

Clandestinity and Control

# The Macao Congress of the Indochina Communist Party (27-31 March, 1935)

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Undoubtedly clandestine or semi-secret organisations have a long history in Macao if we think of proto-Republicans and Masonics in the age of Portuguese monarchy, guilds and triads in the Chinese tradition, Chinese reformists and revolutionaries including the early Kuomintang (KMT) and the subject of this paper, underground communists, not especially Chinese or local, but Vietnamese. Just as clandestinity might be defined as the quality or state of secrecy or furtiveness in evading control or surveillance in order to accomplish sometimes illicit goals, so late colonial Macao provided such a liminal space. Control in colonial spheres was obviously about neutralising anti-colonial activities but in Macao, as the Macao Conference (14-26 June 1934) and subsequent Congress (27-31 March 1935) of the Indochina Communist Party (ICP) revealed, controls seemed to have broken down. Either the Portuguese authorities in Macao were outfoxed by the Vietnamese communist conspirators against French rule in Indochina, or just hands-off lest Macao’s relationship with the authorities in Canton (Guangzhou) be

compromised, or even secretly sympathetic to their broad goals

Apparently unknown to the Portuguese authorities, at least not entering Portuguese archival sources, Vietnamese communists chose Macao to host the landmark first national conference of the newly-formed ICP bringing to the colony a veritable Who’s Who of first generation Vietnamese and ethnic minority communist leaders. Yet, notwithstanding the clandestine character of the underground organisation, codes of secrecy, and use of aliases, etc., they were compromised and penetrated, not by the Salazarist authorities but, apparently unknown to them, by the French. Certainly it is a mystery that the motley collection of Vietnamese and ethnic minority delegates sojourning over a relatively long period of time in the Portuguese colony, even setting up a printing operation, remained undetected. Or, could it have been that the Portuguese authorities turned a blind eye to the foreigners, well knowing that their arrests would entail a long and complex legal-extradition process, as with the earlier Sung Man Cho/Ho Chi Minh case in the British colony, only settled in the plaintiff’s favour in January 1933 after a 20-month legal contest reaching to the Privy Council in London.

This article, accordingly, seeks to offer some home truths on clandestine organisations in Macao, the transient connection between Vietnam and Macao as signalled by the gathering of Vietnamese communist conference delegates, the Macao Congress itself, and the future. First, it discusses the clandestinity trope with respect to Macao, at least as the other side of

colonial control. Second, it tracks the Indochina-Macao connection highlighting the occasional presence in Macao of Vietnamese anti-colonial nationalists. Third, it situates Macao within the broader Macao-Hong Kong-Canton triangle with respect to late 1920s-early 1930s radicalism. Fourth, it describes with some wonderment how the actual Macao Conference and its sequel, the Macao Congress, ever happened despite colonial controls. Fifth, the paper concludes with some remarks upon the importance of the Macao Conference/Congress in the broader sweep of history including the respective fortunes and fates of the attendees, otherwise slipping out of the grasp of the colonial authorities.

## I. THE CLANDESTINITY (AND CONTROL) TROPE

Just as clandestinity might be defined as the quality or state of secrecy or furtiveness in evading control or surveillance in order to accomplish sometimes illicit goals, so late colonial Macao, itself a political anomaly, provided such a hypothetical space. A range of group and organisations in late colonial Macao always occupied a liminal space depending upon political conjuncture. The interwar period which this essay addresses also coincides with more seismic social and political changes taking place in China, also touching Macao. But firmly under the *ditadura* of António de Oliveira Salazar, enemies of the state were also forced into the underground, where they were not only subjected to the full weight of the regime, which included incarceration in the penal system, but also deported, as was the case with criminals from Macao to the utterly remote Southeast Asian colony of Timor. To be sure, communism and leftist political groups were anathema to the New State (Estado Novo) and fell under the strict control of the political police and censorship regime. Yet in this profoundly Chinese grounded society other actors vied and sometimes clashed over economic spoils—pirates, triads, and gangsters—certainly also embedded in social tradition. These were also clandestine worlds—it could hardly be otherwise—as mostly their activities were illegal, albeit still thriving on the margins of society. Doubtless, as well, much ambiguity and slippage existed between the laws, corrupt officialdom of whatever nationality, and practice.

A number of narrative histories on Macao have also acknowledged the clandestinity trope at various stages in Macao’s modern history. No doubt such activities could be defined by their ‘pre-modern’ as opposed to ‘modern’ faces, as with the case of traditional Chinese secret society activities, criminal activities, and the role of Triads, etc., but in Macao we are also reminded of their longevity, at least their ability to morph into new forms.

For example, Bertil Lintner, in *Blood Brothers: Crime, Business and Politics in Asia* (2003), offers a chapter on Macao’s role as a platform for money-laundering, and business-government links, whether colonial or mainland Chinese. According to one review, by placing recent developments within their historical context, Lintner ‘enables us to understand the diplomatic skill of those real arbiters of local politics, the magnates Stanley Ho and Henry Fok’ (Fabre 2004).

Following the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, Macao also emerged as a refuge and base for such reformists as Kang Yuwei 康有为 who arrived in the Portuguese colony in November 1886, followed by Liang Qichao 梁启超 who launched the newspaper *Zhi Xin Bao* 知新报 (The Reformer China) (Wu Zhilang, 1999, p. 284). But in the case of the Qing official Jing Yuanshan 经元善, who fled to Macao in February 1900, the Portuguese were placed in a bind, especially as the Qing sought his arrest and extradition for embezzlement in line with the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Amity and Commerce of December 1887. But backed by the pro-reform ‘Royalist Association’ in Macao, and standing down a Qing appeal to the High Court in Lisbon, the Portuguese declared Jing Yuanshun a ‘political offender’, offering him the right to seek political exile (Fei Chengkang, 1996, pp. 320-321). Obviously an important precedent had been established for future would-be exiles and political refugees. What should be generally understood about extradition law, however, was its Eurocentric character or, at least evolution through European practice dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, apparently, lacking analogous East Asian precedents.<sup>1</sup>

Moving on to the modern period, the public activities of Sun Yat Sen 孙逸仙 in Macao are well-known, although the clandestine networks of his support organisation also offer a mirror on his activities. Certain of his Masonic interlocutors in Macao also maintained a semi-secret brotherhood, although

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not necessarily conspiratorial. But Sun Yat Sen also revealed a penchant for harnessing traditional Chinese underground organisational activities as with the Tong Meng Hui 同盟会 (DeKorn, 1934), a branch of which was set up in Macao in 1909. As an organisation dedicated to the overthrow of the Qing government, the Macao-based Tong Meng Hui obviously did not advertise its existence to the Portuguese authorities. Even so, the later KMT undoubtedly kept up a semi-clandestine existence in Macao, although this appears to me to be a less well-researched topic (cf. Fei Chengkang, 1996, pp. 328-330; Chan, 2013).

Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and, in its wake, the ICP, also adopted a full gamut of Leninist strategies to disguise their presence. Aside from cell structures, secrecy and code language, members also adopted pseudonyms and some even cross-dressed (as with one celebrated Vietnamese women youth delegate boarding ship from Saigon to Canton). On his part, Ho Chi Minh also dressed ‘up’ in the guise of a rich traveling merchant, such as during his clandestine visit

Entrance gate of Quoc-Hoc High School, Hue, central Vietnam, through which passed such eminent Vietnamese revolutionaries as Ho Chi Minh (expelled) and Ha Huy Tap (graduated).



to Shanghai in February 1933 following release from prison in Hong Kong. Other Vietnamese anti-colonial nationalists, as with the aristocratic Prince Cuong De (as discussed below) sometimes dressed down as ‘coolies’ to evade detection.

The war years in Macao were also emblematic of the clandestinity trope and not only a reference to wartime Macao’s ‘Casablanca in the Orient’ image and indeed role, as with the activities of foreign agents and consuls. Only decades after the events, we learn of the underground role of the CCP inside Macao during these years in league with the heroic actions of the West River guerrillas (cf. *Macao during the Sino-Japanese War*, 2001).

Portuguese scholar Moisés Silva Fernandes (2006) has also alluded to Macao as a ‘*centro de espionagem*’ or spy centre through the 1950s and 1960s, as with the role of agents of Beijing in infiltrating the territory especially via the Nam Kwong enterprise. More recently, Washington has charged a local Macao bank with dealing with North Korea, alongside other money laundering activities, just as North Korea has upheld a discreet, if not clandestine post-war presence in Macao at least until recent times. More generally, in her landmark text on the negotiations leading to the retrocession of Macao to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, Carmen Amado Mendes (2013, p. 9) alludes to the ‘ambiguity’ of Macao under Portuguese administration, a status only partly resolved in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is no dearth of examples illustrating a liminal Macao space in this sense.

With respect to the Macao conference/congress of the ICP, we wonder just how arriving Vietnamese communist agents secreted themselves in Macao? We wonder as to their local networks and reception? In other words who were their local contacts and who covered up for them in Macao? We also wonder as to their guise or camouflage, allowing them to melt into local Macao society. Did they dress up, say as wealthy merchants, or dress down? What kind of travel documents did they use? Real or forged? We also wonder as to their language skills.

CENSORSHIP AND CONTROL UNDER THE *DITADURA*

Compounding the difficulties of the Vietnamese nationalists and communists was the question of colonial controls, always tight in Macao but ratcheting up under the impressively anti-communist Salazar regime. Writing of the birth of Salazar’s New State

between July 1930 and April 1933, Douglas Wheeler (1978, p. 251) writes that with the strengthening of the secret police, known as PIDE after 1945, the state structure was almost complete, just as the New State imposed order by means of ‘censorship, police terror and more subtle devices’. Nevertheless, he declaims, it was unable to totally suppress neither the opposition nor the memories of the earlier positive parts of the Republican experience. By implication not all Portuguese embraced the New State, just as dissent frequently surfaced on the part of socialists and liberals, for example (albeit with numbers deported to the colonies and with others languishing in penitentiaries). Still there was rule of law alongside a dictatorial system. Notably, and in contrast to its colonial counterparts, Portugal eschewed the death penalty, possibly making places like Macao a pole of attraction for would-be conspirators trapped in a life-and-death struggle.

Repression in the African colonies was of course even less subtle. Colonies such as Timor were not only used as dumping grounds for metropolitan political *deportados* but significant numbers of local Macao Chinese and others in Macao were deported to the half-island colony in the 1931-1937 period, a practice continuing into the 1950s. The record is not altogether clear in the case of Macao but British colonial practice during the late 1920s and 1930s also saw deportations of suspected Chinese communists to China under Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蒋介石).

Control of anti-colonial left-wing forces was a shared feature across British, French, and Dutch colonies and it would be surprising if Portugal stood outside of this kind of intra-colonial cooperation. In fact, as taken up below, the French authorities in Indochina would more than once lean upon their Portuguese counterparts to arrest and deport Indochinese political activists and alleged criminals.

But special policing was also brought into play in Macao where the Portuguese were separated by language and traditions from local cultures. To this end, dedicated institutions were also brought into play, as with the Repartição Técnica do Expediente Sinico, an elite government department founded in 1885 bringing together specialists in Chinese language and politics to monitor local and mainland Chinese affairs. At a time prior to the establishment of a Portuguese consulate in Canton, the Expediente Sinico handled all official Portuguese correspondence passing between Macao,

Canton and Beijing. In liaison with the Comissário de Polícia (Police Commissioner), the Expediente Sinico also engaged in the surveillance of all political movements involving the Chinese community, press censorship, and surveillance of subversive activities (Wu Zhiliang, 1999, p. 286; *Ditema* 2013, p. 1249).

II. MACAO AND THE FRENCH INDOCHINA CONNECTION

We know that the Vietnamese recognised Macao as a convenient place of exile from French persecution going back to the early decades of the last century. To wit, on 3 February, 1915, Joost van Vollenhoven, the Governor General of Indochina alerted Macao Governor Carlos da Maia (10 June, 1914-5 September, 1916) that a certain number of ‘Annamite’ (the standard French colonial term for Vietnamese) criminals had taken refuge in Macao. As stated, he had forwarded documentation to the French consul in Hong Kong and sought their arrest and extradition. Nevertheless, in a reference to the near universal practice by anti-colonial Vietnamese of adopting pseudonyms, he conceded, ‘It is difficult to establish the names they are going by presently in Macao and I seek to avoid giving erroneous indications’. Implicated in acts of violence in Indochina, he alerted, these ‘*dangereux malfaiteurs de droit*’, should be treated as ‘common assassins, pillards and counterfeiters’ (AHM MO/AH/AC/SA/01/05084).

Given the true identities of the so-called Vietnamese ‘criminals’ believed to have arrived in Macao, the description was highly inaccurate, even misleading and deceptive. Notably, on 3 October, 1915, French Consul Gaston Ernest Liebert in Hong Kong not only alerted Governor Carlos da Maia as to the presence in Macao of ‘Annamite criminals’, but named them, albeit without background information. Deemed ‘French subjects’, these were Cuong De and Phan Boi Chau, along with the latter’s traveling companion named Ha-Truong (Truong-Hong). The trio were understood to have entered Macao between 8-10 September. Following up on the Governor General’s call for the arrest and extradition of the ‘Annamite criminals’, as they were termed, the French consul pointed to Article III of the Treaty of 13 July, 1854 between Portugal and France relating to the extradition of ‘common law criminals’. He also drew

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attention to the arrest warrants issued by the Procurator of the Republic of France in Indochina for Cuong De and Phan Boi Chau, specifically for complicity in assassination (article 59 of the French penal code), and for bomb outrages committed in Hanoi on 26 April, 1913 leading to the death of two French officials, and the wounding of several Europeans and natives. The two named individuals were also condemned *en contumaces* (judged in the absence of the indicted) for the crimes in question by the Hanoi Criminal Commission sitting on 29 August, 1913. Still, as the French authorities well understood, the identification of the suspects in Macao remained a problem. French Consul Liebert offered to forward photographs and descriptions to the Macao authorities. Writing of (unknown) Ha Truong, alias Trong Hong, he allowed that ‘these people constantly change their names’, making it difficult to establish true identity (AHMMO/AH/AC/SA/01/05084).

What van Vollenhoven failed to mention was the stature of the concerned individuals in the broader context of the anti-colonial movement in French Indochina, kicked off by news of Japan’s historic naval victory over imperial Russia at Tsushima in May 1905. Scion of the royal house of Annam, Prince Cuong De (1882-1951) was an inveterate opponent of French rule in Indochina, albeit working with Japan. Taking the lead of literati nationalist, Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940), Cuong De joined the former’s Dong Du or Look East movement of Vietnamese nationalists, variously seeking inspiration and assistance from Japan and China for the expulsion of France from their country. However, in 1909, both had been expelled from Japan under French pressure. Accordingly, both were constantly on the move from Thailand to southern China and, at the same time, rallying support from amongst the scattered émigré Vietnamese communities. On his part, Phan Boi Chau entered into close contact with Chinese nationalists, while modelling his anti-colonial movement upon the Chinese KMT. Briefly, he was in contact with Sun Yat Sen (Tran My-Van, 2005). By 1912, there were at least 1,000 Vietnamese political émigrés traveling by land and maritime routes to Thailand and southern China and Japan. Some 60 were understood to reside in Hong Kong or Kowloon and with 100 active in Canton, not to mention other Chinese towns and cities (See Goscha, 1998, p. 60).

As recounted by Tran My-Van (2005, p. 82), Cuong De had been briefly arrested and detained in

Hong Kong at the end of May 1913 prior to release on bail and with the possible intervention of a ‘third party’. Tran finds this misadventure all the more incredible, as during his visit to Canton, French Governor General Albert Sarraut met with Governor Lung Chi-kuang (Long Jiguang 龙济光) to negotiate—obviously without success—extradition of key revolutionaries, specifically Phan Boi Chau and Cuong De.

In 1915 Cuong De managed to return to Japan following a sojourn in Europe (September 1913-April 1914). In the interim, he travelled to Beijing seeking support for the anti-French cause from the President of the Republic of China, Yuan Shikai 袁世凯. Disappointed at only gaining conditional support, he departed Beijing on 5 May, 1915 arriving in Japan later in the month. More generally, Tran My Van’s (2005) chronology does not tie down the presence of the two revolutionaries in Macao or Hong Kong at the date of Liebert’s letter, neither disallowing their visit nor offering firm confirmation.

Answering back to Liebert on 8 October, 1915, Governor Carlos da Maia duly noted the existence of the Portuguese-French extradition treaty. He also noted that extradition was a matter that would involve the two concerned ministries of foreign affairs, namely Portugal and France. The following day he sent a note to the Portuguese consul in Hanoi requesting him to supply more information on the individuals and the crimes they had allegedly committed. A long time passed before the Consul replied (3 November) revealing that he learned nothing new. He sought further advice before making a direct approach to incoming Governor General Ernest Roume, van Vassailley’s successor. In the event, as the Serviço da Policia Macao made it known to Governor da Maia on 14 February, 1916, they had been alerted (AHM MO/AH/AC/SA/01/05084). With that communication the file came to a close.

Obviously, between 3 October, 1915 and 14 February, 1916, the Vietnamese exiles would not have stood still. It also appears that Governor da Maia, well known as a friend of Sun Yat Sen, temporised in this case. Recall as well, that upon taking office on 10 June, 1914, Governor da Maia rejected the Yuan Shikai regime’s demands to extradite Sun Yat Sen partisans who had taken refuge in the Portuguese colony, an action saluted by Sun Yat Sen in his letter of 12 June, 1916 within the month of Yuan’s death (Chan 2013, p. 103).

Governor da Maia’s response was also prudent, as a little investigation would undoubtedly have revealed that the ‘common criminals’ alluded to in the original dispatch from Hanoi, were actually Vietnamese nationalists of considerable calibre. As mentioned, both figures inspired the Look East movement to Tokyo, just as both figures would be integral to the history of Vietnamese (non-communist) nationalism over the coming decades. In this light, it is also unlikely that the two wanted figures would have been traveling together. Still, both were masters of disguise, given to using pseudonyms, code telegrams and other subterfuges, just as they were constantly on the move. If we take Consul Liebert seriously, they undoubtedly passed through Macao during this period moving on to even safer ground in southern China, outside of the reach of colonial police forces.

A national hero in Vietnam today as pioneer anti-colonial nationalist, Phan Boi Chau was eventually hunted down and arrested in the French concession in Shanghai in 1926. Sentenced to death, but commuted, he spent the rest of his life under house arrest in Hue, albeit still a powerful voice in favour of independence and in secret communication with the movement. On his part, Prince Cuong De who played the Japan card and was used by the militarists, accordingly, never returned to his native land, dying in Tokyo in 1951, virtually written out of Vietnamese nationalist history.

More generally during this period, the British and French authorities together entered into close cooperation in sharing information on trouble makers, rebels, and especially the rising threat of Bolshevism. Specifically, Macao was kept apprised of the Vietnamese nationalist movement, dramatically as with the bomb attempt against Governor Marcial Merlin at the Victoria Hotel in Shameen (Shamien) Canton in June 1924, especially as the aggrieved governor who narrowly escaped with his life cancelled a planned official visit to Macao (AHM MO/AH/AC/SA/09375).

Meantime, in the wake of a highly destructive and unprecedented riot engaging Chinese and Vietnamese in the port of Haiphong in 1927, the French authorities were alerted to a vaguely conspiratorial—possibly KMT-linked—centre in Macao which had written letters in support of Chinese interests in French Indochina. French ships were also boycotted by indignant Chinese stevedores in Hong Kong (AOM SLOTFOM III 39). Resident Portuguese citizens in Haiphong, certain of

them merchants, were also affected by these events. Meantime, the French authorities kept up a voluminous correspondence with the colonial authorities in Hong Kong and Macao through the 1930s as to political risks, emanating from these port cities.

Travel was not exactly borderless in that age but maritime traffic by junk connected Macao with the nearby French treaty port-enclave of Guangzhouwan and the Gulf of Tonkin ports. Steamer traffic likewise connected all the colonial ports with the China coast, making for a fairly intense movement of individuals, whether immigrants, returnees, traders or others. Specifically Guangzhouwan was identified in French official notices as a place of refuge for Portuguese ‘criminals’. To that end, negotiations were entered into as to the extradition of these ‘refugees’ and ‘criminals’ in, respectively, Portuguese and French territory (AHM MO/AH/AC/SA/01/05483 07/08/1916 – 03/20/1917), although there is no evidence as to that occurring. In any case, at this point in time, anti-French Vietnamese rebels were looking East to Japan and China. Vietnamese arriving in southern China in the late 1920s generally received a favourable reception, and there is no reason to believe that contact established with left-wing circles in Canton did not extend to Macao.

III. THE ORIGINS OF THE LEFT WING IN MACAO

Undoubtedly it is true, as Fei Chengkang (1996, p. 331) asserts, that the rise of Canton as a base for the ‘Great Revolution’ of 1924-1927, eclipsed the importance of Macao as ‘a place of secret activities’ on the part of Chinese reformists and revolutionaries. Nevertheless, we have reason to argue that Macao continued to play an important role as base and refuge for progressive political activists through the years of repression under Chiang Kai-shek, not to mention through to the war years.

We are better informed as to the origins of the CCP in the British colony, especially owing to research by such authors as, Chan Lau Kit-Ching, *From Nothing to Nothing: The Chinese Communist Movement and Hong Kong, 1921-1936* (1999). Christine Loh (2010) in *Underground Front* also offers a pioneering examination of the role played by the CCP in Hong Kong since the creation of the Party in 1921. To be sure, as she



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exposes, the CCP has not only operated in Hong Kong since the 1920s but to this day remains underground, its presence both unregistered and unacknowledged. Cindy Yik-yi Chu (2010), by contrast, focuses on the United Front policy of the CCP in Hong Kong during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945. There are no analogous published studies on these themes with respect to Macao.

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The first references to communist activities in Macao emerge in 1922, five years after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. According to Moisés Silva Fernandes (Nunes, 2012), there were strikes and serious incidents that forced the intervention of the local Chinese, and were also guided by ‘a lot of violence from the Portuguese side’. When, on 29 May, 1922, military police in Macao killed and wounded dozens of local people, strikes broke out leading to the dispatch of a delegation to Guangzhou to present a petition to the revolutionary government (meeting Sun Yat Sen on 2 June). While not all the details of this event are fully understood, one thing is certain: ‘The situation only improved when the local Chinese elite intervened in the issue of Macao’ (cf. Wu Zhiliang, 1996, pp. 287-288). In any case, the great Canton-Hong Kong strike-boycott of June 1925 to October 1926 alerted the Portuguese authorities in Macao as to the global nature of Bolshevism and its threats to order. As the head of the Repartição de Expediente Sinico signalled on 6 September, 1926, China was in a ‘quasi-chaotic state’. Owing to the ‘extortionate’ actions of the strikers, European commerce in the country was near impossible.

‘Bolshevism knows no nationality or borders’, the report continued. ‘One part operates in England in support of another part operating in China’ (AHM MO/AH/AC/SA/10856 Repartição de Expediente Sinico, 10 September, 1926). But, Macao prudently played a reactive role watching sometimes heavy-handed British actions in Hong Kong with trepidation. The short-lived communist-backed Canton Uprising (Canton Commune) of December 1927 was undoubtedly registered in Macao just as its crushing by warlord armies no doubt brought relief to the Portuguese, French, and British authorities alike. Starting in April 1927 Chiang Kai-shek had already commenced purging communists from the KMT. French concern was also focused upon Canton from where, between 1925-1927, Ho Chi Minh launched his Thanh Nien or youth networks connecting up with Indochina in 1926. Young Vietnamese were enrolling in the Huangpo (Whampoa) military academy, where Ho Chi Minh served as an adviser on peasant questions to Comintern apparatchik Mikhail Markovich Borodin. In the event, the ‘White terror’ unleashed by Chiang Kai Shek, scattered the Vietnamese community in Canton and with Ho Chi Minh fleeing to the Soviet Union. Back in Hong Kong in 1930, Ho Chi Minh would also chair the inaugural meeting of a united Vietnamese Communist Party, pending its transformation into the ICP. In particular, the British authorities sought to choke Bolshevik activities in its colonial sphere. Commencing with the arrest in Singapore of roving Comintern agent Ducroix (Serge Lefranc) and others on 1 June, 1931, on 15 June the British authorities in Shanghai arrested Ducroix’s controller Comintern agent Noulens (Yakov Rudnik), in turn leading to further arrests at 186 Tam Lung Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong on 6 July, 1931 sweeping up Ho Chi Minh/Sung Man Cho and his female secretary, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai (as described below).(Duncanson, 1974; Gunn, 1990) Macao was not untouched by the attraction of Bolshevism. According to a Macao police report of 1931, communist activities at that time were ‘widespread through all centres in the Far East, not sparing the colony of Macao’. As observed, the communist underground in Macao propagated through the press, through schools, and through the agency of school teachers. However, in September of that year, the Macao Commissioner of Police, Major José Guerreiro de Andrade, boasted to the Governor (Joaquim

Anselmo de Mata Oliveira, March 1931-June 1932) that, as a result of arrests, confessions, and deportations, his force had achieved an ‘*exterminio de acção comunista de Macao*’, or extermination of communism in Macao. Communist meetings were broken up with communist elements arrested and deported. Individuals among them confessed as to their proselyting activities with a view to converting Macao people to their cause. ‘Macao had secret party organization and its affiliates intended for different purposes’. But with the leadership and associates arrested and deported, press materials, etc., were ‘totally seized’. Those not apprehended made their exit from the colony. Meantime, a special section of the Macao police was set up aimed at the elimination of communism and to verifying the facts concerning communist organisation in the colony. A photographic record of suspects was also created. As explained, this action not only terminated their propaganda but also put an end to a special section of the party concerned with external relations. As stated, Macao was then free from these elements bringing ‘tranquillity’ to the population. The role of communist agents in Macao communicating with the major centres of communism in the Far East was declared over (AHM AH/AC/P-13569 micro A1182 ‘Exterminio de accão comunista de Macao’, Colonia de Macau, Direcção Serviço de Administração Civil, 22/09/1931). While we do not doubt the methods employed by the Salazarist police to ‘exterminate’ would-be communist networks inside Macao (namely arrests and deportations), they cannot have been entirely successful, because ‘sleeper’ cells obviously continued. The role of the celebrated General Ye Ting falls into this pattern. According to an officialised account, between 1935-1937, Ye Ting 叶挺, a former KMT stalwart, met several times with CCP representatives in Macao, namely Pan Hannian 潘汉年, Zhang Yunyi 张云逸 and others, before exiting Macao in 1937 and going on to play a lead role in military affairs in the New Fourth Army following the ‘July 7th incident’ of 1937. By this year, many patriotic Macao youth would volunteer for service in the resistance war against Japanese aggression (*Macau during the Sino-Japanese War*, 2001). Residing at 76, Rua Almirante Costa Cabral, his presence in Macao might have been more than just clandestine. Doubtless, as with Ye Ting, many in Macao who shared a background with the KMT also shared a patriotic sense of indignation at the Japanese aggression.

IV. THE MACAO CONFERENCE OF THE ICP (14-26 JUNE, 1934) With the arrest of Ho Chi Minh/Sung Man Cho in Hong Kong in June 1931 and his eventual release in January 1933 and journey to the Soviet Union, local initiative passed into the hands of a small group of Moscow or ‘Stalin School’ graduates who, under the noses of the authorities, began to assemble in the Portuguese colony. Coming to the attention of the French *Sûreté* or special police, the Macao Conference of the ICP, bringing together top ranking members of the newly created ICP, was convened between 14-26 June, 1934. As explained below, the Macao conference would be a preliminary to the all-important Macao Congress of the ICP, eventually held in March 1935. We recall that this high-level gathering of Bolsheviks in Macao was less than three years after Macao Police Commissioner Andrade boasted that he had ‘exterminated’ the communists. The ‘White Terror’ had taken its toll upon the CCP in Guangzhou and elsewhere and the Long March was underway. By this stage, António José Bernandes de Miranda (June 1932-April 1937) had taken up governorship of the Portuguese colony. We do not know how the arriving delegates crossed the border into Macao or even the nature of their travel documents. Undoubtedly they crossed from Hong Kong or Canton by the maritime route. Some of them coming from Bangkok or Saigon would have arrived in Hong Kong by scheduled shipping lines. Passports of the age tended to be single page documents, as with Ho Chi Minh’s Republic of China passport issued in the name of Sung Man Cho during his brief visit to the British colony of Singapore on 28 April, 1930. Legitimate documentation was also provided to French dependents by the French Consulate in Hong Kong, as with Vietnamese from the French colony of Cochinchina (present day southern Vietnam). Five figures in particular stand out at the Macao gathering, roving China-based Comintern apparatchik, Le Hong Phong, a future ICP secretary-general (1935-1936), the Moscow-trained Ha Huy Tap, another future secretary (1936-1938), Thailand-based Tran Van Chan (about whom little is known) and, undoubtedly, the most notorious of them all, Tran Van Giau, the individual who briefly seized power in Saigon in August

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1945 on behalf of the southern Viet Minh just prior to the Japanese surrender. The fifth in this circle was the female delegate, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai.

Following Tran Phu, first ICP secretary general (1930-1931), murdered by the French on 6 April, 1931, Le Hong Phong was the second to hold this office (1935-1936). As such, he headed the office of General Secretary of the Overseas Executive Committee of the ICP (Overseas Leadership Committee), following the almost complete domestic repression of the communist movement inside Vietnam. Born in Nghe An, central Vietnam, in 1924-25 he made his way to Canton, joined the Whampoa military academy, met up with Ho Chi Minh, and in February 1926 joined the CCP. Moving on to Moscow, he also joined the Red Army as a pilot.

Another joining this circle, as mentioned, was Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, confident of both Ho Chi Minh and Le Hong Phong and, ambiguously, wife and/or mistress of one of them (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). Real name Nguyen Thin Bay, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai (Co Duy), was born in Vinh Yen in Nghe An, north-central Vietnam in 1910. In 1930, she joined the ICP as a head of propaganda. She then moved to Hong Kong, as described, serving as secretary to Ho Chi Minh in the Eastern branch office. Arrested in Hong Kong, but also released prior to Ho Chi Minh, she could then reconnect with Le Hong Phong and the Macao Conference. As official Vietnamese histories record, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai married Le Hong Phong. Even so, according to Duiker (2000, p. 225), she also entered a possible ‘marriage’ with Ho Chi Minh prior to their incarceration in Hong Kong’s Victoria prison.

As French police sources confirm, the reorganisation of the ICP in southern Indochina in this period owed greatly to Tran Van Giau. Given his importance in this narrative, as much his idiosyncratic style and personality, it would be appropriate to review his biography. Born (1911) in Long An, south of Saigon, to a well-to-do family, Giau was a graduate of Lycée Chasseloup Laubat in Saigon (as indeed was the future King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia) and, moving to France, attended school in Toulouse (although unlikely to have graduated from university as some reports contend). In 1929 he joined the PCF but, following his participation in demonstrations in front of the Elysée in Paris, was repatriated to Vietnam

in 1931. He then made his way to Moscow where he graduated from the University of the Toilers of the East. Having acquired the necessary training, along with the Comintern’s blessing, he was ordered to return to Vietnam. Arrested by the French authorities in Saigon on 14 October, 1934 on a charge of carrying false papers, he successfully appealed against a five-year sentence and was released.

As context, it should be acknowledged that the new born ICP network which lent its support to the rebellious peasants of the marginal Nghe-Tinh (Nghe An-Ha Tinh) provinces of north-central Vietnam in 1930-31, was subject to a sweeping repression which saw tens of thousands of suspects detained by the colonial authorities and with important sections of the leadership either killed or imprisoned. Needless to say, the surviving ICP leadership went underground in Vietnam or sought to link up with their comrades on the outside, in Thailand or in southern China, especially Canton.

First to arrive in Macao was Ha Huy Tap, born in Ha Tinh in 1906, and educated in the prestigious Quoc Hoc (National) school in Hue. Having abandoned a teaching career, he entered the communist underground, becoming a comrade-in-arms of Ho Chi Minh in the Thanh Nien (Youth) circle in Canton. Following studies in Moscow, he returned to Vietnam in 1933. Known for his theoretical writings and interventions, he would emerge in the wake of the Macao Congress as third General Secretary of the ICP (July 1936-March 1938) operating back inside Vietnam.

Next to arrive in Macao was Tran Van Chan (Tang) and Nguyen Van Than, both coming from Bangkok. With even greater secrecy, Le Hong Phong arrived from China, where he was acting on the behest of the Comintern. Vy Nam Son was then acting as Le Hong Phong’s liaison officer and was likely already positioned in Macao. Arriving in Macao from Saigon on 15 December, 1934, Tran Van Giau could not have been present at the conference (AOM 3SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). Still we do not know how these Vietnamese slipped across borders. To our knowledge not one was apprehended.

At issue was the creation of an ‘ICP external office’ along with a ‘Leadership Committee’, vital given the Party losses incurred at French police hands inside Indochina following the premature Nghe-Tinh rebellion in 1931-1932 and its suppression.

With its proximity to Vietnam, ease of travel to China and, alongside British Hong Kong, apparently lax police controls, the Portuguese colony provided perfect cover for the Vietnamese delegates. Well, at least they thought so, as the French had planted their agents inside Macao and/or had thoroughly penetrated the semi-secret Leninist Party organisation. As the Sûreté recorded, the Macao Bureau were so brazen that they were ‘not even bothered’ by arrests of members of the CCP leadership committee conducted in Shanghai in late 1934 as well as repressive actions effected between 19-21 February, 1935 (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). This is true and by this date, the ICP ran parallel operations even if they were joined at the hip by the Comintern.

Although compromised by French agents, it is not the same as saying that the French authorities could actually interfere in Portuguese jurisdiction. Certainly the French consul in Hong Kong was *au fait* with the gathering of Vietnamese communists in Macao and undoubtedly in contact through agents and spies. It remains mysterious then as to why the French did not invoke the 1854 extradition Treaty with Portugal, as was raised in correspondence with Governor da Maia in 1915. Surely this group of conspirators had overstayed their visas, if at all they carried official identity papers. On their part, the Portuguese authorities must have been informed as to the long drawn out judicial proceedings then involving Ho Chi Minh/Sung Man Cho, leading to his faked death and release from a British prison, suggesting that the extradition route was legally problematical when it touched political cases.

Notwithstanding the coming and going of a variety of ethnic delegates and members under the noses of the authorities, Macao continued to serve as a secure and even primary external base for the ICP for at least the following twelve months. Thereafter, the focus of activities drifted back to Indochina. In any case, from May 1936, as explained, the Macao base would become redundant with the advent of the Popular Front government when the ‘legal’ ICP gained a new status at home.

Originally conceived in Moscow, the Macao Conference was convened between 14-26 June, 1934. With his links with the PCF, the CCP, and the Comintern, ICP General Secretary Le Hong Phong was undoubtedly the prime mover. In the course of the conference, Le Hong Phong was confirmed as

president of the ‘Leadership Committee’ and vested with control over the ICP organisation in northern Vietnam. Discussions between Le Hong Phong and Tran Van Chan centred on the need to dispatch an agent from Thailand to north-central Vietnam via Laos. Similarly, Nguyen Van Dut (Sevan) was charged with organising Party activities in southern Vietnam. A French-educated student activist, expelled back to Vietnam, Nguyen Van Dut, had also spent time in Moscow.

*While we do not doubt the methods employed by the Salazarist police to ‘exterminate’ would-be communist networks inside Macao (namely arrests and deportations), they cannot have been entirely successful, because ‘sleeper’ cells obviously continued.*

In terms of personnel, Nguyen Van Tham was ordered to stay in Macao as liaison officer to replace Vy Nam Son, while Hu Huy Tap was confirmed as a member. To summarise, by November 1934, the Macao Leadership Committee comprised the following members; Ha Huy Tap; Nguyen Hau (Manh Van Lieu), and Nguyen Huu Can (Phi Van), with Nguyen Van Tham and Vy Nam Son serving as liaison officers and, as mentioned, Tran Van Chan, Nguyen Van Dut, and Hoang Van Mau named as delegates for Laos, north-central Vietnam, and southern Vietnam, respectively (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938).

MACAO AS A COMMUNIST PUBLISHING CENTRE:  
*TAP CHI BON-SO-VIC*

As also endorsed by the conference, the Comintern’s *quoc-ngu* or Vietnamese language *Tap chi Bon-so-vic* (Revue Bolchevik) emerged as the Macao-based Leadership Bureau’s primary propaganda organ

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in its dealings with Party organisations in southern Vietnam. Between June 1934 and March 1935, eleven editions of *Tap chi Bon-so-vic* were published in Macao by the Leadership Bureau. To this end, the Macao Bureau edited, translated, printed, and circulated their own version of the publication especially crafted for a Vietnamese audience. At least one copy was sent to the FCP in Paris for forwarding to the Comintern while militants in Longzhou (in Guangxi on the border with Vietnam), Thailand, and southern Vietnam, received between one and four copies each, for local distribution and reproduction (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). Such an enterprise raises many questions as to local support, not the least paper supplies, printing equipment, financing and, crucially, secrecy.

Obviously, such activity did not come cheap and fund-raising also became a preoccupation of the Macao Bureau. The first tranche of funds was supplied by the Comintern and delivered by Le Hong Phong. As a French source estimated, between June-December 1934, the Macao Bureau had collected at least 80,000 francs, some of it by foul means, namely through robbery in Hong Kong. But the money was also put to good use. Notably, when Tran Van Giau returned to Saigon on 7 January, 1935, he was provided with 300 dollars. The same month, the Macao Bureau set up in newly furnished premises in Macao handsomely funded to the tune of 500 dollars (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). Unfortunately the address of the premises are not revealed. Praia Grande? Or can we surmise a location in the Porto Interior bazaar quarter or along the teeming waterfront, bound to offer anonymity among the ruck of sailors, coolies, travellers and transients disembarking from steamers or local waterborne craft?

As the French report summarised, ‘the activities of the Macao Bureau above all concerns the editing of *Tap chi Bon-so-vic*, preparing model pamphlets to be distributed throughout all parts of Indochina, undertaking criticism of various Party sections, and preparing for the first Party Congress’. Additionally, the Macao Bureau was vested with the selection and recruitment of suitable candidates to be sent to the Stalin School in Moscow. Namely, in early 1934, Nguyen Van Tham was sent to Longzhou to meet two Stalin School returnees from Moscow. He was also instructed to escort to Macao the ethnic Tho (Tai) minority, Hoang Van Mau (Hong Dinh Giong), also

known by the French as the ‘Stalin of Cao Bang’ for his pioneering communist activities in this highland zone of northeast Vietnam, Hoang was duly conferred by Le Hong Phong with leadership of communist propaganda in northern Vietnam upon arrival in Macao on September 26, 1934 (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). It is important to note that the ethnic Tho/Tay dominated Cao Bang region would re-emerge in 1941-45 as the future Viet Minh stronghold or cradle of the August Revolution of 1945 leading to the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This was no accident, as the ground had been well prepared, reaching back to the 1930s.

As closely monitored by the Sûreté, the Macao Bureau was also involved in the organisation and dispatch of a group of representatives to Moscow to attend the VII<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Comintern. On 18 October, 1934, Le Hong Phong received a telegram (leading us to wonder if this was received from the Macao post office without being unmasked?) from Ha Huy Tap in the name of the superior echelon of the party (Comintern) to proceed immediately to Shanghai with Hoang Van Mau [(Ngon)] (representing minority people), along with Nguyen Thi (Minh) Khai (Co Duy) (representing women). The three left Hong Kong on 19 October and the arrival in Shanghai of the ‘Macao group’ was confirmed by Ha Huy Tap who returned alone to the Portuguese administered territory on 10 November (AOM 3 SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938). We know from other sources that the three delegates duly arrived in Moscow. This left Ha Huy Tap as the frontrunner in planning for the upcoming Congress, which he also dominated.

ARRIVAL IN MACAO OF TRAN VAN GIAU

Arriving in Macao from Saigon on 15 December, 1934 in the company of a countryman, one Gia, Tran Van Giau also looked ahead to the upcoming Congress. But, as an intellectual rival, he also came under suspicion on the part of Ha Huy Tap as to being a French agent, even believed to have been seen off by the Sûreté from Saigon. Personality issues also came into play (Duiker, 2000, p. 220). While such a claim was not proven, the atmosphere among the Vietnamese communists in Macao in the lead up to the Congress was apparently poisoned by the—correct—assumption that the delegates were under surveillance and that their ranks had been infiltrated. Adding to Ha Huy Tap’s

paranoia was the defection of a Vietnamese cook who made off with a substantial tranche of ICP funds (cf. Duiker, 2000, pp. 219-220)

In any case, Tran Van Giau apprised the Leadership Bureau of the situation in southern Vietnam. Notably, he critiqued the ICP ‘Federal Committee of Southern Indochina’, for errors of doctrine on the part of the local leaders. He drew up an agenda of urgent tasks and also explained to the Macao Bureau the importance and convenience of liaison with the FCP via French ships arriving and departing from Saigon. As the Sûreté summarised, ‘It is not necessary to underline the importance for communist propaganda in Indochina of the sojourn in Macao by Tran Van Giau’. Out of his visit, links were established (for the first time) between ICP fractions in the south and the north of Vietnam (AOM 3SLOTFOM/54 NP 34, 2tri 1938).

This was an important revelation, even a historical moment in the history of the ICP. It is also an identity issue, as the *Sûreté* analyst seemed to bewail. Undoubtedly, for the first time, the delegates from southern, central and northern Vietnam, including ethnic minorities representatives from the north, bonded in Macao as ‘Vietnamese’ although, ambiguously under Comintern orders, they also embraced ‘French Indochina’ as the domain of their struggle.

THE MACAO CONGRESS OF MARCH 1935

Convened by the Leadership Committee, the Macao or First National Congress of the ICP, was held in the Portuguese colony between 27-31 March, 1935. Taking place in an unidentified hotel—Hotel Ribeira?, Bela Vista?, Hotel Central?, Grand Hotel?—15 delegates were in attendance although in the absence of the two most important members, Ho Chi Minh, then in Moscow, and Le Hong Phong who was attending the VII<sup>th</sup> Comintern Congress along with Nguyen Thi Minh Khai and other delegates. Neither did the Comintern send a delegate to Macao as anticipated. In his absence, Le Hong Phong was confirmed as ICP General Secretary with a brief to reconstitute the party networks. The Congress timetable had also been pushed forward. According to Duiker (2000, pp. 219-220), initially scheduled to take place in Ha Huy Tap’s three-room apartment in Macao (with one room reserved for the Comintern delegate), the Congress was delayed owing to Tap’s fears of provocateurs (Ho Chi Minh)

and *Sûreté* informants (Tran Van Giau) within the party. Seeking to please the Stalinist line in Moscow, Tap also targeted Ho Chi Minh—then in Moscow at a time when he was particularly vulnerable to purge—for his alleged nationalist excesses and lukewarm proletarian internationalism, and with *Tap chi Bon-so-vic* serving as Tap’s principle mouthpiece to launch attacks upon rivals and antagonists.

The Macao Congress also coincided with an extreme leftist period in the history of both the Vietnamese and Chinese communist movements. Notably, the Congress manifesto placed great stress upon ‘armed struggle’ (Harrison, 1989, p. 66). A central committee was elected, confirming Ha Huy Tap’s status as general secretary of a nine-man central committee to be relocated to Saigon. Attended by ethnic minority delegates, the Macao Congress also offered the first major discussion on minority issues in Indochina on the part of the party (cf. Gunn, 1988). As Duiker (2000, p. 221) points out, women were also represented with the presence of Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, as suggested, Ho Chi Minh’s ‘love interest’ and former secretary in the southern bureau in Hong Kong. While the Macao Congress ushered in an ultra-leftist period in the history of the ICP, its resolutions were almost immediately overridden by developments in Moscow at the VII<sup>th</sup> Comintern Congress reflecting realities associated with the rise of Nazism in Europe and Japanese militarism in the East.

It is certainly mysterious that Sûreté spies virtually penetrated the inner circle of the ICP in Macao, collecting a full set of documents, allowing them to be translated and analysed. It is also noteworthy that (Charles André) Yolle, a senior *Sûreté* official with his base in Hanoi, visited the Portuguese colony on 15 September, 1934, three months after the Macao Conference of the ICP. This comes to light in the form of a letter addressed to Governor (Miranda) of Macao from the Governor General (Robin) of French Indochina thanking the former for Yolle’s reception and looking forward to ‘the most sincere collaboration’ (AHM MO/AH/MS/SA/01/25343 Gouverneur Général de l’Indochine à Gouverneur Macao, Saigon, 26 September, 1934). Yet, the sincere collaboration did not amount to much as the Congress proceeded anyway. Did the Portuguese turn a blind eye to what was French business and/or was it part of their risk calculus not to meddle in something also touching Chinese domestic politics? Or were they simply inefficient?



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V. IMPORTANCE OF THE MACAO CONFERENCE/CONGRESS IN THE BROADER SWEEP OF HISTORY

Insofaras the Vietnamese were compromised by other Vietnamese who evidently infiltrated their Congress, a number of other questions are raised. Who were these individuals? Why didn't the Portuguese authorities act upon French prompts (as with the special mission to Macao by *Sûreté* agent Yolle in 1934), or indeed why is the Portuguese record on these activities apparently blank? Or, with the example of Governor Carlos da Maia in the 1910s, did Governor Miranda turn a blind eye to these activists who, after all, were focused upon French Indochina and not especially broader Portuguese interests in the region? Many of these questions remain unanswered, simply because of the issue of secrecy, both governmental and on the part of the conspirators.

Simply, Macao Police Commissioner Andrade and/or his successor missed the chance of a lifetime, namely to arrest *flagrante delicto* the entire Overseas Leadership Committee of the ICP, in other words the top rank, highest level leadership echelon of the communist movement in French Indochina including the Second and Third General Secretaries of the ICP (vital, given that domestic leadership had been eliminated after 1931). True, they missed Ho Chi Minh, but back in Moscow he was under a cloud and narrowly risked purge himself. Having missed their chance, certain of this leadership would move on to seminal roles in the future Vietnamese revolution in August 1945 and the aftermath (in the case of Tran Van Giau). Perhaps, after all, in making a deal with visiting *Sûreté* agent Yolle, the Portuguese advised him that arrest and extradition would not work, perhaps allowing the French agents to do their work of infiltration so as to better collect intelligence. Or, then again, they may have fobbed him off. Not implausibly, the authorities in Canton were advised of these strategies, indeed, may have had their own interests in this case.

To summarise, with his return from Moscow Tran Van Giau emerged as the dominant communist personality in southern Indochina. Following his return from the ICP conference in Macao, Giau also confronted the problem of bringing isolated and renegade communist opposition forces in Cambodia and southern Vietnam into closer liaison with the

regional bureau of the ICP in Saigon under his leadership.

Although out of the picture with his arrest in mid-1935, he would again emerge from the shadows as the Viet Minh supremo in the south, following the Japanese surrender in August 1945. In December 1940, he would lead the southern-based party into staging an armed uprising in the Mekong Delta during the opening months of Vichy French rule only to suffer its crushing with major loss of life and property and with Giau imprisoned.

It should be understood that a mere ten years on from the events surrounding the Macao Conference/Congress, the communists would not only see the French knocked out of Indochina by the Japanese but would, in turn, seize power in Hanoi in a virtual power vacuum created by the surrendering Japanese. Released from prison by the Japanese, Tran Van Giau would rebuild the southern ICP/Viet Minh showing its hand again at the moment of the Japanese surrender in urban Saigon, albeit forced back by the arriving British and French to the countryside. Giau's adventurism in 1940, and failure in August 1945, brought him into conflict with the party centre now dominated by Ho Chi Minh. Relegated to the sidelines following a stint in Bangkok as head of the Viet Minh embassy, in later life he turned his hand to being party historian.

Third General Secretary of the ICP, the ultra-leftist Ha Huy Tap, was executed at Hoc Mon on the rural outskirts of Saigon on 28 August, 1941, having participated in Giau's premature armed uprising in the Mekong Delta.

Le Hong Phong, as mentioned, confirmed as second General Secretary of the ICP at the first Party Congress in Macao, was arrested by the French in February 1940 in Saigon and died in September 1942 at the age of 40 in Pulo Condore (Con Son) penitentiary.

As mentioned, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai was one of the delegates to attend the VIIth Congress of the Comintern International in Moscow with Le Hong Phong (whom she married). Her name does not appear in *Sûreté* reports on either the Macao Conference or Congress, yet there is a supposition that she visited Macao (Duiker, 2000, p. 221). Arrested in 1940 upon return to Vietnam, she was sentenced to death and executed by firing squad at Hoc Mon on 26 August, 1941. Her sister Nguyen Thi Minh Thai became the first wife of future general and renowned North

Vietnamese military strategist, Vo Nguyen Giap. Her daughter with Le Hong Phong, named Le Hong Minh, also adopted a revolutionary career.

The French had much to lament, just as the Vietnamese had much to celebrate. At least a core of the Macao Conference/Congress attendees are commemorated as national heroes in Vietnam today as with Le Hong Phong, whose name is lent to the most prestigious boys' High Schools as with the former Petrus Ký High School in Saigon a.k.a. Ho Chi Minh City. On her part, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai is celebrated in street names and prestigious girls' schools, as with the former Collège de Jeunes Filles Indigènes, also in Saigon. Ha Huy Tap lends his name to a street on the

outskirts of Saigon, District 7, but also in Danang, Dalat, and other towns. As with Ho Chi Minh, his name is boldly inscribed in the list of six revolutionary alumni who studied at the still prestigious Quoc Hoc or National School in Hue, the former imperial capital. In 2001, as honorary President of the Association of Vietnamese Historians (and having sold his villa in District 3, Saigon), Tran Van Giau, set up an annual award for historical writing (on Saigon) with a donation of 1,000 taels of gold. Giau passed away in December 2010 at 100 years of age. Tens of thousands attended his state funeral; while special postage stamps issued in Vietnam depict him as the People's Teacher and Labour Hero. **RC**

NOTES

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| 1 | To wit, a case from English history and literature comes to mind. When in 1164, the Archbishop of Canterbury fled England for Flanders, King Henry II pressed King Louis VII of France for his extradition, rejected on the ground that 'he had not fled because of having committed a crime but because he feared violence' (Eliot, <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> , p. 148). |
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