



## Vietnam in global context (1920–1968): looking through the lens of three historical figures

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the connectedness between Martin Luther King's, Ernesto Guevara's and Rabindranath Tagore's ideas and anti-colonial resistance in Vietnam. By showing how three different local struggles were linked to the socio-political realities in Vietnam, the three can be seen as representatives of a way of thinking global and local in political struggles under the principle of anti-colonial resistance and universal self-determination. In this way, it is argued that looking through the lens of dissident intellectuals and political activists provides a methodological groundwork through which we can experience global intellectual connectedness that counterbalances existing Westerncentric perspectives on Vietnamese history. However, global intellectual connectedness has to be taken with a pinch of salt, because thoughts and ideas have always been defined by and modified under different socio-political circumstances, in this case: for the purpose of strengthening the national cause.

### KEYWORDS

Global intellectual history;  
Vietnam; Martin Luther King;  
Ernesto Guevara;  
Rabindranath Tagore;  
Westerncentrism

## 1. Introduction

Recent years have seen a burst of exciting works in the field of global intellectual history. Various publications have been rethinking the circulation of ideas in new and creative (non-Westerncentric) ways, thereby challenging the hitherto prevailing trend to study the work of Western intellectuals and its dissemination to the rest of the world. As a result, intellectuals from the global south, as well as their mutual influence, have been given more prominence in international academia.<sup>1</sup> In *Global Intellectual History* Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori persuasively suggested to consider the idea of a 'global intellectual history' as encouragement to

'create a more inclusive intellectual history that respects the diversity of intellectual traditions and broadens the parameters of thought beyond the narrow limits defined by the traditions institutionalized in the Western or Eurocentric academy', regardless of the geographical spread of the concept or thematic.<sup>2</sup>

For it is all a question of perspective and who exerts the power to interpret history, this article wants to pay attention to hitherto undervalued contributions of the intellectual connectedness between global-southern subjects and their relations to Vietnam.<sup>3</sup> In this spirit,

this article inquires the interconnection of three global figures with the Vietnamese world by locating the texts and contexts of Martin Luther King Jr., Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara and Rabindranath Tagore before highlighting how global intellectual connectedness was as much part of global southern reality as – though not to the same magnitude – it was of the global northern world.

With this paper, the author aims to contribute to a non-Westerncentric approach in global intellectual history which allows us to reconsider the emergence of ‘global discourses’ as the result of a convergence between local traditions and foreign affairs, and vice versa. This should be the case of any author who suggested a non-Westerncentric perspective on Vietnamese history.

As a conceptual framework, this paper takes up what Duncan Bell (2013) describes as the practices of ‘making and taking worlds’. Looking through the lens of three historical figures – Martin Luther King, Ernesto Guevara and Rabindranath Tagore – I hope to cast some light on ‘world-making practices’, practices that Bell considers as the actual focus of intellectual history.<sup>4</sup>

To begin with one of the unresolved complexities of studying ‘global history’: Is ‘there one world that embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects’ or ‘are there many worlds of which the collection is one?’<sup>5</sup> To answer this question, it is essential to consider socio-economic, educational and ideological backgrounds and to determine national and international dynamics that allowed respective processes of transformation. However, for the purpose of argumentation and efficiency, I will refrain from directly engaging with the aforementioned motifs that affect the three global figures, as this has been done by other authors.<sup>6</sup> Instead, I draw on the scarce sources that consciously deal with Martin Luther King’s and Ernesto Guevara’s standpoint on the Vietnam War and Rabindranath Tagore’s reception in the 1920s in Vietnam. Needless to say, the three figures operated in three highly diverse and unequal societies and were navigated by different ideological standpoints, struggles, languages, socio-economic conditions and cultural settings. This makes it impossible to reduce their contributions to any of these factors and thus, difficult to compare the three with one another. What combines them, however, is the strong commitment to collective self-determination. Hence, it is the overall recognition of a global (or better: transnational) movement of ideas, of literature and of experiences that contribute to a non-Westerncentric perspective on Vietnamese history and that concerns me in this article. The first part discusses the role of Martin Luther King and Ernesto Guevara in the creation of a counternarrative that addresses the Vietnam War as a global cause (1967–68). The second part deals with Rabindranath Tagore’s influence on the development of anti-colonial nationalism and the unification of Eastern and Western knowledge.

## **2. Martin Luther King, Ernesto Guevara and the Anti-Vietnam War movement**

During 1967 and 1968 Vietnam as well as the surrounding regions including Laos and Cambodia experienced the increase of massive U.S. intervention. The intensification of military search and destroy operations conducted by the U.S. army subdued the activities of both the National Liberation Front in the northern part of South Vietnam and the Viet Cong which were reinforced by North Vietnamese regulars.<sup>7</sup> The expansion of U.S. troops

precipitated the horrifying number of more than a million deaths accompanied by the intensification of transnational solidarity and Anti-War movements.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the Vietnam War and the Anti-Vietnam protests have been two of the most discussed subjects in the context of Vietnam-related research.<sup>9</sup> Brenda M. Boyle et al. in *Looking Back on the Vietnam War: Twenty-first-Century Perspectives* endeavoured to reconsider and retell the Vietnam War from a different angle. The authors of that volume acknowledge that the historiography of the Vietnam War is still a contested subject. In fact, Western contributions have created different discourses about the country and the people of Vietnam since the Vietnamese Communist-inspired independence movement defied the existing French colonial regime in 1948–1949, which in turn was utilized apologetically to marshal U.S. involvement over French Indochina.<sup>10</sup> Boyle also recalls the multifaceted U.S. narratives ranging from ‘Redskins threatening frontier Americans’ to a kind of ‘rescue stories’ that represent children and women as if they needed to be saved from the ‘Redskins’ and the backwardness and primitivity of Vietnamese people.<sup>11</sup> Since the 1950s, general scholarly interest was concentrated on the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the rehabilitation of the image of the Vietnam War U.S. veterans and U.S. politicians as well as the legacy of Ho Chi Minh, and – though to a lesser extent – on the U.S. relationship to France, the role of the Vietminh and the financial support by the United States.<sup>12</sup> What these references have in common is the reproduction and consolidation of an incomplete history created throughout the years of one-sided documentation of the Vietnam War. However, even those historians who are keen to examine the ‘voices from below’, covering Vietnamese discourses and narratives, the counterculture and dissident movements that were grounded in the late 1960s and early 1970s peace movements and the protesters’ voices burgeoning in global southern regions such as Latin America and South Asia are yet to be studied in more detail.<sup>13</sup>

What is more, throughout the twentieth century historians mostly investigated the Vietnam War and the Anti-War movement separately, causing shortcomings in scholarly literature that brings the two subjects and places together.<sup>14</sup> However, as a matter of fact, counternarratives have been fostered by global (i.e. northern and southern) revolutionaries but remained undervalued by conventional discourses produced by historians and social scientists and thus, hampered our ability to capture an ‘actual’ global historical perspective. Instead, as Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori have pointed out

the category ‘global’ is treated as an artefact of the history of (European) colonial violence, and the invocation of the globe is unveiled as a discourse of domination that produces commensurability and homogeneity by excluding other (subaltern) voices.<sup>15</sup>

Well-known personalities, such as Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara and Martin Luther King Jr., along with Stokely Carmichael, Bayard Rustin, Robert Parris, David Dellinger, Fidel Castro and many others, created a network of anti-imperial resistance that gave rise to a radical counternarrative embracing both the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ lens.

As the dominant narrative of the Vietnam War was essentially construed and constructed by the U.S. government and media coverage and focused almost exclusively on U.S. casualties, the loss of GI’s and the financial and personnel sacrifices made by the U.S. government, the counternarrative was assertively ‘made and remade’ by Anti-Vietnam War and civil rights activists who sought to radically change the one-sided narrative of the Vietnam War.<sup>16</sup> Despite the similarities of the civil rights movement and the

anti-war movement, i.e. the large number of participants, the media attention, global reach, overlap in time and space and the strategies of protest, it is important to emphasize the differences and internal divisions of the movements. First, while the civil rights movement was primarily concerned with the domestic struggle of racial inequalities and supported by a coalition of blacks and whites, the anti-war movement remained white for most of the time. However, Black, Latino/Chicano, Native/indigenous and Asian activists opposed the war as well and, in fact, developed a pan-ethnic Asian-American awareness out of the participation in the anti-war movement.<sup>17</sup> Second, the civil rights movement was marked by a higher degree of unity, coherence, organization and leadership, while the anti-war movement lacked these characteristics. These dynamics influenced the general reception and support within the wider public as well as the impact of the movement on domestic and foreign policy.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the formation of counter-movements, which includes the creation of a counternarrative is, in fact, a technique of (re)taking and (re)making worlds that were previously dominated by imperialist, colonialist and racist projects, yet challenged by students, anti-war protesters, global figures including Martin Luther King Jr. and Ernesto Guevara and at least 2000 Vietnamese foreign students who organized into the 'Union of Vietnamese' throughout various U.S. universities.<sup>19</sup> Following Bell's view, the 'global' is not a 'geographical designation or a synonym for "non-Western" but instead denotes the perceptual scope of an argument or other acts of imagination'.<sup>20</sup> The global relations between anti-war activists and Vietnamese also surfaced in terms of face-to-face encounters in Hanoi, Paris, Bratislava and Canada not least due to the lack of access to international media on the Vietnamese side. The Vietnamese in Hanoi encouraged people's diplomacy and established international solidarity networks, safe travels to Vietnam and safe spaces of exchange of information in order to foster international discussion and awareness of the situation in Vietnam.<sup>21</sup>

The two figures Martin Luther King and Ernesto Guevara contributed to the creation of a counternarrative that has condemned the U.S. war upon the people of Vietnam as immoral, unjust, illegal and contrary to the interests of humanity and civil rights.<sup>22</sup> In his publication *Vietnam Must Not Stand Alone* (1967) Ernesto Guevara expressed his commitment to the Vietnamese cause, addressed the geo-political isolation of Vietnam and demanded to raise public awareness and sharpen our consciousness for a shared colonial identity of the people from the three continents of Africa, Asia and America:

Vietnam - a nation representing the aspirations, the hopes of a whole world of forgotten peoples - is tragically alone. We must ask ourselves: Is Vietnam isolated, or is it not? [...] What role shall we, the exploited people of the world, play? [...] In those places where this meagre peace we have has been violated, what is our duty? To liberate ourselves at any price. The fundamental terrain of imperialist exploitation comprises the three underdeveloped continents: America, Asia and Africa. Every country has also its own characteristics, but each continent, as a whole, also presents a certain unity.<sup>23</sup>

Martin Luther King's condemnation of the Vietnam War found similar expression in several other writings and speeches in which he pointed to the country's responsibility for the struggle against the war atrocities in Vietnam. During that time a number of leaders of the civil rights movement began to openly discuss the connection between racial justice at home and the war abroad. In December 1964 Malcolm X together with James Forman, who at that time was the executive secretary of the *Student Non-Violent*

*Coordination Committee* (SNCC), were among the first public figures who openly denounced the American war in Vietnam and together with the SNCC related 'the suppression of Blacks' political rights [with] the continued violence in the South as part of the larger U.S. war against non-whites, including Vietnam'.<sup>24</sup> By 1967, King endorsed draft resistance and adopted the discourse of peace activists calling for the unification of the struggle of the poor:

I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor of America, who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as an American to the leaders of my own nation. The great initiative in this war is ours. The initiative to stop it must be ours.<sup>25</sup>

King and Guevara advanced a radical counternarrative opposing the patronizing language of the US government by calling the imperative of a joint response and a shared responsibility of oppressed people that transcends national borders and continents.

## 2.1. Martin Luther King Jr

Martin Luther King has become known as the pre-eminent leader of the civil rights movement, whose theoretical and practical contributions towards peace and civil rights continued to be influential to this day. For combating the evils of colonialism, racism and approaching the aggressions of war as well as his lifelong fight for the values of equality, national sovereignty and peace he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.<sup>26</sup> On April 4, 1967, Martin Luther King delivered his speech '*Beyond Vietnam: A time to break the silence*' that now can be considered as one of the most influential contributions to the Anti-War movement in the United States. Exactly one year later to King's speech that he gave at a meeting of *Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam* (CALCAV) at Riverside Church in New York City, he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.<sup>27</sup> He addressed the Vietnam issue at a time when along with the Vietnam War, *Black Power* surged to the forefront of the civil rights movement's national consciousness. Rebellions were breaking out in many African American communities against racism<sup>28</sup> causing an implosion along generational and ideological lines.<sup>29</sup>

On January 25, 1967, King even wrote a letter to The Nobel Institute in Oslo, in which he nominated Buddhist monk and Venerable Thich Nhất Hạnh<sup>30</sup> for the Nobel Peace Prize. The nomination letter stressed Hạnh's strength to advocate for peace to the Vietnamese people, his philosophy of religion and non-violence and his outstanding academic contributions.<sup>31</sup>

However, critics questioned the validity of King's solidarity with the Anti-War movement:

Why are *you* speaking about the war, Dr King? Why are *you* joining the voices of dissent? Peace and civil rights don't mix, they say. Aren't you hurting the cause of your people, they ask? [...] Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.<sup>32</sup>

Bayard Rustin, Kings' closest adviser since 1956, similarly denounced his initiative to combine the two movements, warning against the consequences it would entail to 'split the civil rights movement, anger the President, and damage the prospects for radical social reform'.<sup>33</sup> According to Herbert Aptheker's observation, some civil rights activists even condemned King for attacking the Vietnam War *per se*.<sup>34</sup> However, more people criticized him on the grounds of his constructed connection between the war carried out in Southeast Asia and the civil rights movement in the U.S. Critics considered this erroneous or, at least, strategically reckless.<sup>35</sup> It seemed strategically reckless not least because the key strategies of anti-war activists included draft resistance and conscientious objection, which in turn resulted in the mounting numbers of working class, black and Latino men recruits sent to fight in Vietnam.<sup>36</sup> In fact, as Aptheker has explained, the unease about the 'inter-connection between injustice at home and unjust actions abroad, between demand for equal treatment of all citizens and concern for equal treatment of all nations and nationalities, between aggressive foreign policies and regressive domestic polities' was unprecedented, devastating and destructive to the civil rights movement itself. Nonetheless, on January 12, 1966, King announced his 'principled' support for the *Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's* (SNCC)<sup>37</sup> anti-war position but remained indecisive about taking the civil rights movement to a new stage of protest or leading the anti-war movement at all.<sup>38</sup> King's personal dilemma reflected the divisions it caused in the African American community and in the nation.<sup>39</sup> Thus, impelled by the majority of fellow civil rights activists and influenced by his relationship with President Lyndon B. Johnson, he muted his opposition to the Vietnam War until mid-1967.<sup>40</sup> Despite strong opposition, King nonetheless considered his political and moral positions on Vietnam to be consistent with both the local and the global struggle for self-determination, declaring in 1966, that his commitment to the peace movement must be seen in terms of the struggle against 'the enemy of the poor' and thus, is required to be attacked as such.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, it remained no longer a question of whether to join the anti-war movement but rather to find the best moment to announce his political decision.<sup>42</sup> Apart from the public speeches and articles that were intended to mobilize the masses against the war abroad, King called one talk 'The Domestic Impact of the War in America' and criticized:

The (Vietnam) War has strengthened domestic reaction. It has given the extreme right, the anti-labor, anti-Negro and anti-humanist forces a weapon of spurious patriotism to galvanize its supporters into reaching for power right up to the White House.<sup>43</sup>

In this spirit, King argued for the recognition of the indiscerptible connection between the two movements with which it was to discourage the hypocrisy depicted in the U.S. soldiers' unity and camaraderie on the Vietnamese' battlefield.<sup>44</sup> He denounced the 'cruel irony of watching Negro and White boys on TV scenes as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools'.<sup>45</sup> Instead, the racial line that determined the reality 'back home' in the U.S. has been concealed by the brutal solidarity that allowed them to commit the war atrocities against the Vietnamese people. Hence, he expressed his commitment to the civil rights activists by stating that he 'wished not to speak with [or to] Hanoi and the *National Liberation Front* (NLF), but rather to his fellow Americans who bear the greatest responsibility in ending a conflict that has exacted a heavy price on both continents'.<sup>46</sup> In other words, by recovering the shared historical experience between the Vietnamese and the African American's

struggle for freedom, he ‘carried forward a basic element of history’ and retook the national discourse of the U.S. that had to go hand in hand with the remaking of the global discourse.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, his vision of remaking the world was concerned with the inextricable interconnection of Jim Crow, the Vietnam War and the U.S. foreign policy. However, since emphasizing the dynamics, the strength and effectiveness of international solidarity always comes with a trace of nostalgia, it is fair to say that the assertiveness of each war front should not be relativized. Rather, the connectedness of the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ cause has to be put into critical perspective.

## 2.2. Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara

Adopting a viewpoint similar to what King denounced as ‘The War in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit’<sup>48</sup>, Guevara precisely regarded the Vietnam issue as the ‘most terrible devastation known in the annals of modern warfare’.<sup>49</sup> James Petras emphasized the importance of distinguishing Guevara’s revolutionary political ideas and thoughts from his practices, which included means of armed struggle and rural guerrilla warfare.<sup>50</sup> The significant impact of Guevara’s writings in 1966–67 – at that time involved in his campaign in Bolivia – resulted not only from his analysis of class structure, imperialism, capitalism and socialism, but from his perceptions of relating the different forces and injustices emerging on the international, regional and national level.<sup>51</sup> Petras declared: ‘While the imperialist countries organized on a world scale to destroy each revolution, revolutionaries sought to extend each national revolution internationally’.<sup>52</sup> In other words, Guevara considered revolutionary movements as integral to imperialism; the latter invariably linked to the expansion of capital through the means of political-military action, as well as exploitation and inequality justified by the gains of globalized technologies and a globalized market economy. In *Vietnam Must Not Stand Alone* his analysis comprised observations about the national cause of the Portuguese colonies Guinea, Mozambique and Angola, British imperialism in Rhodesia and upcoming U.S. aggressions in Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the ‘Middle East’. In the section on Latin America he explicitly called for an armed struggle referring to the Vietnamese guerrilla:

‘[T]he impetus attacks of the guerrillas. This is the Vietnamese road; it is a road that should be followed; it is the road that will be followed in our America’ and ‘The Cuban Revolution, will today have a task of much greater relevance: to create a second or a third Vietnam, or the second *and* the third Vietnam of the world [...]. Our share, the responsibility of the exploited and underdeveloped of the world is to eliminate the foundations of imperialism: our oppressed nations, from which they extract capital, raw materials, technicians and cheap labor – instruments of domination; thus, submerging us in an absolute dependence.’

By employing an anti-imperialist language, Guevara rarely missed a chance to stress the international nature of the revolution, rather than playing off nationalist sentiments within the region<sup>53</sup> and constantly reminded his readers and listeners to bear in mind that imperialism is a world system and hence, ‘must be defeated in a world confrontation’.<sup>54</sup>

At the time of King’s and Guevara’s publications, an increasing number of activists and supporters questioned the justification of violence, the role of internationalism and the need to fight for a common cause, because to them these national debates were expressions

of a global struggle. Although King was not advocating the merger of the civil rights movement and the peace movement on the basis of organizational structures, he insisted that the two specific fronts are, nonetheless, interconnected. According to King, the struggle against Jim Crow needed to keep its own strategies and campaigns<sup>55</sup>, yet he was convinced that aggressive foreign policy and regressive domestic policy are reciprocally intertwined, promoting racism in both cases of colonialism and Jim Crow. Similarly, Guevara framed this as ‘internal repercussions’<sup>56</sup> to accept and ‘to comprehend this fact and to act in accordance with it helps both movements’ avowed King.<sup>57</sup> For Guevara, however, it was more than that. The advancement of proletarian internationalism and solidarity demands to ‘settle [the] discrepancies and place everything at the service of [the] struggle’.<sup>58</sup> Radically different from King’s philosophy of non-violence<sup>59</sup> which was, however, accompanied by his distinction between ‘aggressive violence’ and ‘defensive violence’, Guevara actively endorsed the armament of international proletarian armies.<sup>60</sup>

Each spilt drop of blood, in any country under whose flag one has not been born, is an experience passed on to those who survive, to be added later to the liberation struggle of his own country. And each nation liberated is a phase won in the battle for the liberation of one’s own country.<sup>61</sup>

Although Guevara’s idea of the power of guerrilla warfare stood in contrast to King’s condemnation of violence<sup>62</sup>, it is telling that both considered the diversity of political groups and strategies as an integral part of the common global cause, which is the right to self-determination. Hence, developing an army of the international proletariat and sacrificing one’s life as a ‘battle hymn’ for the people’s unity must be considered just as part of the ‘global cause’ as the making of a non-violent world that was propagated by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Despite the differences regarding the means of violence and sacrifice both expressed their dedication to the people of the ‘Southern World’ and contributed to the making of a global discourse. They challenged the narrative that have hitherto dominated the majority of U.S. citizens: The narrative that the United States’ involvement in Vietnam had been an attempt to liberate the vulnerable small Vietnamese country from a Chinese Communist overthrow.<sup>63</sup> On the contrary, Guevara was vocal about exposing the economic self-interests and military-industrial machinery on the part of the United States, while King appealed to the people’s responsibility and moral values:

This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation’s self-defined goals and positions.<sup>64</sup>

### **3. Rabindranath Tagore, nationalism and the production of global southern knowledge**

Now, back in time at the beginning of the twentieth century, the world of Vietnamese intelligentsia could not have been more different than the world of a Bengali intellectual, poet, musician and artist named Rabindranath Tagore. In 1913, Tagore became Asia’s first Nobel Prize Laureate in literature. He undertook numerous trips in pursuit of global education and thinking, and set foot in more than thirty countries on five continents between 1878 and 1932.<sup>65</sup> He briefly studied law in England, then dropped school and instead



studied classical works of art, music, literature, history, modern science and Sanskrit independently.<sup>66</sup> Tagore was born in 1861, a time during which nationalism in India was increasingly gaining support. His involvement in the Swadeshi movement in 1905 that resisted against the British policy of partitioning Bengal, brought patriotic songs and poetry to the movement.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, Vietnam's beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by the uprising of the Nationalist Party of Vietnam, peasants' and workers resistance and demonstrations against the French colonial administration, while Communism was gaining momentum.

Despite the very different intellectual, cultural and political stages of both countries, at least two aspects have facilitated the encounter between Tagore and the Vietnamese intellectuals: First, the aspiration to form an independent Vietnamese identity through critical engagement with the concept of nationalism and second, the idea of synthesizing Eastern and Western education. According to a number of sources, Tagore was first introduced to Vietnam in *La Cloche Fêlée*, a journal edited by Nguyễn An Ninh, an anti-colonial activist, revolutionary and journalist.<sup>68</sup> The article titled 'Patriotisme chez Tagore' and was published on June 16, 1924. The author of the article praised Tagore for his patriotism and commitment to self-determination of the Indian people. 'Tagore too is a patriot [...]' Nguyễn Tinh wrote and cited Tagore (March 5, 1921):

I remember the day, during the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me. They told me that if I commanded them to leave their schools and colleges, they would instantly obey me. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland<sup>69</sup>

'The love that Tagore has for his country is therefore sincere. And this feeling has always been cultivated in his family [...]', wrote Tinh. *La Cloche Fêlée* cited Tagore calling for the 'national cause' in Vietnam in a number of other articles.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, the Saigonese journal *L'Écho Annamite*, whose founder was Nguyễn Phan Long, published articles about Tagore years earlier than *La Cloche Fêlée*. One of the earliest articles about Tagore titled 'Colonies et Métropoles' (November 15, 1921), written by L. Croce. In this article it was particularly Tagore's view on the global inequity between colonizing and colonized countries and the universal disorder between the East and the West that took centre stage. In addition to that, the article outlined Tagore's critique of Western humanity that claimed to have received the mission to be the teacher of the world:

The active love of humanity, the spirit of martyrdom for the cause of justice and truth and the remarkably versatile intelligence founded the greatness of Western civilization. But in the countries that the West colonized, did they really achieve their mission that is to open up the natives' hearts and minds? [...] The West has not sent us its humanity; he only sent us its machine!<sup>71</sup>

Another article written by Dejean de la Batie was published on June 11, 1924. Batie filled 2 columns of the frontpage presenting Tagore's travels, his social background and his intellectual achievements including the foundation of the international university in Santiniketan 'that aims to bring the East closer to the West'.<sup>72</sup> It interpreted Tagore's protest against the massacre in Punjab and his rejection of the Knighthood that the British crown conferred on him as an act of patriotism. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a turning point in Indian history. In April 1919 in Amritsar, Punjab, the English women Marcella

Sherwood was attacked and then rescued by local Indians. What followed was an order issued by Colonel Dyer, the British local commander, requiring every Indian man using that street to crawl its length on his hands and knees. For the next two days, violent protest broke out leaving more than 1500 injured and approximately 1000 dead. This deeply shocked Tagore. Quoted in *L'Echo Annamite* (11 June 1924), Tagore said:

The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen, who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.<sup>73</sup>

On August 2, 1927, also in *L'Echo Annamite*, Hoàng Tích Chu published an article that was based on an interview he conducted with Tagore. '*L'Interview de Rabindranath Tagore, à bord de l'Amboise*' tells how Hoàng Tích Chu, who himself attended talks from French intellectuals in Latin, Paris, accidentally met Tagore on the ship back to his home country. After Tagore accepted his interview request, he visited Tagore in his cabin. Tích Chu described his first impression:

The cabin, as the others, was furnished in a European style. An old man, a non-European, was working at the table. On the table there was a large plate with a real lotus blossom that was still fresh. [I saw] the vision of the East, in a Western setting! [Like] Tagore's idea of the convergence of two civilizations: Europe and Asia.<sup>74</sup>

He told Tagore that his work was highly respected in Vietnam and proposed to translate Tagore's '*Nationalism*' from French into Vietnamese, and noted that colonialism and imperialism, are opposed to the principles of the French revolution in 1789. A few days later, August 6, 1927, the publishers posted '*From Tagore to Hoàng Tích Chu to Gandhi*' as a reaction to Tích Chu's article. It remarks that although the author considered Tagore to be 'an ardent patriot'<sup>75</sup>, his ideas were more moderate compared to Gandhi's. Hence, prior to Tagore's visit to Saigon, public opinion has been mainly positive about Tagore's global thinking, his critical view on Western domination and colonialism and the value of bringing Western and Eastern knowledge closer together. Vietnamese intellectuals considered him a patriot, a spiritual figure and a national hero, who went beyond a narrow definition of nation and nationalism, but instead, personified the connectedness of the 'West' and the 'East'.

However, his 3-day visit from 21 June until 23 June 1929 evoked different reactions. The editors of the newspaper *L'Écho Annamite* posted an article 'Rabindranath Tagore à Saigon' (June 22, 1929) featured a letter by Dương Văn Giáo<sup>76</sup>, who criticized Tagore for being a pacifist:

'You, Sir, are a pacifist. [But] it needs more than courage and heroism to call yourself a pacifist whilst we are citizens of a conquered country!' [...] While seeking for freedom he [Tagore] himself constrained his own will in favour of protecting the powers of destruction and waste and to give it the velocity that springs from this very constraint. Those who seek freedom in the political sphere alone are forced to constantly restrict and reduce their freedom of thought and action to the narrow limits of political freedom itself. Oftentimes at the expense of freedom of our minds.<sup>77</sup>

Commenting on Dương Văn Giáo's argument quoted above, and in defense of Tagore's turn to pacifism, Dương Văn Lợi in 'India and Tagore' (June 29, 1929) replied:

My spirit, in a spontaneous movement, allows me to see the discrete reproach that he [Giáo] expressed. And this sacrilege, I have to honestly admit shall be blamed on the whole universe.<sup>78</sup>

Similarly, in *'Le poete et le martyrs: Tagore et Phan Boi Chau'* written by Hi Vong on July 2 and 3, 1929, the author draws parallels between the two figures' pacifism. The editors' noted as a reaction to Hi Vong's article, that this optimistic pacifism needed to be critically discussed. They regarded the defense of pacifism as illusions of the youth, as idealistic and immature.

Indeed, Tagore had a turn in his view concerning patriotism and nationalism. He denounced the Western 'cult of patriotism' that led nations to 'end their existence in a sudden and violent death'<sup>79</sup>, and his critique of patriotism reinforced when the Swadeshi movement turned to violent means of resistance. Further, Tagore altered his position on nationalism, criticizing and ultimately objecting it for being the source of war, violence and divisiveness:

The Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation.<sup>80</sup>

Do we not see signs of this even now? Does not the voice come to us, [...] the voice which cries to our soul that the tower of national selfishness, which goes by the name of patriotism, which has raised its banner of treason against heaven, must totter and fall with a crash.<sup>81</sup>

Many Vietnamese intellectuals distanced themselves from Tagore's critique of patriotism and his enthusiasm for pacifism that he considered as the ultimate approach towards self-determination. Nguyễn Văn Bá in *Thần Chung* avowed:

We respect Tagore's grey beard, his philosophy and his talent in phrasing his thoughts in a beautiful way, but we want to say that his philosophy of 'peace and charity' is so luxurious that it only applies for a certain group of people. Tagore does not understand why humans are not living in peace. Because Tagore's ideology of peace goes into the clouds and his career is about sounds of music and songs, the reception of Tagore should have been ...<sup>82</sup>

Accordingly, Tagore's thoughts were considered to be idealistic, bourgeois, and not meeting the political realities of the ordinary Vietnamese people.

Yet, nationalism and anti-colonial resistance was not the only reason for Tagore's influence on Vietnamese debates. Despite the fact, that his idea of pacifism was rejected by many Vietnamese intellectuals, it was Tagore's vision to bring Eastern and Western education closer together, which complemented the thoughts of Vietnamese intellectuals at that time. Without doubt, Tagore's rich intellectual environment, his broad access to education in different countries, as much as his unconventional expectations towards proper teaching<sup>83</sup> eventually insinuated his idea of an International University. In 1918, Tagore laid the foundation stone for a new university in Shantiniketan, which was inaugurated three years later in 1921 and bore the name Visva-Bharati.<sup>84</sup> By declaring the university's motto: 'Where the whole world meets in one nest', Tagore once wrote that Visva-Bharati was meant to 'represent India's wealth of mind'<sup>85</sup>, while being a place 'somewhere beyond the limits of nation and geography'.<sup>86</sup> In 1919, he gave his famous lecture *'The center of Indian Culture'* in which he said:

I have no distrust of any culture because of its foreign character. On the contrary, I believe that the shock of outside forces is necessary for maintaining the vitality of our intellect. [W]hat I object to is the artificial arrangement by which this foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind and thus kills, or hampers, the great opportunity for the creation of new thought by a new combination of truths.

Arguably, the foundation of Tagore's own university and his philosophy of a synthesis of 'East' and 'West' might not have been able to exercise its significant influence as it did without the correspondence, influence and mutual exchange of ideas with other intellectuals such as Romain Rolland, Albert Einstein, Henri Bergson, G.B. Shaw, Thomas Mann, Robert Frost, H.G. Wells and Gandhiji.<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, the dimensions of what is considered as the intelligentsia in the 1920s of Vietnam portrayed the opposite of Tagore's internationalism. According to David G. Marr, during the 1920s and 1930s the so-called new intelligentsia was 'not a matter of class, wealth or social status' in the first place, but rather a state of mind. Primarily, it meant that the individual 'had committed himself to thinking, talking, reading and writing about change', however, mainly concerned with problems of land purchase, commerce, administration and judicial affairs, and less with artistic, journalistic or philosophical issues as in the case of R. Tagore who critically reflected on subjects such as nationalism and the subjugation of woman.<sup>88</sup> Marr also stated that in the mid-1920s there might have been 5,000 Vietnamese, who were actively taking intelligentsia roles. In contrast to Tagore's internationalism, the Vietnamese counterparts formed small and informal study groups to work in close harness and publish prolifically on a wide spectrum of topics.<sup>89</sup> Besides the world of Vietnamese intelligentsia, scarcely more than three to five percent of the Vietnamese population was able to read or write in the mid-1920s.<sup>90</sup> By contrast, India's education system was marked by a heavy expansion of higher education in the period from 1857 to 1947. Already in 1857, around 5,399 students were enrolled in three universities and 27 colleges<sup>91</sup>, whereas only a small minority of 83 Vietnamese were enrolled in public secondary schools (year 11–13) in 1923.<sup>92</sup> In 1929 the figure slightly increased to a number of 121, and 465 in 1939.<sup>93</sup>

According to existing literature, Ho Chi Minh had a similar encounter.<sup>94</sup> It is said that Ho Chi Minh came to realize that the propagation of values of human dignity, liberty, equality and fraternity in France stood in contradiction to the demeanour committed by the French in the Vietnamese colony. Influenced and certainly enthused by this, he specifically called for the encouragement of exchange student programmes and thus, the circulation of 'Western' and 'Eastern' ideas. In his speech at *The Fifth Congress of the Communist International on July 8th, 1924*, Ho Chi Minh, who himself was one of the above-mentioned intellectuals receiving French, British, Chinese and Soviet education, proposed 'to send comrades from the colonial countries to study at the Eastern Communist University in Moscow'.<sup>95</sup> Committed to the Soviet form of Marxism-Leninism – an ideology with a universal outlook – he also called for an unprecedented mass education movement in 1945 that was mainly enforced by the Communist Viet Minh guerrilla and aimed at embracing and teaching Marxist-Leninist ideology.<sup>96</sup> Sebastian Conrad wrote that 'when critical intellectuals in Vietnam, such as Ho Chi Minh, began to read Marx this was seen as evidence of the transcultural circulation of ideas'.<sup>97</sup> However, Conrad avowed, 'this connectedness proved to be itself the result of social changes that had created the conditions under which reading Marx in

Vietnam began to make political sense' rather than the power of Marx's arguments alone.<sup>98</sup>

Back to Tagore's visit to Saigon in June 1929, Chi P. Pham emphasized that the reception of Tagore was primarily focused on his creative rather than political writings.<sup>99</sup> Arguably, in terms of the burgeoning nationalist aspirations by Vietnamese intellectuals Tagore's textual and ideological world may not have influenced the discourse in a fervent way but revived yet another debate surrounding the self-determination of the Vietnamese people: The production of global southern knowledge. The connectedness of Tagore's and Vietnamese intellectuals' worlds became particularly apparent with Bùi Quang Chiêu, a political leader, and Dương Văn Giáo, a renowned Saigon lawyer. Both remembered their trip to Tagore's Visva-Bharati, praising the lively and religious atmosphere at the university.<sup>100</sup> During Tagore's reception in Saigon, Quang Chiêu and Văn Giáo introduced the cultural ideal of a synthesis between the East and the West that was, according to Nguyễn Đăng Thục's formulation, personified in Tagore himself:

Poet Tagore does not cultivate a narrow nationalism. He would like to unite Hinduism in the harmony of an active co-operation towards the disinterested love for one's fellowman and all beings, towards the cult of the beautiful, the good and the true. (Thục, 1961: 362).

Bùi Quang Chiêu's (1872–1945) own context is interesting too. He himself lived in Algeria, France and Vietnam and participated in different political movements, such as the *Phong trào Duy Tân* (1906–1908) – a movement led by Phan Châu Trinh that was aimed at following 'the new', as well as in the famous *Đông Du movement* [*Eastern Study movement*] (1905–1909), which was initiated by Phan Bội Châu and encouraged students to 'go East' (i.e. to follow Japan as a model of development). Both movements constituted essential parts of anti-colonial resistance and pursued the approach to create alternatives to the exclusive French/Western education and to foster the circulation of ideas within countries of the 'East'.<sup>101</sup> However, those endeavours have been destroyed by the colonial regime.<sup>102</sup> As a matter of fact, this issue had already been discussed years earlier to Tagore's visit in Vietnam. Phan Châu Trinh<sup>103</sup>, who died three years before Tagore's trip in 1929, advocated the synthesis of 'East' and 'West'. Appealing to French democratic principles, Trinh wrote:

Over the past twelve years, I have lived in the land of democracy [France], breathed the air of liberty. Thanks to that, I became familiar with the principles of universal justice, recognized the duties of the citizens in a country [...]. The gist of my conviction and my objectives are as above.<sup>104</sup>

Although he unequivocally rejected French domination over Vietnam, he rebuffed the idea of reliance on Japan and thus, conflicted with Phan Bội Châu's principles of 'looking east'. Instead, Phan Châu Trinh initiated his own programmes, including a school in Hanoi 'at which local pupils of both sexes, taught in Vietnamese, Chinese and French, could study modern science and economics along the Asian classics'.<sup>105</sup>

One particular topic expressed the convergence of Eastern and Western ideas in both Tagore's work and Vietnamese lived reality: the self-determination of women and her responsibility towards the nation. Tagore's poems particularly affected the readers of the journal *Phụ nữ tân văn* (*Journal of the New Woman*), 1929–1935). In June 1929 Thạch Lan published the article 'Ông Rabindranath Tagore' in which she compared

Tagore's poems with the poetry by Nguyễn Du and Nguyễn Bình Khiêm, followed by an article in October 1930 about Shantiniketan and its alternative methods of education.<sup>106</sup> The journal criticized authoritarian Vietnamese education and teaching methods and expressed admiration for Tagore's self-education, love of nature and Eastern spiritualism.

Tagore was not unique in coping with the Manichaean structure of tradition and modernity caught in the female body<sup>107</sup>, his Vietnamese counterparts were also concerned with the education, emancipation and position of women in family life, among them were Khái Hưng (1896–1947), Nhất Linh (1905–63) and also Phan Bội Châu (1867–1940). Phan Bội Châu, for example, wrote the well-known official textbook *Nữ quốc dân tu tri* (Education for National Females) in 1926. He argued for 'a subtle merging of traditional and modern values, a selective appropriation of Eastern and Western concepts of female behavior'.<sup>108</sup> Encouraging women to expand on their talents, their economic productivity and political roles, instead of reducing them to the sphere of the family and household, he considered to be essential for national survival and progress.<sup>109</sup> However, he warned against all Westernized forms of emancipation and emphasized that abuse of power and a slavish mentality have to be abolished, but this shouldn't mean that roles and responsibilities as parent, child, husband and wife are illegitimate.<sup>110</sup> Nhất Linh, a Vietnamese intellectual who was also influenced by European knowledge, wrote a sociological novel *Đoạn tuyệt*, in which he attempted to extricate women from socially determined gendered hierarchies. For him, the social transformation and the strengthening of women were part of anti-colonial nationalism.<sup>111</sup> And Huỳnh Thúc Kháng<sup>112</sup> (June 27, 1929 in *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*) opined that as long as the tradition of 'nam tôn nữ ti' (a patriarchal concept that values men as superior to women) is further realized in Vietnamese culture, gender equality remains an unfulfilled theory.<sup>113</sup>

However, these protagonists were not unchallenged in their views, nor have they been the first Vietnamese thinkers who have hitherto recontextualized the female body or female texts in Vietnamese culture.<sup>114</sup> For example, opponents of Westernized feminism like Bùi Quang Chiêu associated the education of women with the responsibility towards the nation through teaching women about their rights and moral obligations at 'home', 'towards their husbands' and thus, towards the organization of society.<sup>115</sup> In fact, as Chi P. Pham argues, Tagore's poetry was filled with an 'Oriental mystery' and the 'beautification of sorrow' that was embodied in the female subject.<sup>116</sup> Hence, the reception of Tagore's literature in Vietnam became possible because that 'Oriental mystery' needed to be reinvigorated for the purpose of anti-colonial nationalism and had little to do with Tagore's actual view on nationalism. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that, despite the uneven development of educational history between India and Vietnam, a shared intellectual history facilitated the circulation of Tagore's worlds of thinking.

#### 4. Conclusion

The work of Martin Luther King Jr., Ernesto Guevara and Rabindranath Tagore has been circulated and recited globally and can be seen as representative of a way of thinking global and local in political struggles. However, their ideational connectedness with global southern countries and its intellectual worlds, in particular, remains underrepresented. Thus, by localizing the texts and contexts of the three figures, this article aimed to counter-balance the one-sidedness of dominant Western-centric perspectives on Vietnamese

history. In this way, this paper considered the three figures as examples of how dissident intellectuals and political activist could take the position against Westerncentric narratives by navigating between local and global terrains and linking their own local political struggles to a broader approach, that is the universal struggle for self-determination. I unpacked how the three historical figures encountered the anti-colonial thought in and about Vietnam and as a result, contributed to a counternarrative that challenges Western-dominated perspectives on Vietnamese history to this day. However, the figures own texts and references to Vietnam should not be overstated or mystified as pure commitment to the Vietnamese people, but is more to be seen as methodological lens, an entry point, through which we can correlate the individual histories and national contexts with the global connectedness of our times and struggles.

Martin Luther King and Ernesto Guevara are two examples, whose references to the Vietnam War and the Anti-War Movement are representing a counternarrative to paternalistic accounts of both narratives.<sup>117</sup> The article demonstrated that the revolutionaries' views and contributions can be understood in terms of a response that, indeed, transcended the 'national cause' by relying on the language of the 'global' and the common identity of the colonized. I suggested to read the texts of the two revolutionaries in the entangled context of both their strategic positions in North and South America and the global cause, which altogether capture a special moment of global history in the backdrop of anti-imperial and anti-colonial resistance. Thus, I demonstrated how resituating King's and Guevara's perspectives help to understand the extent to which revolutionaries contributed to the 'taking' and 'making' of the world. Even though neither Guevara nor King actually brought the Vietnam War to an end, they certainly had a formative effect on the politicians' and activists' agenda.<sup>118</sup> Suffice it to say that they contributed to the connectedness of activists with the wider civil society both within and across class and national boundaries.

In the second part of this paper, I addressed the connectedness between Tagore and Vietnamese intellectuals in the 1920s. During French colonial rule in Vietnam, Tagore's poems first gave hope to the growing group of Vietnamese revolutionary intellectuals. This article demonstrated how some of his viewpoints complemented and others contradicted the local ideas in Vietnam. They pointed to the manifold hidden debates that challenged Western-centric knowledge and Western domination. While colonialism was rejected, global literature and thought adopted, criticized and recontextualized. For Tagore praised pacifism as the only legitimate way of resisting colonialism, Vietnamese were disappointed by his bourgeois ideas. Hence, Tagore's dissociation from patriotism and nationalism was considered incompatible with the social realities in Vietnam. Nonetheless, Tagore's international university and his poems still complemented the intellectuals' agenda for the purpose of strengthening national progress and emancipation without necessarily abandoning local Vietnamese traditions. Alternative non-authoritarian teaching methods as well as the emancipation of women were examples of uniting Eastern spirituality and Western scientific knowledge.

Locating Tagore's reception and some of his ideas in the context of Vietnam raises the question whether the increased interconnectedness, in fact, contributed to the overall restriction of circulating ideas among 'Southern' thinkers. Forced displacement and political exile, but also travelling to Western countries for educational reasons have been part of colonial realities, which amplified Western-centric knowledge, giving even less

room to southern-derived literature or southern-southern exchanges. As C. A. Bayly puts it: ‘None of these forms [of Western-derived world literature] wholly destroyed the traditions of popular literature’, but what it meant was that ‘while the reading matter of educated people across the world was rapidly converging in style, it became more distant from these popular [traditional] forms [of literature] and was less and less influenced by them at the same time’.<sup>119</sup>

Be that as it may, it goes without saying that the potential of recognizing the synthesis of global northern and southern ideas could not be fully realized until this day, much less so the southern-derived literature. Yet, looking through the lens of Southern historical figures is a methodological entry point to counterbalance and complement Westerncentric literature.

## Notes

1. Moyn and Sartori, *Global Intellectual History*, 2013; Ward, *Early Evangelicalism*; Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*; Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought*; Armitage, *Civil Wars*; Davis, *Cities in global context*; Feichtinger et al., *The Worlds of Positivism*; Duara et al., *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*; Shruti et al., *An Intellectual History for India*; Arnulf, *Mestizo International Law*.
2. Moyn and Sartori. *Global Intellectual History*, 7.
3. Some might argue that Guevara and King cannot be considered as global-southern subjects per definition. However, in this article I refer to individuals and groups as global-southern subjects, who are involved in anti-colonial, anti-capitalist struggles or geographically located in non-Western countries.
4. Bell, “Making and Taking Worlds,” 262.
5. Goodman went on stating: “The one world may be taken as many or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking”. See Goodman, *Ways of World-making*, 2.
6. For a discussion on Ernesto Guevara’s legacy see Anderson, *Che Guevara*, or Vitier. *The Motorcycle Diaries*.
7. Officially, the first U.S. planes began to bomb North Vietnam on February 8, 1965. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon*, 85.
8. Lewy estimated 1.353.000 total deaths in Vietnam during 1965–1974. Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 453.
9. Miller, “Perceptions & Recommendations of Activists in the Vietnam Protest Movement,” 361.
10. McAdam and Su, “The War at Home,” 698.
11. Boyle and Lim, *Looking Back on the Vietnam War*, 176. Attempts to argue against these narratives can be found in Anderson, *The Vietnam War*; Kimball, *Nixon’s Vietnam War*. A different contribution on Afro-Asian internationalism is provided by Robeson, *The East is Black*.
12. Apart from this, Vietnamese involvement in Cambodia and Laos during and after the Vietnam/American War and its devastating consequences remain obliterated in the binary narrative of ‘the Americans against the Vietnamese’.
13. Grose, “Voices of Southern Protest during the Vietnam War Era,” 154. Chicano and Native American Indian opposition to the Vietnam War is covered by, for example, Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*.
14. By the early 2000s scholars started to give more prominence to counter-perspectives. See, for example, Robbins, *Against the Vietnam War*; Lewes, *Protest and Survive*; Spilsbury, *Who Protested Against the Vietnam War?*; Hall et al., *Vietnam War Era*.
15. Moyn and Sartori, *Global Intellectual History*, 18.



16. Although the U.S. government's narrative that depicted their soldiers as heroes liberating the Vietnamese people from the Communist invasion remained dominant, public opinion changed as the war prolonged. According to a Gallup poll in October 1965, 64 percent of the U.S. public approved the American involvement in Vietnam. In January 1969, the number of approvals declined to 39 percent, while 52 percent indicated to be against the military involvement. In other words, the consent of public opinion to the government's narrative declined between 1965–1969. What is more, it was mainly the aspect of 'the loss of our young men' [sic!] with 31 percent compared to 'killing innocent people' with only 6 percent and 'bombings/terrorism' with only 2 percent that troubled U.S. citizens most. See Lichty, "Polls Tell Us No More Than Where We Are; Vietnam War Opinion." Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy During the Vietnam War (R-3060-AF, Project Air Force)*, 24f.
17. Aguilar-San Juan and Joyce, *The People Make the Peace*, 17f. For instance, Philip Vera Cruz, a leader of the Filipino farmworkers involved in the organization of the Delano grape boycott in 1965, also contributed to the anti-war protests and fostered the idea of pan-Asian solidarity.
18. Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 19.
19. Aguilar-San Juan and Joyce. *The People Make the Peace*, 20.
20. Bell, "Making and Taking Worlds," 257.
21. Aguilar-San Juan and Joyce, *The People Make the Peace*, 24.
22. Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 3.
23. The speech 'Vietnam must not Alone' got republished several times under different titles. For example, the author found the same text but titled 'Vietnam and the World Struggle for Freedom'.
24. Young, "Reflections on the Anti-war Movement, Then and Now," 68; and Philipps, *War! What Is It Good For?*, 242.
25. King, Martin Luther cited in Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 13.
26. *Ibid.*, 3.
27. Miah, "From Vietnam to the War in Iraq," 109.
28. Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 4.
29. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon*, 120.
30. Thích Nhất Hạnh, born in 1926, is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, a peace activist and founder of the Plum Village Tradition. He has been living in exile since 1966 and spent most of his life in the Plum Village Monastery in southwest France. He returned to Vietnam in March 2019 to enjoy the rest of his life. He published over 100 books, in which he promoted non-violence, human rights, reconciliation and mindfulness.
31. King, Letter "Nomination of Thich Nhat Hanh for the Nobel Peace Prize. Archived on the Hartford Web Publishing website."
32. King, Martin Luther. Speech "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence", Riverside Church, Manhattan (April 1967).
33. Cited in Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 24.
34. However, at that time, almost no African American has openly declared this critical standpoint against King. See Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 3.
35. Roy Wilkins, a member of the NAACP, took an apologetic stance arguing that 'civil rights groups [do not] have enough information on Vietnam, or on foreign policy, to make it their cause.' The newspaper *Time* claimed that King was 'confusing the cause', while Senator Tomas Dodd accused King of having 'absolutely no confidence' in dealing with foreign affairs, but instead, is setting himself against the support in Congress. See Fairclough, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam," 25.
36. Aguilar-San Juan and Joyce, *The People Make the Peace*, 14.
37. The SNCC had a pioneering role in the peace movement. Though quite controversial and unpopular at that time, it was most vocal in linking imperialism with war and racism.
38. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon*, 173. The results of the Harris poll on May 19, 1967, revealed that '73 percent of the American people disagreed with King's position on the war, and 60 percent

believed it would hurt the civil rights movement.’ The Harris poll also found that ‘nearly half of the African Americans disagreed with King’s anti-war position, and only 25 percent agreed with him.’ See Lucks, *Selma To Saigon*, 203.

39. Lucks, *Selma To Saigon*, p. 210.
40. *Ibid.*, 146.
41. King, Martin Luther. Cited in Miah, *From Vietnam to the War in Iraq*, 4. Fairclough stated: ‘King’s stance on Vietnam cannot be explained, however, in terms of his abhorrence of war per se. King moved in the real world of politics: like other civil-rights leaders, he was constantly forced to seek compromises.’ In other words, King’s reluctance to fully support the anti-war movement from its infancy must be linked to his responsibility to respect the internal fractions of the civil rights movement, which limited King’s freedom of political action, the risk of ‘alienating a large segment of his mass following’ on the one hand, and ‘endangering his relationship with the federal government on the other’ See Fairclough, “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam,” 24.
42. *Ibid.*, 28.
43. King, M.L. Speech: “*The Domestic Impact of the War in America*”, November 11, 1967.
44. King opined: ‘I see a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle that waged in America’. See King, *Speeches by The Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr.*, 2.
45. King, Martin Luther. Speech “*Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence*”, Riverside Church, Manhattan, April 1967.
46. King said: ‘I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front.’, in the speech “*Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence*”, April 1967.
47. Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 4. I use the term ‘global discourse’ to underline the global dimension of the existing Western dominated discourses that happens to become mainstream in both Western and non-Western countries. However, as this article indicates, I am aware of the diverse - however less hegemonic - counternarratives that evolved throughout the period.
48. King, *Speeches by The Rev. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. About the War in Vietnam*, 10.
49. Guevara, “Vietnam Must not stand alone, 1967,” 79–91.
50. Petras, “Che Guevara and Contemporary Revolutionary Movements,” 9.
51. *Ibid.*, 9.
52. *Ibid.*, 9.
53. Johnson, “From Cuba to Bolivia”, 31.
54. Guevara, “*Vietnam Must not stand alone.*”
55. King, cited in Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 13.
56. Guevara, “Vietnam Must not stand alone,” 90.
57. King, cited in Aptheker, *Dr Martin Luther King, Vietnam and Civil Rights*, 3.
58. Guevara, “Vietnam Must not stand alone,” 89.
59. ‘We shall have a choice today: non-violent coexistence or violent co-annihilation?’ See King, *Vietnam and The Struggle For Human Rights*, 13.
60. Lucks, *Selma To Saigon*, 148.
61. Guevara, “Vietnam Must not stand alone,” 89.
62. However, King considered himself to be a ‘realistic pacifist’, and was critical towards many pacifists, who he found to be naively optimistic and irritatingly self-righteous. Cited in Fairclough “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam,” 22. See also King, ‘Conscience and the Vietnam War’ in *The Trumpet of Conscience*, New York, 1968.
63. Miller, “Perceptions & Recommendations of Activists in the Vietnam Protest Movement,” 365.
64. King, *Speeches by The Rev. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. About the War in Vietnam*, 4.
65. Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 374ff.
66. *Ibid.*, 5–6.
67. Quayum, “Editorial Tagore and Nationalism,” 2.

68. Other articles about Tagore were published in periodicals including *L'Écho Annamite*, *La Cloche Fêlée*, *Thần Chung*, *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*, *Tribune Inchinoise*, *Đuốc Nhà Nam* and others.
69. Nguyễn Tinh. "Patriotism at Tagore" [Patriotisme chez Tagore], *La Cloche Fêlée*, March 5, 1921. English translation from *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore* (1997), 260.
70. Pham, *The Rise and the Fall of Rabindranath Tagore in Vietnam*, 5.
71. Croce, L. "Colonies and Metropoles" [Colonies et Métropoles], *La Cloche Fêlée*, November 15, 1921.
72. De La Batie, "Rabindranath Tagore".
73. Ibid. Translated into English in Dutta, and Robinson, ed. *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*, 223–4.
74. Hoàng Tích Chu. "L'interview de Rabindranath Tagore, à bord de 'l'Amboise', par M. Hoang-Tich-Chu," *L'Echo Annamite*, August 2, 1927.
75. de la Batie, "From Tagore to Hoàng Tích Chu to Gandhi".
76. Dương Văn Giáo (1900–1945) was an official member of the Welcome Committee for Tagore's reception. The reception ceremony itself took place at the Prefecture of Saigon and at the Municipal Theatre.
77. Dương Văn Giáo cited in 'Rabindranath in Saigon' [Rabindranath Tagore à Saigon], *L'Écho Annamite*, June 22, 1929. My translation from French to English. [Original: 'Vous êtes, Maître, un pacifiste. Il faut beaucoup plus que du courage, de l'héroïsme, pour oser être pacifiste quand on est le citoyen d'un pays conquis!'] Further, the article states: 'Dans la recherche de la liberté, il [Tagore] faut contraindre sa volonté, afin de protéger les puissances de cette faculté de la destruction et du gaspillage, et aussi pour lui donner cette vélocité qui naît de la contrainte même. Ceux qui recherchent la liberté dans le seul plan politique, doivent constamment la restreindre, et réduire leur liberté de pensée et d'action entre ces limites étroites dans lesquelles seules peut se développer une liberté politique et très souvent au prix de la liberté de conscience'.]
78. Dương Văn Lợi. "India and Tagore" [L'Inde et Tagore], *L'Écho Annamite*, June 29, 1929. My translation from French to English. [Original: Mon esprit, en un mouvement spontané, m'y fait voir le reproche discret derrière la luange qu'il t'ampère. Et ce sacrilège, je t'avoue ici, en toute franchise, dussé-je encourir le blâme indigné de tout l'universe!]
79. Tagore, *Nationalism*, 78.
80. Expanding on this, Tagore continued: 'It can be safely prophesied that this cannot go on, for there is a moral law in this world, which has its application both to individuals and to organized bodies of men. You cannot go on violating these laws in the name of your nation, yet enjoy their advantage as individuals. This public sapping of ethical ideals slowly reacts upon each member of society, gradually breeding weakness, where it is not seen, and causing that cynical distrust of all things sacred in human nature, which is the true symptom of senility. You must keep in mind that this political civilization, this creed of national patriotism, has not been given a long trial. See Tagore, *Nationalism*, 29f; 60f.
81. Ibid, 91f.
82. This is Chi P. Pham's translation from Vietnamese to English. Nguyễn Văn Bá. "Concerning the reception, the philanthropy and peace of Mr. Tagore [Chung quanh cuộc tiếp rước ông Tagore: Tấm lòng bác ái và hòa bình của tiên sinh]." *Thần Chung*, June 28, 1929.
83. R. Tagore held that proper teaching does not explain things, rather proper teaching stokes curiosity. See Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 50.
84. A compound made from the Sanskrit word for 'the universe' and Bharati, a goddess in the Rigveda associated with the Hindu goddess of learning.
85. Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 220.
86. Frost, "Beyond the limits of nation and geography," 145.
87. Sharma, *Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetics*, 1.
88. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945*, 31–2.
89. Ibid., 32.
90. Ibid., 34.

91. Pillai, “*Higher Education in India*,” 550. For an extended discussion on higher education in India and Bengal see Bellenoit, *Missionary Education and Empire in Late Colonial India, 1860–1920*.
92. In 1929 there were 32.646 public school students in the primary (4–6) grades. See Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, 37.
93. *Ibid.*, 38.
94. See Tagore, *Nationalism, 1918 or The Home and the World, 1916*.
95. Ho. “Report On the National and Colonial Questions At The Fifth Congress Of The Communist International.”
96. Alexander Woodside explained that ‘between 1946 and 1950 Viet Minh guerrillas used night classes and “independence hours” (the rare tranquil hours when French aeroplanes were not releasing bombs), taught basic literacy to some ten million previously uneducated Vietnamese. Three decades later, in 1980, the percentage of children who received a basic form of education was 90 percent.’ According to Woodside, this achievement was unprecedented in Southeast Asian history.  
See Woodside, “The Triumphs and Failures of Mass Education in Vietnam,” 401.
97. Conrad, *What Is Global History?*, 70.
98. *Ibid.*, 70.
99. Pham, *The Rise and the Fall of Rabindranath Tagore in Vietnam*, 18.
100. Thục, “Tagore and Vietnam”, 361.
101. ‘[O]ther than the Chinese exiles (Liang Qichao and Sun Yatsen) the Vietnamese had no overseas communities to speak of, and this conditioned the activities of their political exiles and students for some decades, either preventing them from doing many things that they deemed essential or making them overly dependent on foreigners’ See Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, 24.
102. For an extended discussion on both and other anti-colonial movements in Vietnam see Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925*.
103. One of the most famous early 20th century Vietnamese anti-colonial nationalists and intellectuals, also known as ‘Tây Hồ’.
104. Original source of this quote was written in literary Chinese: Phan Châu Trinh, *Letter to Emperor Khải Định*, July 15, 1922. See Phan Châu Trinh 1922, translated by Vĩnh Sinh (2009), 88. For an overview of Phan Châu Trinh’s perception of Vietnamese-French relations, see *Phan Châu Trinh and His Political Writings*, edited by Vĩnh Sinh, 2009.
105. Karnow, S. wrote: “He antagonized Vietnamese extremists, who thought him too moderate, and he disturbed moderates, who thought him too extreme”. See Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 124.
106. Cited in Pham, *The Rise and the Fall of Rabindranath Tagore*, 17.
107. See, for example, Tagore’s *The Home and the World* (1916).
108. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, 215.
109. *Ibid.*, 215.
110. Phan Bội Châu. “Mr. Phan-Bội-Châu’s opinion on the issue of women” [Ý-kiến của ông Phan-Bội-Châu đối với vấn-đề phụ-nữ] *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*, July 4, 1929. See Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, 215.
111. Tran, *Post-Mandarin*, 66.
112. Huỳnh Thúc Kháng (1876–1947) was the publisher of the first Vietnamese Newspaper in Quốc Ngữ [modern Vietnamese language] in Central Vietnam, *Tiếng Dân* [People’s Voice]. He associated with Phan Chau Trinh but has been largely forgotten for his political activities against French colonial rule (*Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*, June 27, 1929).
113. Huỳnh Thúc Kháng. “Mr. Huynh Thuc Khang’s opinion on the issue of women” [Ý-kiến của ông Huỳnh Thúc Kháng đối với vấn-đề phụ-nữ], *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*, June 22, 1929.
114. ‘The Tale of Kiều’ was written by Nguyễn Du and published in 1820. In this novel, Nguyễn Du emphasized the importance of female fantasy, sexuality and the recovery and restaging of the female body. A comparative work is provided by Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, who edited

the book *Women Filmmakers of the African & Asian Diaspora: Decolonising the Gaze, Locating Subjectivity*, 1997.

115. Editors Phụ Nữ Tân Văn. “Mr. Bui-Quang-Chieu’s opinion on the issue of women. Interview by the editors” [Ý-kiến của ôn Bùi-Quang-Chiêu đối với vấn-đề phụ-nữ. Cuộc phỏng-vấn của P.N.T.V.] *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn*, June 20 (1929), 9–11.
116. Pham, “Cam lang (silence) in Receptions of Rabindranath Tagore in Colonial Vietnam,” 35. In addition, Chi P. Pham states that ‘the reception of Tagore in literary practices was the product of colonial knowledge’. Although I agree with her in principle, I believe that her argument may need to be revised in a more complex setting, as Vietnamese intellectual life has emerged prior to French colonial influence and is thus, more intricate than meets the (post-colonial) academic eye.
117. Small, “The Doves Ascendant,” 43–52.
118. Adam Fairclough avows that, although the anti-war movement might not have contributed to American military disengagement from Vietnam, it certainly fostered the downfall of Lyndon Johnson. See Fairclough, “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the War in Vietnam,” 19.
119. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914*, 389.

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