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## Remembering Those Days

### A Few Old Stories Recalled...

42100003n Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese  
Oct 87 Special Issue pp 70-72

[Article by Ha Huy Giap]

[Text] On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the great October Russian Socialist Revolution, allow me to share a few stories, some of which took place in society and some in prison, about celebrations of the anniversary of the October Revolution during the years of French domination.

In 1929, Comrade Cuc (that is, Nguyen Van Linh, the current general secretary of our Party Central Committee), then only 14 years of age, was attending the Hai Duong City Elementary School. On the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution, he was assigned the task of distributing leaflets within the city. Arising early, he dressed and went out for a run along the sidewalk, pretending to be exercising. As he ran, he passed out leaflets. He was arrested while performing this task. Although intensely interrogated by the enemy, he told them nothing. The Hai Duong Court sentenced Cuc to 6 months in prison. But the prosecutor objected to this sentence, telling the court that it was incorrect and too lenient. He asked the court of appeals in Hanoi to review the case. According to the prosecutor, because Cuc was still a "youth," he did not need to be put on trial, only sent to the Ong Yem Reform Camp, where the length of his stay would depend upon how repentant he was. Cuc was taken to Hoa Lo Prison in Hanoi, where he awaited a review of his case by the court of appeals. On 10 February 1930, uprisings organized by the Vietnam Nationalist Party broke out in Yen Bai and several other places. Frightened by the growing storm of revolution, the Hanoi Court of Appeals hastily sentenced Cuc to life in prison in Con Dao Prison.

For no other reason than distributing leaflets commemorating the October Revolution, a young student by chance became a dangerous enemy of the French colonialists and given a sentence as severe as the sentences handed down to such predecessors as Phan Chu Trinh, Huynh Thue Khang, Le Van Huan... Being reactionary and taking this action, the French colonialists "taught Cuc and our people the importance of the October Revolution.

On Con Dao, Cuc was imprisoned along with Nguyen Van Cu, Le Xuan, Pham Van Dong and Hoang Quoc Viet. Making the best of his situation, Cuc, in addition to taking part in the struggle against the abuses and cruelties of everyday prison life, also found time to study academic subjects and politics. At the time of his arrest, Cuc only had an elementary school education. By 1934-35, he had read the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin and novels and plays written in French.

In 1930, at the wireless telegraph station in Phu Tho (Saigon), on the anniversary of the October Revolution, Le Van Kiet—a technician working at the station—raised a large red flag with hammer and sickle on a large antenna pole under cover of darkness. When dawn broke and they saw the red flag fluttering atop the pole, the masses were very excited. The enemy, however, was deeply angered. They immediately arrested Le Van Kiet because they knew that he was the only person who could have put the flag on the pole. They sentenced Le Van Kiet to life in prison and banished him to Con Dao.

At the Tien River ferry landing, where the ferry crosses from Sa Dec to Cao Lanh (which is now part of Dong Thap Province), tall steel poles had been erected along both banks of the river and strung with telegraph wire. In 1930, on the anniversary of the October Revolution, several comrades, also taking advantage of the cover of darkness, climbed one of these poles on the windward side of the river and, using hooks, attached a red flag with hammer and sickle to two steel wires. As the wind blew, the flag slowly slid along the wires. By dawn, it was about one-third of the way across the river and fluttering in a vast expanse of sky and water. The enemy ranted and raved but could not bring the flag down. As a last resort, they fired on the flag with rifles but only managed to tear it to shreds, not bring it down. It was not until evening, when the wind had blown the flag to the pole on the other side of the river, that they were able to grab the flag and tear it down. That day, the residents of the villages along both sides of the river, ferry passengers and the persons on the boats travelling the river saw the red flag with hammer and sickle flying high in the sky and experienced a feeling of great joy.

In the hell on earth that was the prisons, the ways that the anniversary of the October Revolution was celebrated were also very unique. The prison party committees decided to use the celebrations of this anniversary to remind our brothers and sisters in prison of the great achievements recorded by the Soviet Union and the world revolution as a result of the October Revolution and, on this basis, give everyone stronger confidence in the future.

On Con Dao, the prisoners were at first allowed to buy red cloth to make red flags with hammer and sickle to display during celebrations of this anniversary. With these flags raised, the activities conducted to celebrate the anniversary became more formal and meaningful. As a result, they drew the participation of even common

criminals. Later, when prison officials learned of this, they intensified their campaign of terror and prohibited anything red in color from being brought into prisons. Lacking flags, prisoners celebrated the anniversary by gathering to sing the Internationale and give talks on the Soviet Union. Some prisoners had memorized the book "Diary of a Sinking Ship" by Nguyen Ai Quoc and recited each passage from it that pertained to the Soviet Union. As a result of being held in the formal and serious atmosphere of a ceremony, these meetings to read books and give talks had an even greater impact in inspiring revolutionary zeal and building confidence, such an impact that the French colonialists had to admit that the "Diary of a Sinking Ship" was "an effective weapon of communism."

In 1941, when Hitler's fascists suddenly attacked and swept into the Soviet Union, reactionary prison officials at many prisons seized this opportunity to provoke prisoners. They taunted prisoners, saying that revolutionaries had stopped shouting "long live the Soviet Union" because the Soviet Union was about to be destroyed. Pro-Japanese elements rejoiced over the Soviet Union being attacked by Hitler. They loudly proclaimed that Japan would win victory in Asia. In the face of these reactionary arguments, prisoners pointed out that after occupying all of Europe, Napoleon sent his forces to attack czarist Russia. He reached Moscow but ultimately suffered a tragic defeat and was banished to an island, where he died. And although Petain has surrendered to Hitler, Hitler would surely be defeated and die an even more tragic death than Napoleon. The Soviet Union would liberate France and all mankind from the scourge of fascism.

Confused and angered by the Bac Son and Nam Ky uprisings and the Do Luong mutiny, the enemy was made even angrier by these words of analysis as they intensified their campaign of terror nationwide, especially within the prisons. The basic organizations of the party in the prisons and concentration camps decided, depending upon the circumstances at each place, to organize formal yet practical celebrations of the anniversary of the October Revolution with a view toward displaying the will of revolutionaries and refuting the arguments of the reactionaries. During these celebrations, prisoners came together to analyze the current situation and point out the initial defeats and the inevitable and total defeat of the fascists.

When the Soviet Union won its great victory over German forces in Stalingrad, prison officials had their eyes opened and expressed admiration for the foresight of the revolutionaries.

In 1943, after the Japanese arrived in Indochina, the French were more "lenient" toward communist prisoners. As a result, prisoners were able to formally commemorate the anniversary of the October Revolution. At many prisons, these anniversaries were marked by the display of red flags with hammer and sickle, parades and

the singing of the Internationale. These ceremonies were usually followed by dinners. And, also in 1943, as the counter-attacks of the Soviet Red Army dealt increasingly strong blows to the fascists, our Party Central Committee issued a secret order calling upon prisoners to try to escape from prison in order to seize the once in 1,000 years opportunity created by the victory of the Red Army and advance to the uprising to seize political power and win back the nation's independence and freedom.

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**The Raising of the Red Flag with Hammer and Sickle on Nhon Nuc Mountain**  
*42100003o Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese*  
*Oct 87 Special Issue pp 73-75, 82*

[Article by Nguyen Van Hoan]

[Text] In March 1927, after being accepted into the Association of Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth, I was sent to Canton to attend a training class being held by Ly Thuy, which was the alias being used by the revered President Ho Chi Minh at that time. Through his lessons, he began to equip us with necessary knowledge of the theory of national liberation and the socialist revolution and the methods of revolutionary agitation. According to Ly Thuy, to make revolution, it was first necessary to have a revolutionary party in order to agitate and organize the masses at home and maintain liaison with the oppressed peoples and the proletariat in the countries overseas. The party had to be strong in order for the revolution to be successful. To be strong, the party needed to have a philosophy. There were many theories and philosophies, but the most genuine, the surest and most revolutionary was Leninism.

Expressing himself very clearly, Ly Thuy spoke at great length and in deep detail about the history of the Russian revolution, especially the history of the 1917 October Revolution. He cited and stressed the importance of the relationship between the Russian October Revolution and the Vietnamese revolution. He taught and showed us that in the world at that time, only the Russian October Revolution had achieved "complete" success, because, it was the most thorough of revolutions and had brought to the people true happiness, freedom and equality. At home, the Russian revolution toppled the nobility, landowners and wealthy peasants. Overseas, it was helping workers, peasants and oppressed peoples to make revolution and topple imperialism and world capitalism. Ly Thuy concluded: the Russian October Revolution teaches us that in order for a revolution to be successful, it must be based on the masses (workers and peasants), must be led by a strong and courageous party, must make sacrifices and be united. In summary, it must adhere to Marxism and Leninism.

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One other key theoretical point that we learned well was that the Vietnamese revolution had to follow the path of the Russian October Revolution. The main forces of the Vietnamese revolution were workers and peasants. The leader of the revolution had to be a Marxist-Leninist party and, the Vietnamese revolution was a part of the world revolution.

Upon the completion of my training, I returned home to conduct activities. On Ton Hung Street, now Tuc Mac Street, I met Pham Van Dong, who had arrived from Canton a few days before me. When we said good-bye, Dong left for Quang Nghia to sow the seeds of Marxism-Leninism in his home province, I departed for the municipality of Nam Dinh to assume my task.

On 17 June 1929, at number 312 Kham Thien Street in Hanoi, the Indochinese Communist Party was secretly established. As a result of direct guidance received from the Tonkin Provisional Regional Party Committee and the preparations made by it, the Nam Dinh provincial party organization was established on 19 June and the Ninh Binh party organization came into being on 21 June.

That year, the Provisional Central Committee of the Party decided to formally commemorate the 12th anniversary of the October Revolution to express our profound gratitude to and heartily congratulate the first socialist state of mankind and confirm the fact that it was leading our people along the path of revolution charted for the nation by our leader Nguyen Ai Quoc.

In early October 1929, in keeping with this decision, the leadership of the Ninh Binh provincial party organization met and decided:

- To publish a clandestine newspaper called DAN CAY Newspaper;
- To distribute leaflets and paste up banners at crowded places;
- To raise a flag in Ninh Binh City.

The collective decided to raise the flag on Non Nuoc Mountain, because it stood in a very important position in the middle of the city, lying close to the railroad and the intersection of National Highway 1 and the Ninh Binh-Nam Dinh Interprovincial Highway. The flag had to be raised on the mountain's highest peak (during the resistance against France, this peak was leveled by the French colonialists).

As we were beginning our work, the upper level transferred two youths on our leadership committee, one to the Propaganda and Training Department of the Central Committee and one to the Standing Committee of the Thai Binh Provincial Party Committee. Everything was left up to me to do, with the assistance of a number of party members and a Youth Association member named

Luong Van Tuy. I had estimated that we would need 5 dong to spend on this activity. After many days of running around, we managed to obtain this money with the assistance of comrades and fellow countrymen sympathetic to the revolution. But it would not be easy to buy the materials we needed, such as cloth to make the flag and ink, in a city as small as Ninh Binh City was then because such purchases were quickly learned about by the enemy. There was also the problem of writing the leaflets and making the flag in secrecy. We had to avoid the prying eyes of neighbors and searches by village officials and enemy informers. And, as we went about our work, the small thatch home of Mrs Do Dinh in Phuc Am Village in the outskirts of the city, which she gave to the party to use as a headquarters, would be unguarded.

On 1 November 1929, DAN CAY Newspaper, the organ of the Ninh Binh provincial party organization, a paper published twice a month, written in hand and printed on student notebook paper under the symbol of the hammer and sickle, first appeared before readers. All six pages of the paper were devoted to a summary history of the October Revolution and an appeal to the people of Ninh Binh to unite and arise to save the nation under the leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party. Together with DAN CAY Newspaper, banners written in whitewash on red paper and leaflets printed in scarlet ink on white paper were sent down to the basic organizations within the province. Foremost among these slogans were the following:

- Long live the October Revolution!
- Support the Soviet Union!
- Long live the Soviet Union!
- Long live the Indochinese Communist Party!

In the center of the red flag we made was a symbol of the hammer and sickle drawn in whitewash. On either side of this symbol were the words "Support the Soviet Union!" and "Long Live the Soviet Union!" Above the symbol was "7-11-1917—7-11-1929." Below it in small letters were the words: "The Indochinese Communist Party."

As the day of the anniversary approached, the enemy became very vigilant. Agents were dispatched to conduct searches everywhere. On the night of 6 November 1929, they arrested 40 suspects. Because, several months earlier, on 1 August, the day we protested the imperialist war, we had distributed leaflets within the city and at many other places in the province. However, an investigation conducted by us revealed a weakness on the part of the enemy. Their patrols peaked during the early evening hours and decreased toward midnight. By dawn, everything was quiet.

Having learned this, Tuy and I left Phuc Am Village at 0100 hours on the morning of the 7th disguised as two persons going fishing. We carried poles and baskets, inside which were concealed the flag, leaflets and banners. Walking behind the guard tower at the entrance to the village, we headed off in the direction of Non Nuoc Mountain. As we walked, we observed our surroundings. Occasionally, we laid down and pressed our ears to the rock path to listen for the sound of passers-by.

As planned, Tuy hid in a clump of bushes on the back side of the mountain and I quickly climbed the mountain to reconnoiter. On reaching the top, I looked into the guard house and saw that all the soldiers were sound asleep. I went back down to where Tuy was hiding and signaled for him to come up. The two of us then climbed the mountain. When we reached the guard house where the guards were sleeping, Tuy, as planned, climbed empty-handed up to a spot about 4 meters from the top of the mountain. Below, I took the red flag with hammer and sickle from my basket, attached it to the fishing pole and then handed it to Tuy to insert by the highest rock on the mountain peak. I stood guard for Tuy, my eyes constantly watching the sleeping soldiers. When we finished and before climbing down from the mountain, we put up a banner on a beam of the guard house. We also put a leaflet at the soldiers' feet and placed a rock on it to keep it from blowing away.

When we reached the rock path, we joined To, a member of the Truong Yen Village Party Chapter, who had been pasting up banners and distributing leaflets at key points within the city, such as the railroad station, Van Market, the school, the bus depot, etc. We also did not forget to paste up bright red banners with white lettering on the billboards of the court and the police station of the French. At the same time, as planned, other comrades were distributing leaflets and pasting up banners at the Lang Phong Market (in the Nho Quan District Seat), the Me Market (in the Gia Vien District Seat), the But Bridge and But Market in Yen Mo District), the Ghenh Railroad Station, etc.

As dawn broke on the 7th, atop Non Nuoc Mountain, the bright red flag gradually appeared as the sun rose, proudly fluttering in the wind!

The people of the city and surrounding villages, even the people living on the other side of the Day River in former Nam Dinh Province, joyously saw, for the first time in their locality, the red flag with hammer and sickle and the words:

7-11-1917—7-11-1929 Support the Soviet Union! Long live the Soviet Union! The Indochinese Communist Party

The enemy, enraged, shouted to one another to quickly bring down the flag. But they were also very frightened, because, hanging beside the flag were two grenades. They tried all morning but were not able to bring the flag down

until 1100 hours. It was not until they found out that the grenades did not explode that they realized that the grenades were nothing more than 2 bananas covered with dirt and made to look like grenades. It was Luong Van Tuy's idea to make fake grenades.

It can be said the red flag with hammer and sickle which flew atop Non Nuoc Mountain was one of the first red flags with hammer and sickle in the entire country. It was an indelible symbol of the close relationship between the Vietnamese revolution and the October Revolution and the close affection between the Vietnamese, who were then writhing under the domination of the French colonialists, and the heroic Soviet people. Luong Van Tuy and I were overjoyed to have been able to complete the task assigned to us.

On 18 November, while taking copies of issue Number 2 of DAN CAY Newspaper, which carried a drawing and an article on the event that occurred on Non Nuoc Mountain, to the Yen Mo District Seat, Tuy and I were arrested. After being brutally tortured and put on trial in the court of appeals on 24 April 1930, I was sentenced to life in prison at hard labor and Tuy was sentenced to 15 years in prison at hard labor. I was 23 years old that year, Tuy was 16. We both had to serve our sentences at the prison on Con Dao Island. In 1933, Tuy escaped prison and sacrificed his life at sea. Deeply saddened by the news of his death, I wrote two poems in tribute to Tuy, the first of which was:

Alas, Tuy is dead! A compassionate militant only 20 years old! Of the two who raised the flag on Non Nuoc Mountain, only one remains. Of the pair who wrote DAN CAY Newspaper, only one-half remains. They inspired the masses as a festival does. They enraged the enemy! Your name will be associated with Non Nuoc Mountain for a thousand years. But your great heart lies at the bottom of the sea!

(This poem was subsequently printed in the "Thirty-five Year Anthology of Vietnamese Literature")

Following the liberation of the capital, the historic Non Nuoc flag was found in the "evidence files" left behind by the French at the Hanoi Court of Appeals. The flag is currently on display at the Ha Nam Ninh Museum. An identical copy of the flag was presented as a gift to the city Museum of Bryansk, the brotherhood city of Ninh Binh.

This year, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the great October Revolution and at age 80, I put these memories to paper with a wish for success to the glorious CPSU and the heroic Soviet people in the reform and restructuring campaign now being carried out in accordance with the resolution of the party's 27th Congress.