to the Party. To win over skeptics, activists must dispel the myths and distorted history long spun by Party propagandists. For activists like Tống Văn Công, Lê Hiếu Đằng, and Phạm Đình Trọng, whose lifelong careers were built inside the Party, separating the nation from the Party is as much a personal struggle as it is a civic act.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the new nationalist movement in Vietnam, a recent and still fragile phenomenon that has survived government suppression so far. Despite the lopsided struggle against a powerful police state,⁸² movement participants have generated a vibrant discourse that seeks to demystify the nation, reconstruct its history autonomous from the Party, and propose new concepts of the Vietnamese nation.

The politics of nationalism reflects deep grievances in contemporary Vietnamese society that result from the particular mixture of market reform and authoritarian politics. Market reforms have created independent intellectuals and professionals while authoritarian politics marginalizes them. The “market socialism” Vietnam has followed for two decades is now reaching a bottleneck where fundamental reforms of the political system are required to sustain growth but powerful interests are blocking such reforms. In addition, market socialism has tied Vietnam to China politically and economically. Vietnam’s increasing dependence on China at a time when China acts aggressively in contested territories places the dilemma of

national survival squarely in front of various disaffected Vietnamese groups and launches them on a quest to search for a new national identity.

Even though only a few hundred participants have written blogs and joined street protests, popular blogs that carry the nationalist movement in the virtual world have attracted perhaps a hundred thousand regular readers.⁸³ The movement is fostering a new, if only mostly virtually expressed, consensus across a broad spectrum of Vietnamese inside and outside Vietnam for fundamental reforms, especially political reforms. The movement is reconciling Vietnamese who were once ideological enemies but are now uniting in the face of an aggressive China and a Vietnamese government perceived as meek and corrupt. At the same time, the politics of nationalism stands to divide the communist party into those who are either ideologically committed or benefitting from the status quo, and those who want change for the sake of the nation. As the VCP seeks to maintain good relations with China, it is gambling away its remaining nationalist credentials and is bound to confront greater internal dissent and popular resistance.

This trend reached a new height in mid-May 2014, when China deployed an oil rig near the Paracels, prompting many anti-China protests in Vietnamese cities. The authorities appeared to have condoned the first protests but ordered a crackdown after anti-China protests of workers in two industrial parks in Bình Dương and Hà Tĩnh turned into violent riots, causing at least twenty-one deaths and significant damages to Chinese and other foreign-invested factories.⁸⁴ The government blamed an overseas political group for the riots but some witnesses believed the authorities hired thugs to incite the riots and use them as a pretext to suppress further protests.⁸⁵ Regardless of their true causes, the May riots highlighted the VCP's precarious position between its Chinese patron and its own people. How long it can hold on is now an open question.

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ABSTRACT

The South China Sea conflict is spurring a popular nationalist movement in Vietnam that challenges the ruling communist Party by demanding Hà Nội to sever relations with its patron in Beijing. This paper examines this movement by connecting it to the often misunderstood historical relationship between the ruling Party and modern Vietnamese nationalism. This historical relationship explains why the Party has tried to suppress the movement and why movement discourse strives to debunk national myths and reconstruct national history. Linking national interests to democracy and human rights, the currently fragile movement is creating dissent within the Party and damaging its legitimacy.

KEYWORDS: *Vietnam, nationalism, anti-China, Vietnamese Communist Party, protest movement*

Notes

1. A movement can be defined as a collective effort by a large group of people, especially to achieve a social or political goal.
2. The most important books that popularized this image include David Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking Press, 1983); Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (Boston: Little & Brown, 1972).
3. William Duiker, *The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam, 1900-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 17.
4. Huynh Kim Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism 1925-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 21.
5. For an English translation, see Ho Chi Minh, "The Path that Led me to Leninism," in *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, ed. Prasenjit Duara (New York: Routledge, 2004), 29-31.
6. Nguyễn Ái Quốc, "Mấy ý nghĩ về vấn đề thuộc địa" [Some Thoughts about the Colonial Problem], *L'Humanité*, May 25, 1922, reprinted in *Hồ Chí Minh Toàn Tập* [Collected Works of Ho Chi Minh], 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Hà Nội: Sự Thật, 2000), 63-64. Nguyễn Tất Thành was Hồ Chí Minh's name before he entered politics. The

- name Nguyễn Ái Quốc was first used on the petition for Vietnamese independence at the Versailles conference in 1919 by a group that included Phan Văn Trường, Phan Châu Trinh, and Nguyễn Tất Thành. He later called himself Nguyễn Ái Quốc, causing widespread misperception that he was the sole author of that historic statement of Vietnamese nationalism. Pierre Brocheux, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biography*, trans. Claire Duiker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13.
7. Hùng Sơn, “Bàn về chủ nghĩa yêu nước chân chính và chủ nghĩa quốc tế vô sản” [On Genuine Patriotism and Proletarian Internationalism], *Học Tập* (August 1963): 70-75.
 8. Trường Chinh, “Đời đời nhớ ơn Các Mác và đi con đường Các Mác đã vạch ra,” *Học Tập*, (October 1968): 26.
 9. “Nghị quyết của Ban Bí thư số 36-NQ/TW” [The Secretariat’s Resolution no. 36-NQ/TW], February 24, 1981. Đảng Cộng Sản Việt Nam [Vietnamese Communist Party], *Văn Kiện Đảng Toàn Tập* [Collected Party Documents] (*VKĐTT*), vol. 42 (Hà Nội: Chính trị Quốc gia, 2005), 89.
 10. Bị Áp Bức Zân Tộc Liên Hợp Hội Tuyên Truyền Bộ [Propaganda Division, the League of Oppressed Peoples], “Đường Kách Mệnh” [The Revolutionary Path], originally published in 1927 and reprinted in *VKĐTT*, vol. 1 (Hà Nội: Chính Trị Quốc Gia, 2005).
 11. “Chung quanh vấn đề chiến sách mới” [About the New Tactics], October 30, 1936. *VKĐTT*, vol. 6 (Hà Nội: Chính Trị Quốc Gia, 2000), 151-152. ICP was the name of the VCP during 1930-1945.
 12. “Báo cáo của Tổng Bí Thư Trường Chinh” [Report by Secretary General Truong Chinh], n.d. (likely January 25, 1953). *VKĐTT*, vol. 14 (Hà Nội: Chính trị Quốc gia, 2001), 53-54.
 13. Phạm Văn Đồng, “Chủ nghĩa yêu nước và chủ nghĩa xã hội” [Patriotism and Socialism], *Học Tập* (August 1958): 6-17.
 14. Trường Chinh, “Nắm vững mọi quan hệ giữa chiến tranh và cách mạng ở Việt nam để hoàn thành thắng lợi sự nghiệp chống Mỹ, cứu nước” [Correctly Understanding the Relationship Between War and Revolution in Vietnam to Accomplish the Task of Fighting America to Save our Country], *Học Tập* (September 1965): 20.
 15. “Báo cáo chính trị của Ban Chấp hành Trung ương Đảng” [Political Report of the Central Committee of the Party] *VKĐTT*, vol. 37 (Hà Nội: Chính trị Quốc gia, 2004), 500-501. The report was read by Lê Duẩn at the Fourth Party Congress, on December 14, 1976.
 16. Alec Holcombe, “Stalin, the Moscow Show Trials, and Contesting Vietnamese Visions of Communism in the Late 1930s” (paper presented at the Workshop on Revolutions in Vietnam, University of California, Berkeley, November 11-12, 2011), 41.

17. Minh Tranh, “Những tác phẩm của V. Lenin ở nước ta” [V. Lenin’s Works (Published) in our Country], *Học Tập* (April 1960): 24-25.
18. Bộ Giáo Dục [Ministry of Education], *Tập Đọc Lớp Một* [First Grade Reader] (Hà Nội, 1956). Only one reading textbook was used in the whole country. Lessons with political contents were those that covered a political topic (e.g., land reform as a policy) or aimed to inculcate explicit political values (e.g., loyalty to political leaders, the nation, the state, or the Party).
19. Bộ Giáo Dục [Ministry of Education], *Tập Đọc Lớp Một* [First Grade Reader] (Hà Nội, 1972). No edition was published between 1956 and 1972.
20. Benoit de Tréglodé, *Heroes and Revolution in Vietnam* (Singapore: NUS Press in association with IRASEC, 2012). For a Vietnamese account of the effective propaganda machine in Vietnam, see Anh Ba Sàm (Nguyễn Hữu Vinh), “Đúc người vì lợi ích trăm năm” [Molding People for a Hundred Years’ Sake], October 22, 2007, <http://anhbasam.wordpress.com/2007/10/22/duc-nguoi-vi-loi-ich-dam-nam/>.
21. Đặng Thùy Trâm, *Nhật ký Đặng Thùy Trâm* [The Diary of Đặng Thùy Trâm], ed. Đặng Kim Trâm and Vương Trí Nhàn (Hà Nội: Nhã Nam, 2005), 68, 256.
22. *Ibid.*, 39.
23. Trương Chinh, “Nhân dân Việt nam kiên quyết đánh bại mọi mưu mô xâm lược của chủ nghĩa bành trướng và chủ nghĩa bá quyền Trung Quốc” [The Vietnamese People Will Resolutely Defeat the Aggressive Plots of China’s Expansionism and Chauvinism], in *Chống Chủ Nghĩa Bành Trướng Bá Quyền Trung Quốc* [Against Chinese Expansionism and Chauvinism] (Hà Nội, 1983), 37, 43.
24. Nguyễn Văn Linh, “Tiếp tục đưa sự nghiệp đổi mới tiến lên theo con đường Xã hội chủ nghĩa” [Continue to Advance Reform along the Socialist Path], *Tap Chí Cộng Sản* [Communist Review] no. 7 (1991): 16-17.
25. “Ý kiến của Bộ Chính trị số 154/TLHN ngày 30/11/1993 về một số vấn đề của Dự thảo Báo cáo chính trị qua thảo luận của Trung ương” [The Politburo’s Opinion no. 154/TLHN on November 30, 1993 about Some Issues in the Draft Political Report], photocopied and published as an appendix in Nguyễn Đình Thực, “Chủ trương của Đảng Cộng sản Việt nam về quan hệ đối ngoại với ASEAN (1967-1995)” [The VCP’s Policy on Vietnam’s Relations with ASEAN] (PhD dissertation, Học Viện Chính Trị Quốc Gia [National Institute of Politics] 2001), 264-265. Available at the Vietnam National Library, Hà Nội, call number L7924.
26. Alexander Vuving argues that patriotic sentiments were suppressed because of their anti-China tendency. See “Vietnam in 2012: A Rent-Seeking State on the Verge of a Crisis,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* no. 1 (2013): 326.
27. “Nghị quyết Hội nghị lần thứ bảy Ban Chấp hành Trung ương khóa IX” [Resolution of the Seventh Central Committee Plenum], dated March 12, 2003,

- in Đảng Cộng sản Việt nam [Vietnamese Communist Party], *Văn kiện Hội nghị lần thứ bảy Ban Chấp hành Trung ương khóa IX* [The Seventh Central Committee Plenum Documents] (Hà Nội: Chính trị Quốc gia, 2003), 13.
28. Ibid., 11-12.
 29. Martin Mevius, "Reappraising Communism and Nationalism," *Nationalities Papers* 37 no. 4 (2009): 377; David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); S.A. Smith, "Saving the Nation: National and Class Identities in the City," in *Revolution and the People in Russia and China: A Comparative History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
 30. For brief but informative discussions of the challenges facing the VCP in dealing with Beijing, see Carlyle Thayer, "Vietnam's Relations with China and North Korea: The Next Five Years (with Addendum)" and "Vietnam's Military Diplomacy: China and the United States" Thayer Consultancy Background Brief, March 2010.
 31. For a similar view, see Carlyle Thayer, "Vietnam and the Challenges of Political Civil Society," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31 no. 1 (2009): 1-27.
 32. Personal communication with Nguyễn An Nguyễn, a founding member of the group, on August 2013. The group has since dissolved and its website (biendong.org) shut down.
 33. Khối 8406 [8406 Bloc], "Tuyên Ngôn Tự do Dân chủ cho Việt Nam 2006" [A Declaration of Democratic Rights for Vietnam 2006], April 8, 2006, <http://cacvankiencoban.blogspot.com/2008/03/tuyenngontudodanchu2006.html>.
 34. Đỗ Mười, "Về định hướng Xã hội chủ nghĩa trong xây dựng đất nước ta hiện nay" [On Socialist Orientations in the Building of our Country Today], *Nhân Dân* [The People] (ND), November 4, 2005, reprinted in *Tranh Luận Để Đồng Thuận* [Debate to Achieve Consensus] (TLDDT) (Hà Nội: Tri Thức, 2006), 256-277; Nguyễn Đức Bình, "Xây dựng Đảng ta thật vững mạnh" [Strengthening our Party], ND, February 23, 2006, reprinted in TLDDT, 7-36.
 35. See Lê Đăng Doanh and Phan Đình Diệu's speeches in November 2004, which were delivered to Party leaders as a study project in preparation for the Tenth Party Congress. The former is available at http://www.wright.edu/~tdung/LeDangDoanh_02_11_2004.htm, and the latter has been reprinted in TLDDT, 66-77. See also Tương Lai, "Đảng phải là Đảng của dân tộc" [The Party Should be the Party of the (Whole) Nation], reprinted in TLDDT, 194-201; Nguyễn Trung, "Thời cơ vàng của Đảng ta" [Our Party's Golden Opportunity], reprinted in TLDDT, 315-337; Nguyễn Quang A, "Đôi lời cùng Giáo sư Nguyễn Đức Bình và góp ý với Đảng Cộng sản Việt nam" [A Few Words for Professor Nguyễn Đức Bình and the VCP], reprinted in TLDDT, 37-65.

36. See Doan Trang, “Lược sử blog Việt - A Brief History of Blogs in Vietnam,” June 23, 2012, <http://www.phamdoantrang.com/2012/06/luot-su-blog-viet-brief-history-of.html>.
37. There were many more popular blogs that stay away from politics, such as Cô Gái Đồ Long or Thông Tấn Xã Vàng Anh. After 2009, when it appeared that Yahoo! was under pressure from Vietnamese authorities to disclose the identities of bloggers, most bloggers switched to other services such as wordpress.com, blogspot.com, and facebook.com.
38. For a well-documented list of online communication controls in Vietnam, see Human Rights Watch, “Vietnam: Stop Cyber Attacks against Online Critics,” May 26, 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/05/26/vietnam-stop-cyber-attacks-against-online-critics>. An insightful analysis of press control is Geoff Cain’s, “Kill One to Warn One Hundred: The Politics of Press Censorship in Vietnam,” *International Journal of Press Politics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 1-23. On the government’s hiring of online debate manipulators, see “Tổ chức nhóm chuyên gia bút chiến trên Internet” [Organizing a Team of Experts for Internet Debates], *Lao Động* [Labor], January 9, 2013, <http://laodong.com.vn/Chinh-tri/To-chuc-nhom-chuyen-gia-but-chien-tren-Internet/98582.bld>.
39. For the history of this group, see the recent interview of one of its founders, Professor Nguyễn Huệ Chi, on April 25, 2013. “GS Nguyễn Huệ Chi trả lời phỏng vấn của GS Thomas Engelbert” [Professor Nguyễn Huệ Chi Responds to Professor Thomas Engelbert] *Bauxite Việt Nam (BVN)*, May 27, 2013, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2013/05/gs-nguyen-hue-chi-tra-loi-phong-van-cua.html>.
40. See “Tuyên bố về việc cưỡng chế giải tỏa đất đai Văn Giang bằng vũ lực” [A Statement on the Forcible Clearance of Land in Văn Giang], June 4, 2012, http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2012/05/tuyen-bo-ve-viec-cuong-che-giai-toa-at_05.html.
41. See, for example, Bùi Minh Quốc, “Giải phóng” [Liberation], *viet-studies.org*, April 30, 2010, http://www.viet-studies.info/BuiMinhQuoc_GiaiPhong.htm; Hạ Đình Nguyễn, “Một thoáng Hoàng sa 1974” [Reflections on Hoàng Sa 1974], *Ba Sam News (BSN)*, August 12, 2011, <https://anhbasam.wordpress.com/2011/08/12/257-m%E1%BB%99t-thoang-hoang-sa-1974-anh-hay-ng%E1%BB%93i-xu%E1%BB%91ng-day/>; Lê Hiếu Đằng, “Suy nghĩ trong những ngày nằm bệnh . . .” [Thoughts During My Bedridden Days], *BVN*, August 12, 2013, http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2013/08/suy-nghi-trong-nhung-ngay-nam-binh_17.html; Hồ Ngọc Nhuận, “Phá xiềng” [Breaking Chains], *BVN*, August 16, 2013, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2013/08/pha-xieng.html>. Also see Phạm Đình Trọng’s letter to announce his renunciation of membership in the VCP, September 28, 2009. “Đại tá, nhà văn Phạm Đình Trọng tự ra khỏi Đảng” [Colonel, Writer Phạm Đình Trọng Removes Himself from the Party] *Nguyễn Thông*, November

- 28, 2009, <http://thongcao55.blogspot.com/2009/11/ai-ta-nha-van-pham-inh-trong-tu-ra-khoi.html>.
42. Huỳnh Ngọc Chênh, “Lời cuối chân thành” [My Honest Last Words], *Huỳnh Ngọc Chênh*, October 23, 2011, <http://huynhngocchenh.blogspot.com/2011/10/loi-cuoi-chan-thanh.html>. Other journalists are Đoàn Trang, Nguyễn Đắc Kiên, and Trương Duy Nhất.
43. Người Buôn Gió, “Thông điệp của một tấm hình” [Message from a Picture], *Người Buôn Gió 1972*, July 26, 2013, <http://nguoibuongio1972.blogspot.com/2013/07/thong-iep-cua-mot-tam-hinh.html>; Trần Hữu, “Tự diễn biến” [Self-Evolution], *BVN*, December 11, 2012, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2012/12/tu-dien-bien.html>.
44. Interview with Huỳnh Tấn Mẫm on December 10, 2012, *Radio Française Internationale*, <http://vi.rfi.fr/viet-nam/20121210-bien-dong-dan-viet-nam-phan-no-truoc-hanh-dong-thai-qua-cua-trung-quoc/>.
45. Phan Thị Thùy Linh, “Tâm sự một cô giáo trẻ từng tham gia biểu tình chống xâm lược” [Thoughts from a Young Teacher Who Once Joined the Protest Against (Chinese) Invasion], *Bùi Thị Minh Hằng*, August 2, 2013, <http://danoanbuihang.blogspot.com/2013/08/tam-su-mot-co-giao-tre-tung-tham-gia.html>.
46. See Kami, “Sự khôn ngoan, bản lĩnh, niềm tin là những cái cần có của người tranh đấu” [Wisdom, Courage, and Conviction are Necessary Qualities of Activists], *Trí Nhân Media*, March 26, 2012, <http://www.trinhanmedia.com/2012/03/su-khon-ngoan-ban-linh-va-niem-tin-la.html>.
47. An example is the controversy caused by Phạm Hồng Sơn’s criticism of those who petitioned the government for constitutional reform. He was later criticized by Anh Ba Sàm for lacking understanding of political realities in Vietnam. See, Quốc Phương, “Góp ý hiến pháp: hơn một sự ngộ nhận,” *BBC*, March 2, 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/vietnamese/forum/2013/03/130302_phamhongson_hienphap1.shtml; “Anhbasam Điểm Tin Chủ Nhật, 03-03-2013,” *Đổi Mới*, March 3, 2013, <http://doithoionline2.blogspot.com/2013/03/anhbasam-iem-tin-chu-nhat-03-03-2013.html>; “Một comment trên anhbasam quanh bài trả lời phỏng vấn của BS Phạm Hồng Sơn,” *ixij*, March 4, 2013, <http://ixij.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/mot-comment-tren-anhbasam-quanh-bai-tra-loi-phong-van-cua-bs-pham-hong-son/>.
48. See Fulbright Economics Teaching Program, “Khởi thông những nút thắt thể chế để phục hồi tăng trưởng” [Untying Institutional Knots to Restore Growth] (Hồ Chí Minh City, 2013), esp. 41-43; Kenichi Ohno, “Avoiding the Middle-Income Trap: Renovating Industrial Policy Formation in Vietnam,” *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 26, no. 1 (2009): 25-43.
49. See, for example, Robert Kaplan, “The Vietnam Solution: How a Former Enemy Became a Crucial U.S. Ally in Balancing China’s Rise,” *The Atlantic*, May 21, 2012.

50. See, Huy Đức, “Định hướng xã hội chủ nghĩa” in *Bên Thắng Cuộc* [The Winning Side], vol. 2, *Quyền Bính* [Power] (Boston: OsinBook, 2012), chap. 21.
51. Hà Anh, “Vì sao kinh tế Việt Nam phụ thuộc nhiều vào Trung Quốc?” [Why is the Vietnamese Economy so Dependent on China?], *Đất Việt* [Viet Country], May 22, 2014, <http://baodatviet.vn/kinh-te/thi-truong/vi-sao-kinh-te-viet-nam-phu-thuoc-nhieu-vao-trung-quoc-3039075/>.
52. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, *Tổ Quốc Ân Năn* [The Fatherland Repents], 2nd ed. (Paris, 2004), 3-4, http://www.ethongluan.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&Itemid=&gid=61&orderby=dmdatecounter&ascdesc=DESC.
53. See, for example, Patricia Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam: New Histories of the National Past* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002); Haydon Cherry, “Digging up the Past: Prehistory and the Weight of the Present in Vietnam,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4, no. 1 (2009): 84-144.
54. For example, Hồ Chí Minh said during his visit to the temple of the Hùng kings that “[t]he Hùng kings have created our nation, we must continue [their work by] defending the nation.” See “Ghi sâu lời Bác dặn: ‘Các Vua Hùng đã có công dựng nước, Bác cháu ta phải cùng nhau giữ lấy nước’” [Remember Uncle’s Advice: “The Hùng Kings Built the Nation, You and I Must Preserve it”], *Báo Mới*, September 18, 2009, <http://www.baomoi.com/Ghi-sau-loi-Bac-dan-Cac-Vua-Hung-da-cong-dung-nuoc-Bac-chau-ta-phai-cung-nhau-giu-lay-nuoc/122/3223752.epi>.
55. Phạm Thị Hoài, “Tu cách trí thức Việt Nam” [The Conduct of Vietnamese Intelligentsia], *Dân Luận* (DL), March 18, 2009, <http://danluan.org/node/668>.
56. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, *Tổ Quốc Ân Năn*, 587-588. This book was first published in 2001 and republished in 2004. The author mentioned in the second edition that the book had received more attention inside than outside Vietnam.
57. *Ibid.*, 13.
58. “Chúng ta hơi kiêu ngạo so với thế giới” [We are More Arrogant than Other Peoples in the World], *Vương Trí Nhàn*, August 25, 2008, <http://vuongtrinhan.blogspot.com/2008/08/chng-ta-hi-kiu-ngo-so-vi-th-gii.html>.
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61. Trần Thanh, “Thói hư tật xấu người Việt chỉ trong 300 trang có đủ?” [Are 300 Pages enough to Talk about the Bad Babits and Ugly Customs of the Vietnamese?], *Việt Báo*, September 21, 2006, <http://vietbao.vn/Van-hoa/Thoi-hu-tat-xau-nguoi-Viet-chi-trong-300-trang-co-du/70062529/181/>.
62. Comments have been republished in Nguyễn Hương Thủy, ed., *Người Việt, phẩm chất & thói hư tật xấu* [The Vietnamese: Their Character, Bad Habits, and Ugly Customs] (Hà Nội: Thanh Niên, 2010).

63. Tống Văn Công, “Nhân ngày sinh lần thứ 120 Chủ tịch Hồ Chí Minh: Vì sao Hồ Chí Minh đặt dân chủ trước giàu mạnh?” [On the Occasion of Ho Chi Minh’s 120th Birthday: Why did Hồ Chí Minh Prioritize Democracy Over Prosperity?], *BVN*, May 17, 2010, http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2010/05/nhan-ngay-sinh-lan-thu-120-chu-tich-ho_19.html; “Bản điều trần cứu nước” [Petition to Save the Country], *BVN*, June 27, 2011, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2011/06/ban-ieu-tran-cuu-nuoc.html>.
64. Lê Hiếu Đằng, “Suy nghĩ trong những ngày nằm bệnh . . .”; Bùi Minh Quốc, “Giải phóng”; Lê Phú Khải, “Suy nghĩ của một người ngoài Đảng về đa nguyên đa đảng ở Việt nam” [Thoughts of a Non-Party Person about a Multi-Party System in Vietnam], *BSN*, August 20, 2013, <http://basam.info/2013/08/20/1971-suy-nghi-cua-mot-nguoi-ngoai-dang-ve-da-nguyen-da-dang-o-viet-nam/>.
65. Ibid.
66. “Đại tá Trần Đăng Thanh giảng về biển Đông cho lãnh đạo các trường đại học” [Colonel Trần Đăng Thanh’s Lecture on the Eastern Sea for University Administrators], *BSN*, December 19, 2012, <http://anhbasam.wordpress.com/2012/12/19/1481-dai-ta-tran-dang-thanh-giang-ve-bien-dong-cho-lanh-dao-cac-truong-dai-hoc/#more-86178>.
67. Vũ Cao Đàm, “Viết nhân ngày quốc khánh Trung Cộng (1/10)” [Thoughts on the National Day of Communist China], *BVN*, September 26, 2011, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2011/09/viet-nhan-ngay-quoc-khanh-trung-cong.html>. For a similar view, see Trần Phương Bình, “Tàn mạn nhân ngày 20/7: Hàn gắn vết thương dân tộc để chống ý chí xâm lược của Chủ Nghĩa Cộng Sản Đại Hán” [Thoughts on July 20: Healing National Wounds to Combat Chinese Communist Expansionism], *BVN*, July 20, 2012, <http://www.boxitvn.net/bai/39402>. Trần Phương Bình is also a retired official from the State Scientific Committee.
68. This idea came from a poem by Tố Hữu, the head of the Party’s Ideological Department. Đặng Thùy Trâm in her diary also mentioned that she was fighting for three billion people worldwide, not just thirty million Vietnamese. *Nhật ký Đặng Thùy Trâm*, 137.
69. Vũ Cao Đàm, “Viết nhân ngày quốc khánh Trung Cộng (1/10).”
70. Phạm Đình Trọng, “Không trung thực trong Điều 4 Hiến Pháp” [Dishonesty in Article 4 of the Constitution], *Radio Free Asia*, September 1, 2013, http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/dishonest-constitution-art-4-09012013102901.html.
71. Phạm Đình Trọng, “Ăn mày đi vãng: Thực chất cuộc vận động học tập tư tưởng Hồ Chí Minh” [Beggars of the Past: Behind the Campaign to Learn from Hồ Chí Minh’s Thought], *DL*, September 13, 2009, <https://danluan.org/tin-tuc/20090713/pham-dinh-trong-an-may-di-vang-thuc-chat-cuoc-van-dong-hoc-tap-tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh>.

72. Phạm Hồng Sơn, “Phỏng vấn Huỳnh Nhật Hải, Huỳnh Nhật Tấn—Làm cách mạng không phải để dựng nên một nhà nước độc tài” [Interview with Huỳnh Nhật Hải and Huỳnh Nhật Tấn: Making Revolution not for Establishing a Dictatorship], *Pro&contra P&C*, April 28, 2012, <http://www.procontra.asia/?p=544>.
73. Phạm Hồng Sơn, “Cắt rời thủ đoạn,” *P&C*, July 2, 2012, <http://www.procontra.asia/?p=712>.
74. For opposing views on this note, see Phạm Quang Tuấn, “Có cần phải thông cảm cho ông Phạm Văn Đồng?” [Must One Sympathize with Phạm Văn Đồng?], *BVN*, June 15, 2014, <http://boxitvn.blogspot.com/2014/06/co-can-phai-thong-cam-cho-ong-pham-van.html>; Cao Huy Thuận, “Công hàm Phạm Văn Đồng: Góp ý về việc giải thích” [Phạm Văn Đồng’s Diplomatic Note: How to Interpret it], *Thời Đại Mới* [New Era], July 31, 2014, http://www.tapchithoidai.org/ThoiDai31/201431_CaoHuyThuan.pdf. Both writers are university professors in the West. The former (from Australia) agrees with Trần Trung Đạo’s interpretation while the latter (from France) disagrees. Based on archival research, my interpretation of this document concurs with Phạm Quang Tuấn. Just to cite one telling piece of information from an open source, in his recently published personal diary, Lê Văn Hiến, the Minister of Finance and a high-ranking leader of the VCP until the 1950s, expressed joy on hearing that Chinese communist forces seized parts of the Paracels from the French in May 1950. Lê Văn Hiến thought Chinese takeover would help the Vietnamese revolution advance in central and southern Vietnam and did not mention any sovereignty concerns. See entry dated May 14, 1950 in *Nhật Ký Một Bộ Trưởng: Tập 2* [Diary of a Minister: Volume Two] (Đà Nẵng: Đà Nẵng Publishing House, 2004), 318.
75. See Trần Quang Cơ, “Hồi ức và Suy Nghĩ” [Memories and Thoughts] (unpublished memoir, 2003). Trần Quang Cơ was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the late 1980s to early 1990s.
76. Trần Trung Đạo, “Từ ‘Phạm Văn Đồng’ tới ‘Thành Đô’: Hai công hàm bán nước” [From “Phạm Văn Đồng” to “Thành Đô”: Two Diplomatic Notes Selling the Country], January 2012, *Dân Làm Báo* [Citizen Journalism], <http://danlambaovn.blogspot.com/2012/01/tu-pham-van-ong-toi-thanh-o-hai-cong.html#more>.
77. Mai Thái Linh, “Tìm hiểu quan niệm chính trị của Phan Châu Trinh –Về con đường đi lên chủ nghĩa xã hội” [Understanding Phan Chu Trinh’s Political Thought—About the Path to Socialism], *talawas*, February 26, 2007, <http://www.talawas.org/talaDB/suche.php?res=9321&rb=0306>.
78. Nguyễn Gia Kiểng, *Tổ Quốc Ấn Năm*, 487.
79. Anh Ba Sàm and a collaborator were arrested in May 2014 and were not brought to trial at the time of writing this. His blog is now based overseas.

80. “Phá vòng nô lệ” [Break the Shackles of Slavery], BSN, n.d. <https://anhbasam.wordpress.com/tuyenngon/>.
81. Phạm Hồng Sơn, “Nền tảng nào cho đoàn kết?” [What Foundation for Solidarity?], *P&C*, January 28, 2012, <http://www.procontra.asia/?p=201>.
82. It is estimated that one of every six working Vietnamese is employed by security apparatuses. Bill Hayton, *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 73.
83. This is an estimate by David Brown for Anh Ba Sam’s blog. Of course, not all readers subscribe to this view. See “Mysterious Attacks on a Vietnamese Blog,” *Asia Sentinel*, March 18, 2013, <http://www.asiasentinel.com/politics/mysterious-attack-on-a-vietnamese-blog/>.
84. Kate Hodal and Jonathan Kaiman, “At least 21 dead in Vietnam’s anti-China protests over oil rig,” *The Guardian*, May 15, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/15/vietnam-anti-china-protests-oil-rig-dead-injured>; Thái Linh, “Vụ xô xát tại Vũng Áng: Khởi tố 16 bị can” [The Vũng Áng Incident: Prosecuting Sixteen Accused], *Đất Việt* [Vietnam], May 18, 2014, <http://baodatviet.vn/phap-luat/tin-tuc-phap-luat/vu-xo-xat-tai-vung-ang-khoi-to-16-bi-can-3038482/>.
85. See “Đi giữa dòng bạo động” [Amidst the Stream of Violence], *Tuấn Khanh’s Blog*, May 15, 2014, <http://nhacsituankhanh.wordpress.com/2014/05/15/di-giua-dong-bao-dong-p-1/>.