

Appendix for Module Four

Please refer to the material below to supplement the lessons in Module 4.

Background Information:

Ho Chi Minh, born in 1890, was the son of a nationalist father. In 1912 Ho went to France. During the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 he attempted to meet with President Woodrow Wilson to request self-determination for Vietnam. Until his death in 1969, he continued his quest for a united Vietnam under the direction of a communist government. This was achieved in 1975 after the fall of Saigon.

Module 4: Appendix A — Excerpts, Vietnam: A History by Stanley Karnow

The following is a passage from *Vietnam: A History*, by Stanley Karnow, p. 109-110.

All subject peoples are filled with hope by the prospect that an era of right and justice is opening for them. . . in the struggle of civilization against barbarism. .

Ho Chi Minh

But for his Asian features, he might have been an impoverished young French intellectual, a familiar sight in the Paris of the early 1920s. Small and frail, with a shock of black hair and piercing black eyes, he occupied a shabby room in a hotel on a dead-end street behind Montmartre, eking out a livelihood by enlarging and retouching photographs — “a souvenir of your relatives and friends,” his visiting card advertised. He was never without a book, either Shakespeare or Hugo or Zola, and he rarely missed a weekly meeting of the Club du Faubourg, a genteel group that discussed drama, literature and sometimes even spiritualism, but generally avoided political issues. Earnest yet gentle, reserved yet not timid, he would speak up in fluent French at those sessions, his intensity tempered by wit. Or, as a contemporary French acquaintance recalled later: “He seemed to be mocking the world, and also mocking himself.”

But even during those balmy days in Paris, he was a determined revolutionary, devoted to the Vietnamese struggle against French colonialism. He had earlier borne several different names, and he would use many aliases as an underground Communist agent in the years to come. He then called himself Nguyen Ai Quoc, Nguyen the Patriot. Two decades later, during a more tumultuous period, he would assume a more appropriate nom de guerre, Ho Chi Minh — the “enlightened” leader of the Vietminh.

Like other nationalists of his generation who had lived in France or attended French schools in Vietnam, Nguyen Ai Quoc absorbed the influence of the West but rejected its domination. His experience conformed to Vietnam’s past. For long before the French conquest, the Vietnamese had borrowed Chinese culture, institutions, ethics and even calligraphy while resisting China’s efforts to control their country. But French imperialists, in their campaigns to subjugate Vietnam, committed the mistake of believing, as Prime Minister Jules Ferry had put it, that their Vietnamese foes were merely “bandits” without “any sentiment of patriotism.” Similarly, American strategists would later misperceive Ho Chi Minh, though an avowed Communist, as simply a soviet instrument. These errors stemmed largely from an ignorance of Vietnam’s history, a long and tortuous series of conflicts and accommodations that gave the Vietnamese a profound sense of their own identity.

Module 4: Appendix B— Poem, Mourning the Death, By Hemorrhage, of a Child from Honai by Basil T. Paquet

Mourning the Death, by Hemorrhage, of a Child from Honai*
By Basil T. Paquet

Always the children are included
In these battles for the body politic.
Prefaced with mortars and rockets
The year of the Monkey was precluded
By the mephitic
Stench of blasted bodies sullenly drifting from the pocket

Of refugee hootches at Honai.
The enemy patriots knew the young
Would be glad to die for the revolution.
The allies were certain the vox populi
Called a mandate for flag-strung
Counter attack and awful retribution.

The majesty of the annihilation of the city
Could be heard clearly in the background,
I could only wonder what ideology
The child carried in her left arm — necessity
Must have dictated an M-16 round
Should cut it off, and her gaining the roll of martyrology.

Her dying in my arms, this daughter
Weaned on war, was for the greater
Glory of all concerned.
There was no time to mourn your slaughter
Small, denuded, one-armed thing, I too was violator,
And after the first death, the many must go unmourned.

**The village of Honai lies between Bien Hoa and the Post of Long Binh. It is a village of North Vietnamese refugees and was known as "Sniper's Village". After the Tet Offensive of 1968 it was known as "Widow's Village."*

Module 4: Appendix C — Address, Political Report of the Charter Committee for the Communist Party of Vietnam

Political Report of the Charter Committee

Delivered by Comrade Le Duan, Secretary General, and the General Resolution of the Congress during the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (Vietnam Workers Party) held in Hanoi from December 14-20, 1969.

Comrade delegates,
Esteemed guests,

Sixteen years have elapsed between the Third Congress and this Fourth Congress of our Party.

During this period, our motherland has been through the most severe of trials. Hardly had our people emerged from the great war of resistance against the French colonialists, when they engaged in another struggle against the unprecedentedly atrocious aggressive war unleashed by U. S. imperialism, the chieftain of imperialism, the international gendarme, the most cruel enemy of mankind. In this contest, the U. S. imperialists hoped to crush our people within a short time. Yet under the correct leadership of our Party, and with the wholehearted support of brothers and friends the world over, our people and our army in the whole country fought with great heroism and won a most brilliant victory.

The victory of our people in the patriotic war of resistance against U. S. aggression will stand the test of time, will go down in the history of our nation as one of the most brilliant chapters, a radiant symbol of the complete victory of revolutionary heroism and human intelligence and will go down in world history as a great international importance and of profound epoch-making character.

Our glorious Party comes to this Fourth Congress, overbrimming with enthusiasm and revolutionary energy, rapidly grown up in its political stature and creative power, more united and of one mind than ever, bound more than ever to the class and the nation, to the great international army of communists, to the fighters who have been struggling for independence, freedom and social progress the world over. Our Party is firmly confident in its own strength and in the correct lines blazed by this Congress for the Vietnamese revolution in the new stage.