

# The Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945-1960) - the important activities of National Assembly according to archives

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Received 20 January 2007

**Abstract.** For the first time in history, the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945-1960) shall disclose widely the documents produced by the National Assembly and the Standing Committee of the National Assembly during the process of exercising its function as the highest elected body of State power of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Most of the documents disclosed in Volume 1 are original ones which have been collected and selected from the National Assembly Archives maintained at the National Archives Center III. These documents constitute a valuable source of historic literature that greatly facilitates the study on theories of building a new-model state in Vietnam.

To implement Resolution No 731/ NQ-UBTVQH11 dated October 6, 2004 of Vietnam's Standing Committee of the National Assembly on disclosing the Complete Works of the National Assembly under the guidance of the publication Council, including National Assembly leaders and National Assembly Committees, the National Political Publishers released the 2006 publication which has been highly respected by readers. Because this is the first time the Standing Committee of the National Assembly has decided to publish the Complete Works of the National Assembly which is a complete system of the National

Assembly documents over the last 60 years. The purpose of publishing the Complete Works of the National Assembly is to reflect objectively and honestly the process of organization and operation of the National Assembly and its organs from 1946, reflecting our nation's process of construction and development, and providing historical documentation precisely and systematically for the study on theories, compiling the history of the National Assembly, propagandizing and cultivating the traditions of Vietnam's National Assembly for cadres, Party members and people, especially young generations [1, p.7].

As is known, only 4 months after President Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed the Declaration of Independence in Ba Dinh

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Square on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945 to found a new Vietnam, the general election was organized successfully in order to select our nation's first National Assembly [2, p.33-34]. It was the first National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The first National Assembly mainly operated in the condition of Vietnam's War of Resistance against the French Colonists (1946 -1954) and several years after the restoration of peace until the second National Assembly election on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1960. With an over 14 year term, the first National Assembly held 12 sessions and promulgated hundreds of documents in order to implement its functions, tasks and power of the highest elected body of State power of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945 -1960) are the documents promulgated by the first National Assembly (except 12 documents of the National Congress in Tan Trao in 1945, which were considered as the precursor of the National Assembly) so as to carry out the work assigned by the voters nationwide. Of 366 documents published in the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1, 308 documents are collected and chosen from the National Archives Centre No III and the rest are collected from the Complete Works of the Vietnam Communist Party, the Complete Works of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnam News published in the past. These documents are also collected from the Archives of Vietnam Communist Party and State.

The first National Assembly mainly existed and operated during the War of resistance against the French Colonists, Therefore, the conditions and the means to produce and maintain documents were so difficult. More than 300 documents

maintained in the archives are collected and chosen to disclose in the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945 – 1960). Although the number of documents is modest, they are precise and lively historical marks about the activities of Vietnam's National Assembly in the first term. The documents disclosed in Volume 1, most of which were collected and sought for from the archives and are first chosen for wide publication in order to meet different social demands.

First of all, it is a source of historic literature which have high reliability so as to study the history of the formation and development of the highest elected body of State power in particular and the history of building and development of a new-model state in Vietnam in general. In the opening speech and the report by President Ho Chi Minh in the first session of the first National Assembly on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1946, he said, "This National Congress is the first time in Vietnam's history. It is the result of the General Election on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1946 and the general election is the result of our ancestors' sacrifice and struggles, it is the consequence of Vietnamese people's solidarity, fortitude and struggle..." [1, p.41] Also in this session, the National Assembly founded the wartime coalition government to "be determined to lead the people to carry out a war of resistance against the French colonists, to implement the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and to bring about freedom and happiness for the nation" [1, p.40]. This is really the State of the people, by the people and for the people as President Ho Chi Minh had stressed many times.

The situation of the war was so arduous and fierce, so most activities of the first

National Assembly were mainly through the Standing Committee of the National Assembly. This is represented in the documents of the National Assembly and the Standing Committee of the National Assembly disclosed every year. For example, all 26 documents were promulgated in 1946, but 13 documents were promulgated by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly in 1947, and only 5 documents were promulgated by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly in 1952. In general, from 1946 to 1954 before the restoration of peace, the total of disclosed documents were 146, most of which were by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly because during the nine-year war of resistance against the French Colonists (1946 - 1954), the National Assembly held only three sessions in March, November 1946 and December 1953. The major tasks of the National Assembly were solved by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly in order to implement its focus in this period on consolidating the government and speeding up the war of resistance against the French Colonists to complete success.

After the restoration of peace, from 1955 to the termination of its term in mid 1960, the first National Assembly held nine sessions more regularly. The number of documents produced to serve the work of the National Assembly increased considerably and amounted to 208 documents disclosed in Volume 1, in which there are such important documents as law on press regulations, law on regulating the freedom of gathering, law on guaranteeing the freedom rights of body and the imprescriptible rights of houses, objects, letters of people, law on labour union, law on the organization of local governments

and especially the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1959...

In this period, the mission of struggling to implement seriously the Geneva Agreement and the general election for the national unity was represented in such documents as Resolutions, Declarations and Appeals of the National Assembly for compatriots nationwide as well as peace-loving people in the world, etc. At the same time, the missions of building the Democratic state of people, restoring the economic development, completing the land reform and correcting the faults, expanding relations with foreign nations, etc. were represented in many documented printed in this Volume 1.

Most of the documents disclosed in the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945 - 1960) were collected and chosen from the archives which are first or sparsely disclosed in the daily newspapers or in other documents (such as the Vietnam News, the Complete Works of the Vietnam Communist Party, the Complete Works of Ho Chi Minh). They are the original ones which the Editorial Council take into consideration and choose carefully, especially the documents which are dimmed and lost their words because of time or primitive printing technical errors. Many old and difficult words are clearly noted for users.

Of 354 documents, 308 documents collected from the National Archives Centre No 3 are edited and disclosed in the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1. They are not only a valuable source of historic literature but also important documents for study and summarizing experience in building a new-model state in Vietnam in the implementation of the tasks of the National and Democratic Revolution and

the Socialist Revolution in an underdeveloped agricultural nation as Vietnam. This will certainly contribute to enriching the treasure of general theories of the Marxism and Leninism.

For the disclose of great documents, the writing of the research tools to help users so that they will not have to look for other documents while still understanding correctly and precisely the disclosed documents is extremely important. The introduction of the publishing house, notes, guidance paper of proper names and the table content of the Volume 1 of the Complete Works of the National Assembly are useful and convenient for readers. Through these research tools, users can understand the main purpose of the disclosed documents and where they are collected and chosen from, what their degree of accuracy is, etc. However, the research tools of the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 haven't satisfied readers' expectation. For example, there are only 16 notes related to some organizations (apart from notes of proper names, nouns, etc. in the final page) are incomplete because many organizations and events should be clearly noted so that people who didn't go through this historical period can understand them. We can take the followings as examples: Vietnam Catholic Union in the South (p.192), China Advisory Board of Political Negotiation (p.241), Cambodia National Liberation Committee (p.370), etc. For the documents without date, they can't be noted because "the originals were not dated" (p.143, 199, 293, 308, etc.), but they need verifying. The guidance paper of proper names is a bit too little.

Of 354 documented collected and chosen to disclose in the Complete Works of the

National Assembly, 308 documents collected from the National Archives Centre No 3 and are noted "Achieved in the National Archives Centre No 3" are not complete and practical when we need to check and compare with the original ones. In principle, when disclosing stored documents, we must instruct clearly "the address", including the following information:

- Name of the storehouse in Archives
- Name in Archives
- Name or Index of files
- Pieces of disclosed documents

Indicating clearly the address of documents will help readers check and compare quickly and precisely the disclosed documents with the original ones in the record when necessary.

If the chronology of events is compiled additionally, the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 disclosed this time will become more convenient for users. In terms of time, the guidance paper systematically presents the main events of the National Assembly (including the National Congress in Tan Trao) consisting of three main factors as follows: time - event - page No (the events of the disclosed documents). This is the annals which readers pay special attentions to when getting access to great volumes of documents that contain many historical events such as the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1.

For the first time it presents itself before readers, the Complete Works of the National Assembly, Volume 1 (1945 - 1960) is really a valuable book because these materials which are stored with strict security precautions in the National Archives Centre are widely disclosed to serve the historical research, summarize theories and educate the

traditions of revolution for Vietnamese generations at present and in the future. On the other hand, disclosing this book also satisfies the rights of being informed of the operation of the highest elected body for citizens in particular and our nation in general.

## References

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