

PHAN BỘI CHÂU'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM

*O PENSAMENTO EDUCACIONAL DE PHAN BỘI CHÂU E SUA RELEVÂNCIA PARA
A REFORMA EDUCACIONAL NO VIETNÃ CONTEMPORÂNEO*

*EL PENSAMIENTO EDUCATIVO DE PHAN BỘI CHÂU Y SU RELEVANCIA PARA LA
REFORMA EDUCATIVA EN EL VIETNAM CONTEMPORÁNEO*



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ABSTRACT: This study examines the educational thought of Phan Bội Châu to assess its relevance for ongoing educational reform in contemporary Vietnam. Grounded in dialectical and historical materialism, the research employs a combination of methodological approaches, including logical–historical analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and comparative perspectives within the philosophy of history. The findings highlight the core values and reform-oriented ideas in Phan Bội Châu's thought, emphasizing their potential contributions to shaping strategic directions for comprehensive educational transformation. In the context of international integration, although Vietnam has achieved significant progress in expanding and democratizing education, persistent limitations remain. This study argues that revisiting and critically interpreting historical educational ideas can provide meaningful insights for addressing current challenges. By clarifying the theoretical and practical significance of these perspectives, the research contributes to enhancing awareness of the role of progressive thought in aligning educational development with Vietnam's broader socio-economic goals.

KEYWORDS: Phan Bội Châu's thought. Education. Educational reform. Vietnam.

RESUMO: Este estudo examina o pensamento educacional de Phan Bội Châu com o objetivo de avaliar sua relevância para a reforma educacional em curso no Vietnã contemporâneo. Fundamentada no materialismo dialético e histórico, a pesquisa utiliza uma combinação de abordagens metodológicas, incluindo análise lógico-histórica, síntese, indução, dedução e perspectivas comparativas no âmbito da filosofia da história. Os resultados destacam os valores centrais e as ideias orientadas à reforma presentes no pensamento de Phan Bội Châu, enfatizando suas contribuições potenciais para a definição de diretrizes estratégicas de transformação educacional abrangente. No contexto da integração internacional, embora o Vietnã tenha alcançado avanços significativos na expansão e democratização da educação, persistem limitações. O estudo argumenta que a revisitação crítica de ideias educacionais históricas pode oferecer subsídios relevantes para enfrentar desafios atuais, contribuindo para alinhar o desenvolvimento educacional aos objetivos socioeconômicos do país.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pensamento de Phan Bội Châu. Educação. Reforma educacional. Vietnã.

RESUMEN: Este estudio examina el pensamiento educativo de Phan Bội Châu con el objetivo de evaluar su relevancia para la reforma educativa en curso en el Vietnam contemporáneo. Basada en el materialismo dialéctico e histórico, la investigación emplea una combinación de enfoques metodológicos, incluyendo análisis lógico-histórico, síntesis, inducción, deducción y perspectivas comparativas dentro de la filosofía de la historia. Los resultados destacan los valores fundamentales y las ideas orientadas a la reforma en el pensamiento de Phan Bội Châu, enfatizando sus posibles contribuciones para definir direcciones estratégicas de transformación educativa integral. En el contexto de la integración internacional, aunque Vietnam ha logrado avances significativos en la expansión y democratización de la educación, persisten limitaciones. El estudio sostiene que la revisión crítica de ideas educativas históricas puede aportar elementos relevantes para enfrentar los desafíos actuales, contribuyendo a alinear el desarrollo educativo con los objetivos socioeconómicos del país.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pensamiento de Phan Bội Châu. Educación. Reforma educativa. Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

In the turbulent historical context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the country was under colonial domination, Phan Bội Châu (1867–1940) emerged as one of the most prominent thinkers, a revolutionary and cultural figure who profoundly influenced the national renaissance movement. His legacy is not only marked by his contributions to politics and literature but also, perhaps most significantly, by his deep and lasting impact on educational thought, a field he regarded as the key to enlightening the populace, awakening patriotism, and fostering a spirit of independence and self-reliance among the Vietnamese people.

Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy did not arise spontaneously; rather, it was the result of a selective and thoughtful integration of the nation's traditional values with the philosophical essence of the East and progressive Western ideologies. He inherited the Confucian ideals of patriotism and respect for teachers, while also engaging with revolutionary ideas such as Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People," the democratic, libertarian, and egalitarian values of Rousseau and Montesquieu, and the scientific, revolutionary spirit of Marxism – Leninism. From this foundation, he developed a comprehensive and strategic educational vision aimed at awakening human consciousness, inspiring national spirit, and cultivating an intellectual force to serve the cause of national salvation and modernization.

In the present context, where Vietnam is promoting a fundamental and comprehensive reform of its education system to meet the demands of sustainable development in an era of integration, the study, exploration, and application of educational thought from historical figures like Phan Bội Châu is of great significance. This article aims to elucidate the educational thought of Phan Bội Châu and analyze its implications for contemporary educational reform, to build a humanistic, progressive, and modern education system that aligns with the historical and cultural characteristics of the Vietnamese nation in the current stage of development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Phan Bội Châu stands as a seminal figure in the intellectual and political history of modern Vietnam. As a revolutionary thinker whose educational philosophy was intrinsically linked to the cause of national independence and social transformation, his thought has been the subject of considerable academic attention. The existing body of scholarship, ranging from biographical and historical analyses to ideological and philosophical interpretations, has contributed significantly to our understanding of his multifaceted legacy. However, gaps remain

in capturing the full depth and complexity of his educational thought, particularly in its philosophical foundations and intercultural influences.

One of the foundational works on Phan Bội Châu's life and ideas is *Phan Bội Châu* by Thanh (1978), which offers a chronological account of the evolution of his thought. Through a close reading of his literary output, especially his poems and political treatises, Thanh illustrates the intimate connection between Phan's revolutionary activities and his vision for education as a means of national revival. The book presents education not merely as a technical or institutional matter, but as a cultural and ideological battleground.

Boudarel (1997), in *Phan Bội Châu and Vietnamese Society in His Era*, adopts a broader interpretive framework by situating Phan's ideas within the geopolitical shifts of East Asia and the global wave of modernist reform. His analysis underscores the transformative potential Phan attributed to education not only as a tool for personal enlightenment but as a vehicle for collective emancipation and the modernization of Vietnamese society. Boudarel's work is notable for its emphasis on Phan's transnational engagement, highlighting his efforts to learn from Japan, China, and the West.

Complementing these historical and biographical approaches is the conference volume *Phan Bội Châu – The Man and His Career* (1997), published by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi. This collection assembles a diverse array of scholarly contributions that examine different dimensions of Phan's life and legacy. Several essays within the volume place his educational thought at the heart of his strategic vision, portraying him as a thinker who saw intellectual cultivation as the foundation for building a new national identity grounded in patriotism, ethical responsibility, and scientific rationality.

From a more synthetic and philosophical standpoint, Giàu (1998), in *The Development of Thought in Vietnam from the 19th Century to the August Revolution*, situates Phan Bội Châu within the broader intellectual currents of modern Vietnamese history. Giàu recognizes Phan as a transitional figure, both steeped in the Confucian tradition and open to reformist influences from abroad. His work highlights education as a central axis in Phan's thought system, linking the moral cultivation of the individual with the broader aims of national salvation and modernization.

Similarly, Chính and Thịnh (2007), in *The Transformation of Vietnamese Political Thought at the Turn of the 20th Century through Key Figures*, focus on the ideological realignment that characterized the period, with Phan Bội Châu as a paradigmatic case. They emphasize how his educational thought functioned as a mechanism for social mobility and

political awakening, aimed at forging an enlightened elite capable of leading the country through a period of profound upheaval.

Despite the richness of this literature, some limitations can be identified. Much of the current research tends to emphasize the functional and instrumental dimensions of Phan Bội Châu's educational vision, without fully addressing the philosophical and epistemological sources from which it drew. In particular, there remains a lack of in-depth exploration of how Phan engaged with and reinterpreted elements of Confucian moral philosophy, Buddhist humanism, and Western liberal-democratic ideals. Moreover, although Marxist educational principles had not yet fully permeated Vietnamese thought during Phan's active years, certain anticipatory elements in his thinking, such as the emphasis on mass education, class awareness, and the liberation of the oppressed, deserve closer scrutiny.

This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the field by offering a more integrated and nuanced account of Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy. It aims to go beyond surface-level content analysis by uncovering the dialogical and syncretic processes through which Phan constructed his vision, drawing from disparate traditions to forge an educational ideology that was at once nationalistic, reformist, and cosmopolitan. By doing so, this research hopes to clarify the intellectual architecture of Phan's thought and to demonstrate its enduring relevance for contemporary educational reform in Vietnam and beyond.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in a multi-dimensional theoretical framework that synthesizes insights from three key pillars to critically examine Phan Bội Châu's educational thought within its historical and contemporary significance:

Socio-historical approach: This perspective situates Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy within the complex socio-political context of early 20th-century Vietnam and the broader currents of global transformation. By analyzing the historical conditions, including colonial domination, the decline of Confucian orthodoxy, and the rise of nationalist movements, this approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how Phan's educational vision emerged as a strategic response to national crisis and modernization demands.

Cultural and ideological hybridization: Drawing on theories of intercultural exchange and ideological synthesis, this approach explores how Phan Bội Châu appropriated, adapted, and reconfigured diverse intellectual traditions, including Confucian humanism, Buddhist ethics,

Western liberal-democratic ideals, and early Marxist principles. Rather than adopting these traditions wholesale, Phan engaged in a dynamic process of selection and reinterpretation, creating a hybrid educational discourse that was both rooted in Vietnamese cultural identity and oriented toward global modernity.

Educational reform theory: This theoretical lens enables a systematic comparison between Phan's educational thought and contemporary frameworks for educational innovation and reform. It provides the conceptual tools to evaluate the relevance of his ideas in light of Vietnam's current efforts to fundamentally renovate its education system toward holistic human development, international integration, and responsiveness to social needs. Through this lens, the study seeks to distill enduring values and actionable insights from Phan's thought for present-day policy and pedagogical reform.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a qualitative analytical approach, combining several complementary methods to achieve a comprehensive and context-sensitive examination of Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy:

Content analysis: The study conducts close readings of Phan's original works including poems, essays, memoirs, and personal correspondence to identify, extract, and systematize the core elements of his educational thought. This method allows for an internal reconstruction of his conceptual framework based on primary sources.

Historical method: By embedding Phan's thought within the socio-political and intellectual developments of late 19th and early 20th-century Vietnam, this method elucidates the historical drivers, tensions, and aspirations that shaped his educational vision. It also helps trace the transformation of traditional educational values under the pressures of colonialism and modernization.

Comparative method: This approach contrasts Phan Bội Châu's educational ideas with other contemporary and historical intellectual movements both domestic and international. The goal is to highlight his distinctive contributions, as well as the continuities and divergences between his thought and prevailing ideologies, such as Neo-Confucian reformism, Western modernism, and early Marxist humanism.

Modern relevance analysis: Building on insights from the aforementioned methods, this final stage of the research identifies aspects of Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy that

retain practical and theoretical significance in today's context. It offers critical reflections on how his thought can inform current educational reforms in Vietnam, particularly in fostering national identity, global citizenship, and sustainable development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Content in Phan Bội Châu's educational thought

First, Phan Bội Châu's views on the role, purpose, and subjects of education

Throughout his active participation in the Duy Tân (Modernization) and revolutionary movements, Phan Bội Châu had numerous opportunities to observe, learn from, and synthesize experiences drawn from the education systems of advanced nations. It was from such practical engagement that he developed a profound understanding of the essential role education plays in the struggle for national liberation and national reconstruction. According to him, education is not merely a framework for shaping individuals, expanding knowledge, and nurturing the soul and character, but more importantly, it serves as the foundation for cultivating patriotism and national consciousness, thereby contributing to the holistic development of the Vietnamese people. He asserted: "With education, the people's intellect will be enlightened, their spirit strengthened, and their rights empowered" (Châu, 2001, p. 179). For Phan Bội Châu, education was a critical tool for promoting reform, initiating revolution, expelling French colonialists, and ultimately building a strong and prosperous nation.

He further regarded education as the cornerstone of the political and social institutions of a country. In *Tân Việt Nam (New Vietnam)*, he emphasized: "Education molds people. Officials and soldiers come from it. Education is also the root from which political institutions grow. Taxation, law, and everything else derives from it" (Châu, 2001, p. 184). Therefore, he saw education as a foundational and urgent national task not only because of its role in human and national development but also in response to the alarming state of Vietnamese society at the time. The majority of the population remained mired in ignorance, their intellect undeveloped, their spirit weakened, and their lives impoverished; they endured suffering in submission, serving the ruling class without resistance. He lamented: "Our people today remain trapped in a deep slumber, buried in ignorance and delusion" (Châu, 2001, p. 124).

Troubled by this intellectual and spiritual backwardness, Phan Bội Châu expressed deep concern about the miserable lives, weakened spirit, narrow awareness, and short-sightedness of his fellow countrymen. He wrote: "Our people are foolish and naïve, unable to claim national

sovereignty or protect the destiny of the nation. Day and night, they devote all their strength and blood to feed the tyrants and usurpers! Alas, how pitiful!” (Châu, 2001, p. 179).

Moreover, he strongly criticized the colonial “policy of stupefaction” imposed by the French. Under the guise of “civilizing” the Vietnamese people, the French implemented an enslaving education system aimed at maintaining subjugation and obedience. Initially, they preserved the outdated, rote-learning Confucian model; later, they deliberately built a system tailored to their colonial rule. In *Heaven! Empire!*, he wrote:

After the country was lost, not only did the French fail to bring a proper education to the Vietnamese, but they increasingly forced a system of enslaved, beast-like education upon them. When they first invaded Vietnam, the French encouraged the old-fashioned exam-based learning of eight-legged essays, poetry, maxims, and rhetorical flourishes. (Châu, 2001, p. 280)

Of the new French education system, he criticized: “It merely turns the Vietnamese into docile oxen and horses, blind, deaf, and paralyzed slaves. How pitiful indeed!” (Châu, 2001, p. 181).

From this awareness, Phan Bội Châu considered the development of education to raise intellectual capacity, personal character, civic values, and social consciousness an essential and urgent task of the era, one that preoccupied him deeply. In *On the Issue of Education in Our Country*, he affirmed: “The issue of education was an urgent necessity for our nation at that time” (Châu, 2001, p. 213).

Phan Bội Châu devoted considerable attention to researching and proposing educational issues through a series of major works and essays, including *New Vietnam*, *Blood Letter from Abroad*, *On the Purpose and Value of Literature*, *Citizens' Guide for Vietnamese Men*, *Citizens' Guide for Vietnamese Women*, *The Cure for Poverty*, *Heaven! Empire!*... In these works, he not only offered in-depth analyses and explanations of his educational philosophy but also systematically outlined educational principles, content, and, most importantly, the ultimate purpose and noble significance of education in human and national development.

According to Phan Bội Châu, the foremost goal of education is to enhance the intelligence, morality, and consciousness of the Vietnamese people. Only when individuals are well-educated can they possess the knowledge, willpower, and determination to rise against colonialism and reclaim their freedom and independence. He believed that education not only contributes to individual self-perfection but also plays an essential role in shaping the nation's

destiny and development. Education, in his view, also fosters civic awareness, altruism, and social responsibility—drivers of national prosperity and progress. He affirmed: “Only through attention to education can people abandon self-interest and embrace public good, thereby leading the nation to strength and advancement” (Châu, 2001, p. 185).

When discussing the target groups of education, Phan Bội Châu argued that it is the shared responsibility of both the government and society as a whole. He emphasized that education is essential for everyone, regardless of age, gender, social class, or economic status, because “*we learn first and foremost to become human*” (Châu, 2001, p. 259). In particular, he paid special attention to the education of soldiers and women, two groups he considered vital to society.

According to him, soldiers are the direct defenders of the nation, maintainers of social order, and supporters of labor and production. Therefore, they must receive a comprehensive education to develop a strong sense of duty and be prepared to sacrifice for the nation. He wrote:

Soldiers must help farmers, traders, open land and relocate people, strengthen the country, and empower the people. Without proper education, how could they be willing to lay down their lives for the nation, out of love for their compatriots, and help the country prosper day by day? (Châu, 2001, p. 185)

He also especially emphasized the role of women in the revival of the nation. As mothers and wives, women not only raise future generations but also directly shape the personality, ideology, and morality of children from early childhood. Therefore, women’s education is not only a necessity but also a key factor in raising public awareness and promoting comprehensive social development.

Second, Phan Bội Châu’s views on the content, principles, and methods of education

Stemming from the urgent historical and social demands of Vietnam at the turn of the 20th century, particularly the missions of human and national liberation, Phan Bội Châu placed great emphasis on the content of education. According to him, educational content must be holistic, encompassing all three essential dimensions: intellectual education (*trí dục*), moral education (*đức dục*), and physical education (*thể dục*). Education should not be limited to natural scientific knowledge but must extend into the domains of the social sciences as well. It should not only foster traditional moral virtues such as *benevolence (nhân)*, *righteousness (nghĩa)*,

propriety (lễ), wisdom (trí), trustworthiness (tín), respect for elders (kính đễ), diligence (cần), frugality (kiệm), honesty (trung thực), integrity (thành tín), and sense of shame (liêm sỉ), but also promote modern social and individual ethical standards such as virtue (công), grace (dung), eloquence (ngôn), and propriety (hạnh).

Particularly, Phan Bội Châu underscored the importance of disseminating new forms of knowledge associated with the development of the era, including science, economics, military affairs, jurisprudence, information, industry, agriculture, commerce, forestry, medicine, as well as ideological, political, and social fields such as democracy, civil rights, national sovereignty, independence, freedom, self-reliance, and equality. From a comprehensive perspective, his educational philosophy aimed at shaping well-rounded individuals who not only possessed a deep understanding of moral principles (such as the duties of a child, a father, or a mother) but who also had a strong awareness of their civic responsibilities to themselves, their families, society, the nation, and the people. Within this framework, the cultivation of patriotism, national identity, and values that contribute to the practical well-being of the people and the country constituted the core themes of education.

Phan Bội Châu wrote:

From the royal court to the wider society, all earnestly focus on education on moral education and physical education without omission. We must study from China, Japan, and Europe, and acquire all that is beneficial. Nursery schools, youth academies, and primary, secondary, and higher education institutions should be found everywhere, in cities and rural areas. The manner of organizing schools, arranging teaching and learning, and appointing qualified individuals should follow the best practices of countries like Japan and those in Europe. People must study philosophy, literature, history, politics, economics, military science, law ... along with industrial arts, commerce, agriculture, domestic science, medicine, and forestry. Furthermore, before entering primary school, everyone should already be literate in the national script (Quốc ngữ), capable of reading newspapers and accessing current news, and able to understand essays and public discussions. In this way, public knowledge is expanded. Once admitted into primary schools, students must commit fully to learning, as this forms the foundation for cultivating national identity. Moreover, all textbooks, whether at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level, should be compiled by the Ministry of Education, reviewed with public consultation, and approved by the National Assembly. The entirety of educational content must aim at nurturing patriotism, mutual trust and love among citizens, enlightenment of the people, empowerment of civil rights, and advancement for all. (Châu, 2001, pp. 184–185)

In particular, recognizing Vietnam's technical and productive backwardness and the growing need for vocational development, Phan Bội Châu demonstrated remarkable foresight in emphasizing the necessity of developing a nationwide system of vocational training schools. In *New Vietnam*, he wrote: "Technical schools must be established throughout the country to train craftsmen: miners, goldsmiths, gunsmiths, machinists, producers of goods for trade, toolmakers for agriculture, skilled painters, talented tailors indeed, for every craft imaginable, there must be masters" (Châu, 2001, p. 188). With a lifelong devotion to the cause of public education, Phan Bội Châu also proposed a structured educational framework for the national education system, guided by the principle that:

It should be divided into three stages. The first stage includes children from the ages of six to sixteen. During this period, they should receive a traditional education focused on ethical and moral values. The curriculum should emphasize the national script (Quốc ngữ) and classical Chinese (Hán văn), as well as practical general knowledge. This stage is akin to nourishing a young child with the mother's milk, the earliest stage of development. The second stage encompasses those aged sixteen to twenty-four or twenty-five. Here, modern education should be emphasized, with instruction primarily in Western languages, though still incorporating some classical Chinese. The focus should be on scientific and intellectual development to cultivate useful talents capable of engaging with the present and future world. This is the second stage. The final stage, stage three, should offer a hybrid education that harmonizes Eastern and Western traditions, blending the old and the new. (Châu, 2001, p. 215)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PHAN BỘI CHÂU'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN VIETNAM

With its emphasis on comprehensive education, Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy not only holds deep theoretical value, contributing richly and vividly to the intellectual heritage of Vietnamese educational thought, but also bears significant practical meaning in the nation's historical development. His educational vision represents the crystallization of three aspirations: national independence, intellectual enlightenment of the people (*Khai dân trí*), and the desire to build a progressive society through the transformative power of education.

Nonetheless, due to the historical conditions of his time, Phan Bội Châu's philosophy still exhibited certain limitations. In terms of both content and methods, his educational thinking remained heavily influenced by Confucian traditions and did not fully depart from the epistemological framework of classical Confucianism. This is evident in his continued use of

traditional concepts and categories such as *ren* (nhân), *yi* (nghĩa), *li* (lễ), *Zhi* (trí), *xin* (tín); the ideal of the *junzi* (quân tử); and the vision of a *Great Unity* (xã hội đại đồng) to articulate educational principles. Despite his radical ideological shift from monarchism to bourgeois democracy, and even initial engagement with Marxism–Leninism, his transformation remained, to some extent, constrained by the influence of earlier ideological systems and lacked a fully revolutionary shift in methodology and worldview.

Even so, it would be mistaken to overlook the enduring and positive contributions of Phan Bội Châu's educational thought. His educational philosophy is not only relevant to the Vietnamese society of the late 19th and early 20th centuries but continues to hold valuable significance for contemporary national educational reform. These enduring values may be summarized as follows:

Firstly, holistic human education. Rooted in the specific social demands and historical realities of Vietnam in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century, as well as in response to a backward and fragmented educational system, Phan Bội Châu was among the earliest Vietnamese thinkers to affirm the importance of educating the whole person. He advocated for a well-rounded education encompassing multiple dimensions: natural sciences, social sciences, vocational and technical training, moral and ethical cultivation, and the dissemination of progressive ideas such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and equality, especially patriotism, national consciousness, and a strong sense of community.

He wrote: “Study philosophy, literature, history, politics, economics, military science, law ... Study industry, commerce, agriculture, domestic arts, medicine, and forestry” (Châu, 2001, p. 184). He aimed to develop well-rounded individuals equipped with the knowledge, morality, and practical capacity to contribute to the cause of human and national liberation, as well as to the task of national construction and development. This concept of holistic education constitutes a central element in Phan Bội Châu's philosophy and remains deeply relevant to Vietnam's current educational renovation and reform efforts.

Inheriting and advancing the national tradition of education, particularly the notion of comprehensive human development found in Phan Bội Châu's thought, the Vietnamese Communist Party has, in the current context of renovation and international integration, affirmed holistic education as a central and urgent mission. The orientation for educational reform has been clearly articulated in the shift from a knowledge-transmission-centered model to one focused on the development of learners' competencies and qualities, from learning to pass exams to learning to work, to live responsibly, and to function effectively in society.

The Resolution of the 8th Plenum of the 11th Party Central Committee stated:

Renew curricula to develop learners' competencies and qualities harmoniously, integrating moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic education; to teach people, teach knowledge, and teach vocational skills. Reform educational content toward streamlining, modern relevance, practicality, age and level appropriateness, and professional alignment; increase hands-on practice and application of knowledge to real life. Emphasize character education, morality, lifestyle, legal knowledge, and civic awareness. Focus on core values of culture, national traditions, and ethics; on the humanistic and essential values of Marxism–Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh Thought. Enhance physical education, national defense knowledge, security, and career orientation. Teach foreign languages and informatics in a standardized and practical manner, ensuring learners' effective usage. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013, p. 128)

Continuing this spirit, the Documents of the 13th National Party Congress stressed the goal of: “Educating individuals with ethics, discipline, order, and civic and social responsibility; with life skills, work skills, foreign language competence, digital and information technology literacy, creative thinking, and the ability to integrate globally (as global citizens)” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, pp. 232–233)

Secondly, educating patriotism, national spirit, and the will to self-reliance. In the context of the country being under colonial domination, imbued with the spirit of “when the nation is lost, the family is ruined,” Phan Bội Châu asserted that the most important task of education at that time was to awaken and nurture patriotism, national consciousness, and the will for self-reliance and independence in every Vietnamese citizen. According to him, to save the nation, one must first save the people's intellect; and to save the people's intellect, education is the only path, particularly education that instills patriotism.

Phan Bội Châu emphasized: “Education is the means to enlighten the people's intellect, revive their spirit, and improve their livelihood,” a core ideology that runs through his entire revolutionary career and educational philosophy. Here, “enlightening the people's intellect” refers to raising awareness and broadening knowledge; “reviving their spirit” means arousing national pride, the will to independence, and self-reliance; and “improving their livelihood” refers to advancing both material and spiritual well-being, thereby enhancing the people's quality of life. Education, in his view, was not merely the acquisition of academic knowledge but a path to national awakening. Hence, in his educational reform proposals, he placed particular emphasis on integrating patriotism as a central component of the curriculum from

textbooks to both in-school and extracurricular educational activities. All educational content, he asserted, must “cultivate a love for the homeland and mutual trust among the people,” thereby fostering a civic consciousness toward the nation and its people.

Phan Bội Châu's philosophy of patriotic education continues to be inherited and developed within the educational guidelines of the Communist Party of Vietnam today. The Documents of the 13th National Congress of the Party underscore the role of education in shaping a generation of citizens with deep patriotism, revolutionary ideals, and a strong sense of social responsibility: “Emphasize the teaching of national history and cultural traditions; foster patriotism, national pride, ideals of living, and the aspiration for a prosperous and happy nation” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 232), and

Place greater emphasis on moral education, personality development, creative capacities, and core values, especially in nurturing patriotism, national pride and dignity, historical consciousness, and social responsibility among all social strata, particularly the younger generation; preserve and promote the good cultural identity of the Vietnamese people; arouse the aspiration for national development and firmly defend the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Integrate knowledge education, moral education, aesthetics, life skills, and physical education to enhance the overall stature of the Vietnamese people. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, pp. 136–137)

Particularly, to foster the comprehensive development of human capital, including the task of building a high-quality workforce, the Party emphasizes that in the current era of rapid scientific and technological advancement, especially in information technology, the world is undergoing profound transformations brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Science and technology have become direct productive forces, playing an increasingly vital role in the development of the productive capacities of society; intellectual content is growing ever more significant in both material and spiritual products. Accordingly, the direction has been set: “Develop human resources, education, and training to meet the demands for high-quality labor in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 231).

Thirdly, education is linked to vocational and practical skills development. One of the remarkable aspects of Phan Bội Châu's educational philosophy is his early recognition of the importance of vocational and technical education for the socio-economic development of the country. In the early 20th century, when Vietnam was still a backward agrarian society with

rudimentary manual production techniques, he affirmed that education must not focus solely on scholarly knowledge or moral teachings, but must be closely aligned with the practical demands of life. It must promote occupational development and production skills to improve people's livelihood and build the nation.

In his work, *Tân Việt Nam (New Vietnam)*, Phan Bội Châu explicitly wrote:

Vocational schools must be opened throughout the country to train workers: miners, goldsmiths, gunsmiths, machine makers, goods manufacturers for trade, toolmakers for farming, skilled painters, talented tailors, every trade must have its craftspeople. (Châu, 2001, p. 188)

Through this, he laid the ideological groundwork for vocational-oriented education—a progressive and highly practical vision. According to him, education must aim to train individuals with practical skills who can contribute to various sectors such as agriculture, industry, commerce, forestry, and medicine, serving the development of the nation concretely. This vision closely aligns with the model of *practical learning for practical work*, that is, learning to work, to live, and to serve society, not merely to pass exams or seek fame.

This educational thought of Phan Bội Châu is entirely consistent with the Party's views in the current period of national renovation. The 13th National Congress Document states: “Develop vocational education with fundamental and strong improvements in quality and effectiveness; closely align vocational education with labor market demands, employment, sustainable livelihoods, and social welfare” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 233).

Today, vocational education, practical skills training, entrepreneurship, and innovation are central focuses in educational reform. Phan Bội Châu's forward-looking ideas remain a guiding light, affirming both the strategic vision and the immense practical value of his educational philosophy.

Fourthly, educational development must be closely linked to the practical realities of societal development. In his educational philosophy, Phan Bội Châu emphasized that educational reform must be synchronized in terms of content, methodology, organization, management, training, talent recruitment and utilization, and, most importantly, must be tailored to the specific characteristics and practical demands of Vietnam's historical and social context. For this reason, teaching methods must be applied flexibly; no single method should be absolutized. Teaching should adapt to circumstances and learners, aiming to convey knowledge that is truly beneficial to the student.

To achieve the goal of comprehensive human development, education must be a collaborative effort between schools and society. While schools should ensure a holistic educational approach, they must also provide specialized training in professional skills that align with the real needs of society. In this regard, the ability to anticipate and forecast social demands plays a crucial role in shaping effective educational strategies. This viewpoint was not only valuable during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it also remains a significant historical lesson for Vietnam's current efforts in educational reform and development.

In the context of international integration, the development of a workforce that is both sufficient in quantity and strong in quality has become an urgent and decisive factor. To meet this fundamental and pressing requirement, the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed:

Developing education and training alongside science and technology is the top national policy; investing in education and training is investing in development. Promote a fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training in accordance with the needs of social development. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p. 77)

Simultaneously, the Party has emphasized the need to

Train human resources to be ethical, disciplined, and law-abiding, with a sense of civic and social responsibility; equipped with life skills, work skills, foreign language proficiency, digital and information technology competence, creative thinking, and the ability to integrate internationally. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 233)

Furthermore, it is necessary to comprehensively promote innovation and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of state management, as well as professional governance in education and training. This includes gradually implementing an effective autonomy mechanism coupled with accountability in educational institutions; building a healthy educational environment; decisively overcoming the obsession with achievements; and strictly preventing and addressing negative phenomena in education and training.

Other vital measures include: improving and stabilizing quality assessment and accreditation systems; reforming high school graduation exams and university, college, and vocational entrance exams; and developing a robust strategy for international cooperation and integration in education and training. In addition, mechanisms and policies must be improved to foster high-quality scientific research and technology transfer in educational institutions. The

Party affirms: “Tightly integrate education and training with research, development, and the application of scientific and technological advances; establish centers of excellence and strong innovation groups” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 138).

In the context of the scientific and technological revolution and international integration, the 13th National Congress set forth the requirement to:

Effectively develop and implement a strategy for international cooperation and integration in education and training. Strive to transform Vietnam into a leading country in education and training in the region, reaching the advanced level of the world, and participating in the global human resource training market. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 140)

Continuing the spirit of the 12th Congress, the documents of the 13th Congress place renewed emphasis on improving mechanisms and policies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of scientific research and technology transfer in educational and training institutions. A notable addition in the 13th Congress is the call to: “Tightly link education and training with research, deployment, and application of new scientific and technological achievements; develop centers of excellence and strong innovation teams” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 139).

Alongside emphasizing the role, position, and social responsibility of educators, it is imperative to strongly reform policies on incentives and welfare to develop a qualified teaching and education management workforce, which is considered a pivotal factor. The 13th National Congress documents underscore: “Synchronously implement mechanisms, policies, and solutions to improve living standards and enhance the qualifications and quality of teachers and education managers” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 231)

The focus is also on developing leading experts and scientists; enhancing the technical, digital, technological management, enterprise administration, and social management workforce capable of organizing life and human care.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Phan Bội Châu’s educational thought constitutes an essential component of the profound intellectual legacy he bequeathed to the Vietnamese nation.

Born from a fervent desire for national independence, self-reliance, and progress in a time of historical turbulence, Phan Bội Châu developed a progressive, profound, and

strategically oriented educational philosophy. To him, education was not merely a mold for training and shaping the intellect, character, and personal values of the Vietnamese people; it was also a vital means to nurture patriotism and national consciousness, ultimately fostering the full development of the Vietnamese individual. From this foundation, the people would be empowered with the talent and courage necessary to rise against French colonialism, reclaim national independence and freedom, and build a prosperous and strong country.

Although his thought was influenced to some extent by Confucianism and still bore certain limitations of his era, Phan Bội Châu's educational vision demonstrated a spirit of reform, a broad perspective, and a profound sense of global integration. This is especially evident in his call to learn from the educational models of Japan, China, and Western countries. His insights remain highly relevant today, providing guidance for Vietnam's current efforts toward a fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training, one that aims to develop well-rounded human beings, promote international integration, address practical societal needs, and contribute to the sustainable development of the nation. Studying and applying Phan Bội Châu's educational thought not only deepens our understanding of a crucial stage in the evolution of Vietnamese intellectual history but also enriches the theoretical foundations of national education. At the same time, it helps revive and promote core values such as patriotism, self-study, and self-reliance qualities that are essential for the cause of national construction and defense in the contemporary era.

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