

COLONIALISM - AN UNCLOSED FILE

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Navigators' voyages at the end of the 15th century opened up new prospects in the eyes of the Europeans. Businessmen and evangelists along with armed forces went to look for new lands to change them into cultivated areas, to emigrate inhabitants and to rob their riches. The flags of western nations were set up in remote territories, establishing the right of possession, and creating colonial territories. Colonialism came into the world with an increasing system of colonies. A long time ago, it was admired as "the mission of enlightening civilization".

In Asian, African and Latin American nations, there had already been a movement when the Europeans set foot on those lands. The penetration of a commodity economy attracted the remote lands of this planet into the orbit of capitalism. A number of towns and cities appeared, factories grew and communication routes spread everywhere and economic activities were eventful. Reformed educational systems, hospitals with new way of treatment gradually appeared. These events more or less changed the faces of the colonies. And the Westerners boasted about it as "their contribution to the civilization of those dark territories".

Genuine historians consider it as a historical phenomenon and appraise it objectively. When the Capitalist economy penetrated the colonies, its impacts broke through the isolation and the closeness of natural economies, speeded up the commodity exchange in domestic markets and the trading with foreign nations and scattered capitalist germs into the economic activities of colonies. It created the changes in the structure of social sections and socio-economic activities.

Behind the newness of that western civilization, what happened in the colonies? The tragic and frightening fact of the inhabitants in the colonies was truthfully and vividly described in the books and newspapers at that time. Only with the true color of French Colonists in Indochina, readers can find in two books: one was published in 1925 by by Nguyen Ai Quoc which was entitled *The verdict of French Colonialism*; and the other by the French social activist Andre' Viollis which was entitled *Indochina in Emergency* in 1936.

From those two books, there is enough evidence to answer the questions about the so-called the French colonialists' mission of civilizing the nations in Indochina as well as in Africa. It is possible that the "kind-hearted"

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capitalists from the West crossed thousands of miles of the ocean in order to bring the inhabitants there electric light, railways, factories, bridges and roads so that these inhabitants can enjoy and know what the Western civilization is. Obviously, it is not like that, million times, no.

In the eyes of the Colonialists, colonies are the lands for them to plunder and bleed the inhabitants for riches by power and cane; they are the monopoly markets for consumption of commodities through tariff barriers; they are the places to exploit limitlessly material resources by the sweat and tear of miners and plantation coolies; they are the places to invest in cheap labor resources carrying medieval traces. And when the wars broke out in Europe, the colonial people were appointed to be soldiers and became food for powder, had to pay "blood" taxes in order to defend "their mother country". In short, colonies themselves are "the stomach of the Colonialists" as defined by British Minister for Foreign Affairs, Disraeli in the 19th century; it bleeds colonies for riches to support the colonialists.

The colonial people, the people who worked hard to produce rice and cloth had to live in the hungry and cold situation and suffered from shame because they had to pay all kinds of taxes, all forms of unpaid hard labor tied them down and all forms of barbarous punishment threatened their life. "The motto "Freedom, Equality and Humanity"- the lofty principle of the

French Revolution in its colonial nations became a meaningless motto, the colonial people "enjoyed" the freedom of being exploited and ill-treated, the right to equality was only in paper and humanity was only an empty barrel. All was only a deceit, no more, no less.

Of course, the deceit was paid the penalty for in people's dudgeon, by the revolts of people. Then, the true color of colonialism took its own form in frightening terrors and bloody suppressions. The human rights and civil rights of the 1789 Declaration were enforced in jails and prisons by corporal punishment and condemning a mass of people to death.

Finally, patriotism and the indomitable will of the oppressed peoples flamed up to become the high tides of struggle for liberation. But the French Colonialists still hadn't seen the reasons. Being bitterly defeated in Vietnam and Algeria in the 1950s and 1960s, France really acknowledged the break of its colonial system and started to implement the decolonized policies in the remaining colonies.

Nowadays, the nations which gained their independence from the French Colonialists have been in agreement to look toward the equal cooperation for mutual benefits. From Vietnam, historians wrote the history of colonialism with seriousness, respecting truth, condemning colonialism while not degrading its objective impacts. That is a scientific and fair attitude toward history.

It is a pity that recently the French Parliament has promulgated an Act demanding that historians “put the presence of the French overseas in its ‘proper place’ in the history of France” and that text books “acknowledge the active role of the presence of the French overseas”. It means that historians have to rewrite the full of crime history of colonialism, praising it, denying the

truth and deceiving the younger generations. The genuine French historians raised their objections to it. The pen point cannot be bent and the native good adjustment cannot be tinted dirty.

Let history speak itself. It is for this reason that until now the file of colonialism still remains unclosed.