

NGUYEN AN NINH'S THOUGHTS ABOUT HUMANS AND MEANINGS FOR THE TIME

NGUYEN AN NINH'S PENSAMENTOS SOBRE OS SERES HUMANOS E SIGNIFICADOS PARA A ÉPOCA*

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Abstract: In Vietnamese history at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there was a period of great change in all aspects, namely: the decline of the Nguyen dynasty feudalism; The Confucian ideology was the spiritual support for the feudal system in crisis and powerlessness before the tasks of contemporary Vietnamese social history. Vietnamese society fell into a great upheaval, which had never been seen in history, people lost their freedom and democracy seriously. Before the request of history, many thinkers appeared, including Nguyen An Ninh. In his ideological system, Nguyen An Ninh discussed ideas about the role, position, human values and human education. He explained the origin of man from the point of view of evolution. The people mentioned by Nguyen An Ninh are concrete and real people associated with historical and social circumstances, not general and abstract people. Nguyen An Ninh asserts that humans are both active and passive towards the universe. Therefore, human freedom is not born by itself, but it is cultivated according to the evolution of society. In particular, he always believes in the power of real people and that it is people who make social history. Therefore, in order to build the future for the country, it is necessary to train a generation of people who know how to create, know the true value of the race, have knowledge and a soul to revive the national spirit. It is necessary to take care of the development of education, so that everyone is fully educated. Nguyen An Ninh emphasized that human rights are inviolable, he called on everyone to stand up and fight for human rights. His thought on human rights has made a certain contribution to humanity in general and Vietnam in particular.

Keywords: Thought. People. Liberty.

Resumo: Na história do Vietnã no final do século XIX e início do século XX, houve um período de grandes mudanças em todos os aspectos, a saber: o declínio do feudalismo da dinastia Nguyen; A ideologia confucionista foi o suporte espiritual para o sistema feudal em crise e impotência diante das tarefas da história social vietnamita contemporânea. A sociedade vietnamita caiu em uma grande convulsão, que nunca havia sido vista na história, as pessoas perderam seriamente sua liberdade e democracia. Antes do pedido da história, muitos pensadores apareceram, incluindo Nguyen An Ninh. Em seu sistema ideológico, Nguyen An Ninh discutia idéias sobre o papel, a posição, os valores humanos e a educação humana. Ele explicou a origem do homem a partir do ponto de vista da evolução. As pessoas mencionadas por Nguyen An Ninh são pessoas concretas e reais associadas a circunstâncias históricas e sociais, não pessoas gerais e abstratas. Nguyen An Ninh afirma que os humanos são tanto ativos quanto passivos em relação ao universo. Portanto, a liberdade humana não nasce por si mesma, mas é cultivada de acordo com a evolução da sociedade. Em particular, ele sempre acredita no poder das pessoas reais e que são as pessoas que fazem história social. Portanto, para construir o futuro do país, é necessário formar uma geração de pessoas que saibam criar, conheçam o verdadeiro valor da raça, tenham conhecimento e uma alma para reavivar o espírito nacional. É necessário cuidar do desenvolvimento da educação, para que todos sejam plenamente instruídos. Nguyen An Ninh enfatizou que os direitos

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humanos são invioláveis, ele chamou a todos para se levantarem e lutarem pelos direitos humanos. Seu pensamento sobre os direitos humanos tem dado uma certa contribuição à humanidade em geral e ao Vietnã em particular.

Palavras-chave: Pensamento. Pessoas. Liberdade.

1. Introduction

According to the Marxist view “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness” (Erzin Alexandr, 2017, p. 344). “Social existence and social consciousness” (Safar, A. 2021) have a dialectical relationship with each other, in which social existence determines social consciousness. On the other hand, social consciousness also has relative independence, it affects social existence. Therefore, all properties, contents and trends of social consciousness are ultimately determined and governed by social existence. In which, thought is one of the forms of social consciousness, reflecting and subject to the regulation of social existence. “The content of thought reflects its relationship with the perceived object” (V.D. Shadrikov, 2016, p.564). Therefore, the formation and development of Nguyen An Ninh's thought is not an exception to that rule. Therefore, on the one hand, his thought was dominated by the characteristics and requirements of social history in the late 19th century and early 20th century. On the other hand, it is the inheritance of the ideological premises about man of the previous thinkers. Besides, it is a reflection and distillation of the quintessence of cultural values of the Vietnamese nation. As C. Marx noted in *Die Kolnische Zeitung*: “Philosophers do not spring up like mushrooms out of the ground; they are products of their time, of their nation, whose most subtle, valuable and invisible juices flow in the ideas of philosophy.”(Leonid Golovanov, 1988). Therefore, studying Nguyen An Ninh's thought, we cannot fail to learn the characteristics of historical circumstances and economic, political, social, and cultural conditions as well as the theoretical premises that forms his humanity thought.

Nguyen An Ninh was born on September 15, 1900 in Long Thuong commune, Phuoc Dien Thuong canton, Cho Lon province, now Long Thuong commune, Can Giuoc district, Long An province. He was born and raised in a patriotic Confucian family. In 1918 he started to study law at Sorbonne University - Paris. During his time in France, he participated in many socio-political organizations and approached many progressive thought streams. In 1923, Nguyen An Ninh decided to return to the country, entering the path of revolutionary activities.

Nguyen An Ninh is a great thinker and culturalist, in his active life, he left many valuable

thoughts through more than 300 articles, speeches and 5 works containing content on philosophy, politics, culture, and science. Nguyen An Ninh's thought has far-reaching influence on the development of Vietnam's cultural and ideological history from modern times to the present. He was one of the most typical people of the first class of "Western-educated" intellectuals, bravely committed, devoted all his talents, courage and life to the cause of national liberation from the oppression of the colonialism. The study of Nguyen An Ninh's thought on human beings is not only meaningful to the improvement of human rights in Vietnam but also contributes to the enhancement of human rights in countries around the world.

In this article, the author will focus on clarifying issues such as: Nguyen An Ninh's views on the role and position of people and human education; Perspectives on human rights and human liberation; Clarifying the contributions of Nguyen An Ninh in improving human rights in Vietnam but also contributing to the improvement of human rights in countries around the world.

2. Research Methods

The article studies the history of Vietnamese thought by a historical figure, a thinker, so the approach follows the basic methodological principles of the science of history of thought.

In order to well implement the research objectives and tasks, the article must implement the rigor of history, that is, the research is comprehensive, multidimensional, historical - specifically, considering the views of Nguyen An Ninh in many relationships, with different aspects, specific times and spaces, in the historical conditions of the Vietnamese nation. At the same time, as a historical figure, he is always attached to historical circumstances, but cannot be separated from his family and homeland, so he has to go through information sources from his family, relatives, comrades, and colleagues to get objective, comprehensive and insightful research results.

Nguyen An Ninh was born, raised and operated in the early twentieth century, with difficult conditions of information and documents. Therefore, in the process of approaching and evaluating research issues, the author of the topic will base on each specific situation to make judgments and assessments suitable to each specific condition and relationship of the study. When studying specific fields, the author will approach research issues from the perspective of the history of thought, the view of people from the historical perspective to analyze and explain the contents of the ideology of human beings.

Historical - logical method: The article uses historical method to understand the conditions of thought formation as well as to consider and evaluate the views and thoughts of Nguyen An Ninh according to each specific historical condition. We based on the historical method to study the events and scientific problems that the topic poses. On the basis of historical data, we draw the regularity of the movement and development of views and ideas.

Methods of literature: The research team will be faithful to the text of the works to learn and research scientific issues. At the same time, find out the source of the text, compare the text to analyze and clarify the content of Nguyen An Ninh's thought in historical periods.

Methods of collecting information and documents: The research team will collect documents such as books, newspapers and magazines at home and abroad about Nguyen An Ninh's thought, and will approach his family to collect information, verifying information, thanks to the help of agencies that keep records and documents of Nguyen An Ninh, especially the microphone film about Nguyen An Ninh provided by the French Government. After that, the group will classify the sources of documents to use in the process of researching the topic.

Method of analysis and synthesis: The article uses this method to analyze issues such as the origin, and nature of Nguyen An Ninh's thoughts on human beings. On that basis, generalize and synthesize conclusions about Nguyen An Ninh's thought.

Method of comparison - comparison: During Nguyen An Ninh's revolutionary activities, there were other revolutionaries, patriots and intellectuals participating in the same period, so it is necessary to use the method of comparison. This method was used to compare and clarify the contents of Nguyen An Ninh's views and thoughts in the historical conditions in Vietnam at that time.

Methods of discussion, exchange and consultation of experts: The research topic of special historical figures is controversial such as whether Nguyen An Ninh is just a patriot, or a revolutionary, or a new intellectual, or a journalists, etc. Therefore, the topic also uses the group discussion method to unify and draw objective judgments and assessments. At the same time, we invited scientific experts, politicians and his families to exchange, get opinions, unify awareness, as well as properly and objectively evaluate Nguyen An Ninh.

3. Content

3.1. Perspectives on the role, position of people and human education

“Thought is always subjective since it is produced by a “thinking individual”. As such we are dealing with the process of thought subjectivation that, as already mentioned,

has three stages. The first stage is the thinking individual's need objectivation within a thought. The second stage is the thought "wrapping" in moral statutes of the individual. The third stage is sociocultural subjectivation of thoughts. To the extent to which an individual is raised in a particular cul-ture, they will perceive the external world in the ontext of such culture." (Barro RJ, 2000).

In our opinion, thoughts are reflections of reality in consciousness, expressions of relationships between people and problems about the surrounding world. When it comes to ideas, we often see scientists talking about "thought foundation" (Dong Biao. 2021).

Man is a natural entity. "That man is a natural being" (Onyiloha, 2018) with social characteristics with dialectical unity between the two aspects of nature and society.

The first material premise that regulates the formation, existence and development of man is the natural world. Therefore, nature is one of the basic aspects of man, the human race. Therefore, the scientific research and discovery of the natural structure and natural origin of man is an important scientific basis for people to understand themselves, to come to master themselves in life, in every act and activity that creates its history, the history of mankind.

Humans are the result of "human evolution" (Syropoulos, 2022) and long-term development of the natural world. Man is a part of the natural world and at the same time the natural world is "an inorganic body of man".

"Philosophy of life as an academic research field that joins the following activities: Cross-cultural, comparative, or historical research on philosophies of life, death; Philosophical and ethical analysis of contemporary issues concerning human and non-human life in the age of modern technology" (Masahiro Morioka, 2017, Pp. 16). Nguyen An Ninh's thought on human life is expressed in a rich, profound and relatively systematic way through his conceptions of man, his role, position and values. "Theorists have long assumed that people's self-esteem and social relationships influence each other" (Harris, M. A, & Orth, U. 2019). According to Nguyen An Ninh, people are attached to history and society, people have the right to freedom and mastery.

Nguyen An Ninh criticizes idealistic and religious doctrines that say that man is created by a supernatural being, he has an immortal soul and a mortal body. "Humans are part of nature" (Löbler, H. 2017), on that point of view, Nguyen An Ninh said that humans do not have an immortal soul as asserted by other religions, this has been proven by science. Based on the achievements of science, he explained the formation of humans from within natural evolution, each human being was formed by the union of the mother's egg and the father's sperm, the personality, the body has genes inherited from previous generations. In terms of spirit or human

soul, it is not imported from the outside at conception as religions believe, but it is inherited from previous generations of grandparents, he wrote: "Experiential science says what A woman's egg (ovule) and a man's sperm (spermatozoide) combine to create a fetus". Realistic, concrete people are associated with historical and social circumstances, not general and abstract people like religions once conceived. According to him, "people are attached to the social relations in which people exist, that is, family relations, village relations, race relations, social relations, but should not believe in the creeds of Religion holds that people have a life outside of reality. He conceived, "humanity includes both the dead and the living" (p.155); Therefore, people live in the relationship of the impact of society, the current situation and also the influence of the previous generations in the past. Beyond the depths of the past, their great silhouette stands out against the dark background of the past to show the way, to tell the living what happened and to help them avoid falling, he writes. when preparing for the future". Nguyen An Ninh believes that people's real happiness comes from real life, not happiness from imagining a happy and happy realm. Because "happiness is contagious, such that one person's happiness in a network spill to spill over to others" (Liudmila Titova & Kennon M. Sheldon, 2017).

Humans also have a close relationship with nature, with society, in this relationship, people, nature and society interact and influence each other. In which, human freedom lies in the domination and regulation of history and society. As history and society develop, the freedom and self-control of people are increasingly affirmed and developed, not vice versa, that is the evolutionary law of society and people. In Nguyen An Ninh's concept, the human role is highly valued and the human value is freedom. "The universe has a relationship with society, society has an influence on people, and people also affect society and the universe. Circumstances and people cannot be separated, but influence each other to move forward together. Therefore, human freedom must be due to the conditions of history, it moves forward with history, and expands. Knowledge and insight in the human mind are also brought about by human history. With society, with the universe, people today are more free and self-reliant than in the past; Just as the descendants in the future will be freer and more self-reliant than the descendants of this generation" (Mai Quoc Lien et al, p 940). According to this view, the more society develops, in the future mankind's autonomy and freedom will develop more and more. People will be liberated from the constraints of society, losing the basic rights of freedom and equality. Thus "man must be free to choose, to be absolutely free" (Mai Quoc Lien et al p.74), and contrary to freedom which is coercive, it will impede evolution, and thus lead to the abolition of society, "for coercion will lead to failure to evolve, and failure to evolve will lead to death" (Mai Quoc Lien et

al p74). In order to survive, people need to be educated to expand their knowledge, have health and intelligence, master society and nature, and pave the way for future development. In human history, the role of people is decisive in promoting social development. Therefore, people need to be aware of their roles and missions before the development requirements of history and society. In order to promote history and society's development, according to Nguyen An Ninh, "society urgently needs people who are confident, aware of the obligations and missions entrusted to them and are always ready to sacrifice for the race" (Nguyen An Ninh p.319). If people try to rise up, they will improve the reality of personal life, society and the destiny of the country. Humans as well as all things are subject to the regulation and domination of natural and social laws, in that binding, people also increasingly assert and gain their freedom, because man himself creates history and society from which to extend freedom.

Thus, it is people who can change history and society, so in order to build the future for the country, it is necessary to train a generation of people with knowledge, creativity and respect for values. the true value of the race, devote all efforts to revive the national spirit. Therefore, the issue of education has been emphasized and put on the top by Nguyen An Ninh, in order to build a generation of intellectuals for society, a team that is strong enough in terms of ideology to stand up and lead the country. Nguyen An Ninh said that the purpose of an education is how to train intelligent, qualified people who know how to treat people. The important job is to build an ideal for young people to study in order to improve the people's intelligence and national self-reliance. Education is not only aimed at training engineers who can build bridges, lay railways, and doctors who can treat, but also create people with outstanding intelligence to develop the country. He advocated the approach to the new progressive theories of mankind to change the face of the country through education, promoting both physical strength and spiritual life.

3.2. Perspectives on human rights and human liberation

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in Vietnam, there were the most changes in the history of the nation. While in Western countries, capitalism developed strongly, moved from the stage of free competition to the stage of monopoly, production power grew strongly, in Vietnam it is still a feudal and stagnant and underdeveloped country. Inheriting and promoting progressive ideas on human rights in the Declaration of Human Rights and Civil Rights of the French Revolution, Nguyen An Ninh considered the right to life, equality of rights, freedom and the right to pursue happiness. Happiness is sacred, completely natural and inviolable. This view is consistent with the

declaration of United Nations in 1993 “All human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and interrelated.” Human rights are not created by gods or goddesses, nor are they a gift or a favor bestowed by god or superior. The nature of human rights is expressed in the right to exist, the right to live by one's own labor, the right to be free and protected by law, and the right to develop. “Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work” (Richard T. De George Follow, 1984). The content of human rights summarized by Nguyen An Ninh includes the following contents: Firstly, the right to live for "Life is the Most Basic Right" (Etzioni, Amitai, 2010). According to Nguyen An Ninh, the right to live here is not only a temporary living here, living a short life, pretending to live, but it is the human right to a minimum life such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation, etc., which needs to be guaranteed. . Nguyen An Ninh described the people's living situation "in dirty thatched huts, families with many children living with small children, suffocating because of the lack of air, because of the humidity, they sleep on tattered mats, full of hate and dirt, drinking from the pond next to the house, washing and bathing in the same pond. Adults dress like that, but they have to work very hard.”; Secondly, the right to equality, “of the right to equality has also been widely recognized in law.” (Guy Lurie, 2020). The equality of people cannot be distinguished by skin color, ethnicity or any other factor but must be based on the law. Violations of human rights in any form should be condemned. People must be treated equally and protected by domestic and international laws. Nguyen An Ninh believes that, as a human being, everyone should have equal rights, without ethnic discrimination, regardless of skin color; Thirdly, the right to individual liberty. That means everyone is free to do what they like as long as it is not against the Law. Fourth is freedom of movement. According to Nguyen An Ninh, the right to freedom of movement includes the right to freely travel between regions in the country and the right to travel abroad. Fifth, freedom of thought includes freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. In Vietnam at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there was not a single human right that was enforced, not even the right to life. All basic human rights are denied. While these rights are essential for progress, the expansion of knowledge and information in the spiritual life of a people. He wrote: “Individual freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, when reform proves to be necessary for progress, for the life of a nation, the people will demand it. But when that basic freedom is denied, the people just shut up and revolt.”

When human rights are not expressed, it will stifle the fighting spirit of people and make people happy with their lives. Therefore, according to him, freedom is not born of one's mind but built along the lines of history, Nguyen An Ninh writes: “Freedom is not born of one's own

mind; it grows larger and larger by the conditions of history" (Mai Quoc Lien et al, p.940). So "freedom is not an object that can be passed from person to person, given or sold, but in fact anyone can have freedom". "As long as there are winners and losers, oppressors and oppressed, masters and slaves, there can be no harmony between man and man" (Mai Quoc Lien et al. p.337). Freedom is an inalienable human right, so everyone needs to find ways to protect their freedom and not give in because giving in is self-harm.

Nguyen An Ninh frankly condemned the reality of barbaric violations of human rights against the Vietnamese people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was from that fact that he was determined to find a way to fight back for the people basic rights. He called and encouraged the people's spirit to stand up strong with their own feet, unite together, accept sacrifices and hardships, gather into a large force and strong determination for revolutionary struggle, regain their right to life, freedom and right to enjoy happiness and well-being.

2.3. Nguyen An Ninh's contribution to people

It can be affirmed that Nguyen An Ninh's thought has made great contributions to the Vietnamese and world's thought system on human origin when he thinks that humans have their origins in the evolution of nature. Humans are formed by the combination of the mother's egg and the father's sperm, the physical personality is inherited from the previous generation. He denied the view that humans were created by supernatural beings, with immortal souls. The person he mentioned here is a specific, real person associated with certain historical and social situations. Humans are attached to the social relationships in which people exist, which are family relationships, village relationships, social relations... People not only have a relationship with the present but also with the past and future. Therefore, humanity includes not only the living but also the dead. In addition, according to Nguyen An Ninh, humans also have a close relationship and interaction with nature and society. Human freedom lies in the domination and regulation of history and society. The more history and society develop, the more freedom and self-control of people are affirmed and developed. The value of man is freedom, so man should be free to choose, absolutely free and "in the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law" (Dorota Lis-Staranowicz, 2019). And people need to be aware of their roles and missions before the development requirements of history and society. According to him, as long as people strive to rise, they will improve the reality of personal life, society and the destiny of the country. Therefore, he strongly believed in the power of real people, not in gods like many people in society at that time. According to him,

it is people who can change history and society, so building the future for the country requires training people with knowledge, qualifications and understanding of true values of the race. This is not only meaningful to the society at that time, but it also has the same meaning to today's society.

Human liberation, human perfect development is one of the important contributions in the thought of Nguyen An Ninh. We realize that the core purpose of his thought and action is the issue of national liberation and human liberation. Facing the great upheavals of the times in terms of economy, politics and society, Nguyen An Ninh and patriotic thinkers together tried to find a way to save the nation's destiny. But in order to liberate people, according to him, in any situation, it is necessary to rely on the internal strength of the country, not rely on and rely on the help of other countries. In order to gain independence for the nation, towards the goal of liberating the country and liberating people, everyone in the country must join forces. The unity of all people is to protect themselves first, and then to defend the country. Solidarity will create great strength to regain independence for the nation. To unite, one must have a common purpose, have faith and be willing to sacrifice to protect national independence. To liberate the nation, it must first rely on national strength, which is not only valuable in the struggle but also has a very important meaning in the process of national construction and development. Today, singing the inner strength is a major policy of many countries in the world in general and of Vietnam in particular. For development, it is necessary to consider domestic resources to play a decisive role, external resources to play an important role, and the combination of these two resources has great significance for development.

In order to promote the role and valuable position of human beings, education must be promoted, because the purpose of education is to train people with knowledge, qualifications, and human behavior. So education is compulsory for everyone especially children. Educational programs must ensure the production of intellectuals who understand the requirements of the race. Just like (Dr. D.Napoleon, 2020)) “to make the best national gains from this progress, the youth must be set up by higher quality education to make them most profitable.” In order for people to be able to absorb the currents of progressive ideas in the world, Nguyen An Ninh emphasized that he must learn at least one international language. According to (Hanna Onyi Yusuf, 2012) “language which can be used as an effective instrument for national development and the promotion of national consciousness”. Being fluent in a foreign language is first to inherit and develop the Vietnamese national language, and then to learn the culture of other countries, which is a progressive point of view. Nguyen An Ninh believes that understanding

foreign languages of other countries contributes to human development and human liberation.

In the fourth industrial revolution, the important issue is to put people and build people in a new environment, clearly see the external and internal factors affecting people's lives to determine specifying specific requirements for human construction. Facing the complicated developments of the current international situation, the issue of educating patriotism and national self-reliance and the issue of human construction and human development must be placed at the center of the socio-economic development process.

4. Conclusion

Nguyen An Ninh's concept of human being is a person associated with history and society. Man is both a product of history but also a subject of history. He criticized idealistic theories, saying that man was created by a supernatural being, that man has an immortal soul and a mortal body. According to Nguyen An Ninh, humans originated from evolution in nature, humans do not have an immortal soul as religions claim, this has been proven by science. Based on the achievements of science, he explained the formation of man from within natural evolution. Humans live in relation to the impact of society, current circumstances and even the influences of past generations.

Nguyen An Ninh said that the real happiness of the people is from real life, not happiness from imagining the realm of happiness and happiness. Humans have a close relationship with nature, with society, in this relationship, people, nature, and society interact and influence each other. In which, human freedom lies in the domination and regulation of history and society. As history and society develop, the freedom and self-control of people are increasingly affirmed and developed, not vice versa, that is the evolutionary law of society and people. In the future of mankind, the issue of self-control and freedom will develop more and more accordingly. People will be liberated from the constraints of society, losing the basic rights of freedom and equality, which are the predictions of Nguyen An Ninh about the future. Nguyen An Ninh also said that freedom is the evolutionary driving force of society, so "man must be free to choose, absolutely free", according to Nguyen An Ninh, in contrast to freedom is coercion. it will impede evolution, and so will lead to the abolition of society. The morality of the ruler must include enough humanity, ceremony, righteousness, wisdom, and faith. (Dung. V. V 2022)

The freedom that Nguyen An Ninh conceives is not only personal freedom but also associated with freedom of thought and freedom of movement that the contemporary socio-

political regime must exercise, these rights exercised will promote social development. He strongly believes in the power of real people, only real people can change history and society. His thought not only contributed to the treasure of Vietnam and humanity, but also contributed to the enhancement of human rights in reality.

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