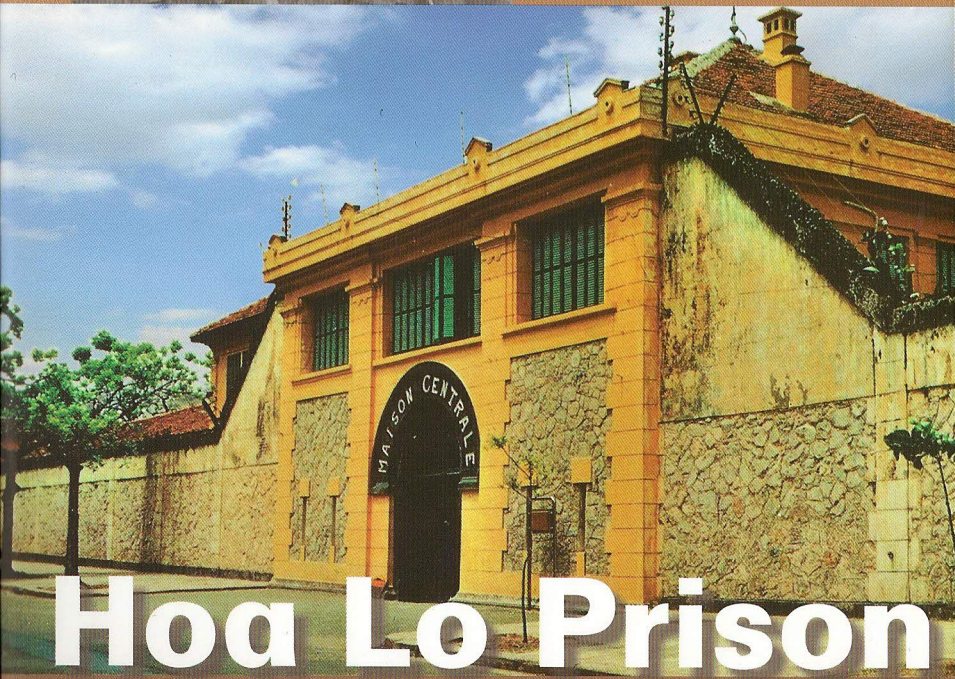
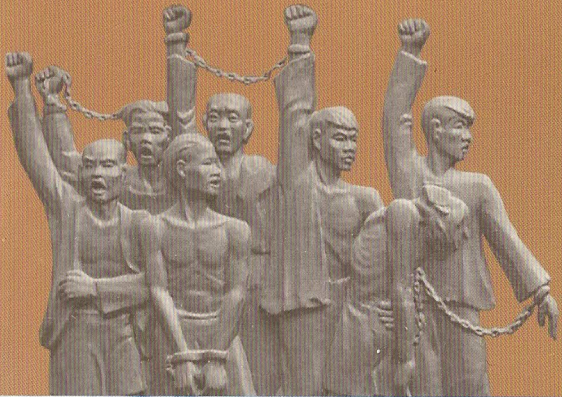


ADMINISTRATION BOARD
OF HOA LO PRISON HISTORICAL RELIC



Hoa Lo Prison

Historical relic

Hanoi, 2013

Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic

Other information on Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic

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HOA LO PRISON HISTORICAL RELIC

Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic is located at No. 1 Hoa Lo Street, Tran Hung Dao Ward, Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi, about 1.5 km Southwest of the central Hoan Kiem Lake. It is a typical historical relic of the capital city and has been classified as a national relic by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. It is also an interesting tourist, research and learning destination for domestic and international tourists.



Front panorama of Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic

Hoa Lo Prison was built by the French colonialists in 1896 to hold thousands of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters. Since the restoration of peace and liberation of North Vietnam on October 10, 1954, the Vietnamese State has used Hoa Lo Prison for criminals. From August 5, 1964 to March 29, 1973, part of the prison was used for captured American pilots who were shot down in North Vietnam.

In 1993, to meet the development requirements of Hanoi Capital City, the Vietnamese Government decided to demolish part of Hoa Lo Prison for the construction of Hanoi Tower. The remaining area of 2,434m² was turned into a historical relic site. The retained architectural works include three 2-storey French-style buildings, two quarters for men and women

prisoners, cells for death sentenced prisoners and dungeons (cachot), two 2-storey watchtowers and part of the 5m - high, 0.5m - thick stone wall surrounding the prison.



Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic

In Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic, many precious documents and exhibits are displayed including a guillotine, cells holding death sentenced prisoners, underground sewer gate, exhibits related to American prisoners of war (POWs), the flight suit of Pilot, Major John McCain (who was a Presidential candidate in 2008). The exhibit contents are very interesting and lively, focusing on the following main topics: Hoa Lo Prison under the French colonialist regime in Vietnam and the life of American POWs in Hoa Lo Prison.

Part 1 Hoa Lo Prison under the French colonialist regime in Vietnam

1. History of construction of Hoa Lo prison

1.1 History of the land area where Hoa Lo Prison was built

In the past, Hoa Lo Prison was located in Phu Khanh Village, Vinh Xuong Canton, Tho Xuong District, Hanoi. Phu Khanh was a famous craft village in Hanoi specializing in making earthen pots, earthen kettles and earthen stoves and carpentry bases that were sold widely in the capital city, hence the name Hoa Lo (fiery furnace).

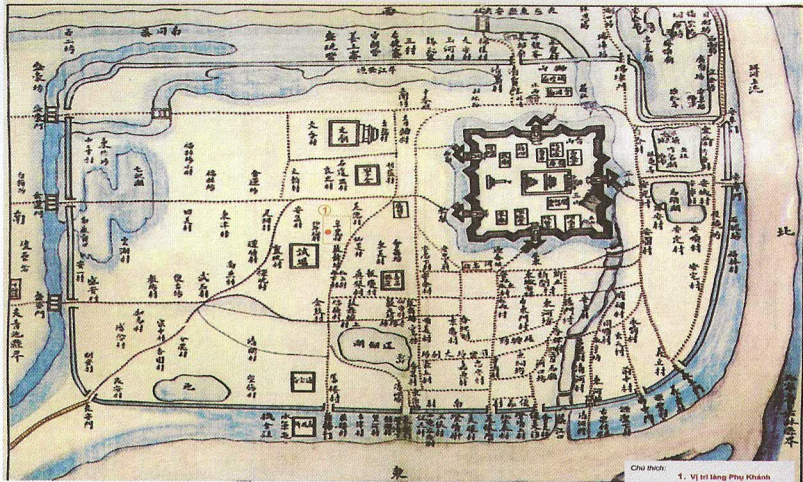
Throughout nearly a century under the French occupation (1858 -1954), the life of laboring Vietnamese was extremely hard and miserable: "shortages of food and clothing" and family separation. Not being resigned to losing the country and being enslaved, the Vietnamese rose up against French colonialists and regained national independence and sovereignty.



Exhibition room on Phu Khanh Village before the construction of Hoa Lo Prison by the French

In late 19th and early 20th century, to wipe out the increasing fighting movements of the Vietnamese, the French colonialists strongly suppressed, killed and arrested patriots. Their domination apparatus was strengthened, building "more prisons than schools". In central Hanoi, the

French ordered the building of an uninterrupted legal system to serve their ruling administration in Vietnam, including the Secret Agent Office, the Court and Hoa Lo Prison. At present, these French architectural-style buildings have been kept intact.



Map of Hanoi in the 19th century



Chan Tien Pagoda where two stelae of Phu Khanh Village (1897) are kept

To have land to build Hoa Lo Prison, the French colonialists displaced

all of the 48 households from Phu Khanh Village and resettled them in the present date The Giao Street (Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi). They dismantled Phu Khanh Communal House and Luu Ly, Bich Thu, Bich Hoa and Chan Tien Pagoda (Chan Tien Pagoda was rebuilt at No. 151 Ba Trieu Street, Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi). Since then, Hoa Lo was "notorious" for detaining and physically and mentally torturing thousands of patriotic and revolutionary Vietnamese.

1.2. Hoa Lo, the biggest and most solid prison in Indochina

Construction of Hoa Lo Prison started in 1896 by the French and was named "Maison Centrale" (Central House, a traditional euphemism to denote prisons in France), but people used to call it by its location name Hoa Lo (or Hoa Lo Prison). It was one of the biggest and most solid prisons in Indochina. Hoa Lo Prison and the Court of Assizes and the Secret Agent Office built nearby formed a legal system to effectively serve the French suppression of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighting movements.

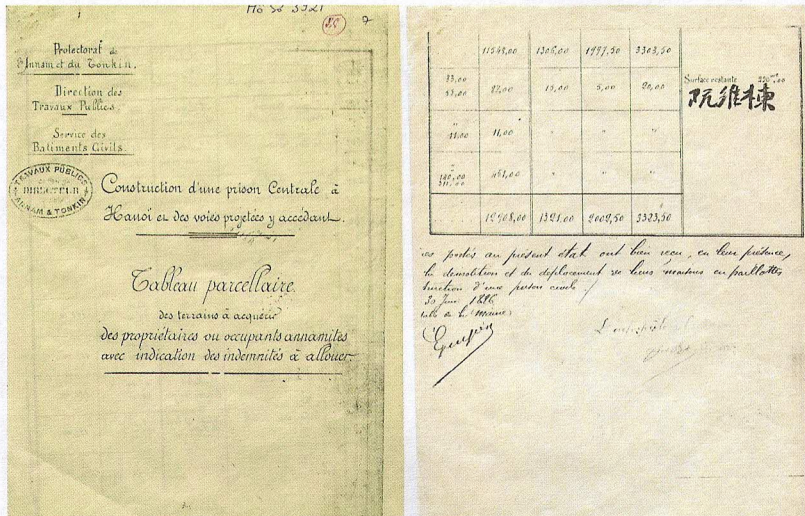


Panorama of Hoa Lo Prison 1896 - 1954

Hoa Lo Prison was built in the centre of Hanoi (the then capital of the French administration). Opposite to the prison to the east was Hoa Lo Street, close to the Court, Rue Richaud (now Quan Su Street) to the west, Rue des Teituriers (now Tho Nhuom Street) to the south, and Rollande Prolonge (now Hai Ba Trung Street) to the north of the Prison. Total land area of Hoa Lo Prison (Maison Centrale) and adjacent roads leading to the prison was 12,908 m² and estimated construction cost was

1,212,434 Indochinese piasters.

Hoa Lo Prison was built with a careful selection of construction materials by the French. All metal and glass equipment and accessories (such as locks, hinges, dog nails etc.) were imported from France with best quality and were strictly checked before construction. The required glass plates were crystal without bubbles and bricks should fully absorb water before construction. The thickness of connecting areas was no more than 0.007m to 0.008m... With all those strict construction requirements, the French were at ease and self-satisfied, thinking that Hoa Lo Prison could be “no body in, no body out”, and even “an ant could not get through it”.



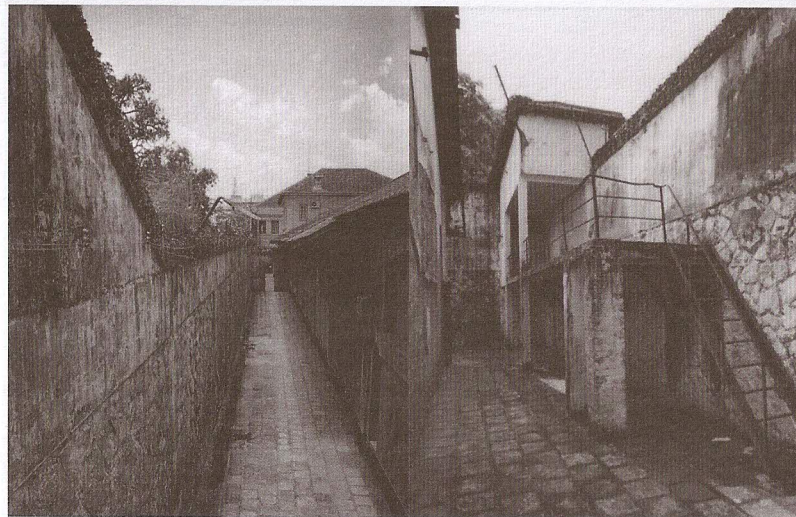
Cost estimations and tender requirements for construction of Hoa Lo Prison (1896)

Dossier No.6692 being kept at the Vietnam National Archives Centre says: “The Project document and tender requirements have 41 provisions drafted by Architect, Director of the Department of Civil Construction and completed on Jan. 24, 1896. Chief Engineer, Director of Public Works Office appraised it and the Indochinese Governor General approved it on Feb. 27, 1896. Due to its special urgency, the Hoa Lo Prison project was implemented in the same year, 1896”. In 1899, after three years of construction, although many works were not yet completed, the prison was put into use because then many Vietnamese were arrested by French colonialists. The first batch of prisoners held in Hoa Lo Prison

was from Can Vuong Movement ,Yen The Insurrection. The next ones included Luong Van Can, Nguyen Quyen, and Duong Ba Trac from the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc Movement; Phan Boi Chau from the Dong Du Movement; Nguyen Thai Hoc, Pho Duc Chinh and Nguyen Khac Nhu from the Vietnam Nationalist Party.

According to the design approved by the French in 1896, Hoa Lo Prison had several construction works: a house used for guarding; two for health stations; one for a charity hospital; two for holding arrestees; one for a workshop; and five for prisoners.

Detention rooms of Hoa Lo Prison were of different sizes but built with the same design: houses having four tile roofs and solid brick walls, painted grey and with a few very small windows near the roof, making the rooms very dark and stuffy.



Surrounding walls and watchtowers of Hoa Lo Prison

The walls surrounding Hoa Lo Prison were solidly built with stones, 4m high and 0.5m thick. The top of the walls was planted with sharp broken glasses and wired with high-voltage electric grid to prevent inmates from escape. There was a 2m wide corridor separating the walls and the barracks and was used for patrol by prison guards. Four watchtowers were built in the four corners of the Prison where guards could observe all inner and outer parts of the Prison.

Hoa Lo Prison underwent several repairs and restorations in

the years later, mostly to expand the detention rooms and strengthen stringent defense measures against escape.

2. Hoa Lo Prison - a "hell" in Hanoi

2.1. Detention regime and oppressing schemes against prisoners by French colonialists at Hoa Lo Prison

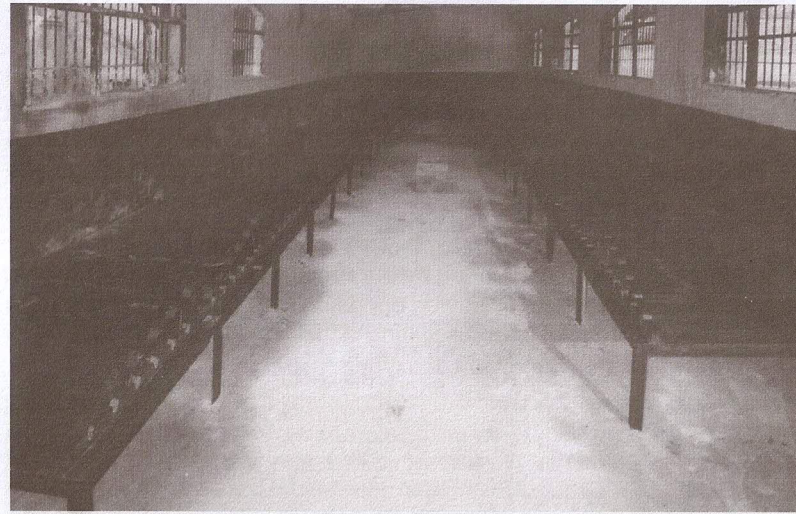
Hoa Lo Prison was nicknamed a "hell on earth" in downtown Hanoi. It is because the French used most ruthless and inhumane torture against patriotic and revolutionary prisoners. They include fierce slaps after entering through the heavy iron-wooden gate (weighing 1.6 tones), cangue, and barbarous beatings in solitary confinement and cells holding death sentenced prisoners.



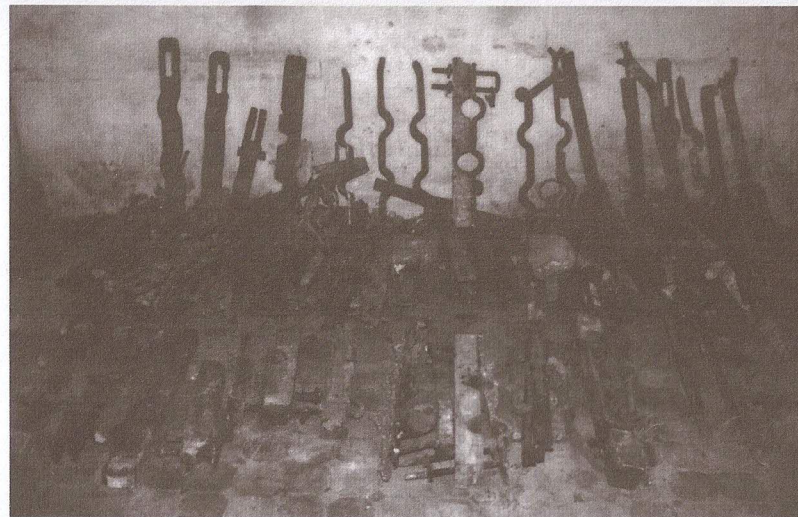
Fighters taking part in the Ha Thanh Poisoning Incident (1908) arrested and detained by French colonialists in Hoa Lo Prison

The Hoa Lo Prison administrators were worldly-wise, cunning and experienced jailers, cruel overseers and stool-pigeons together with a harsh detention regime and subhuman conditions, thus turning Hoa Lo Prison into a "hell on earth".

Prisoners held in Hoa Lo Prison, after being sentenced, were given two sets of clothing (a set of long-sleeve and a set of short-sleeve) patched with the word MC (Maison Centrale) and a Nam Dinh-made woolen blanket in winter.



K Barrack in Hoa Lo Prison



Individual fetter - used by the French to shackle patriotic and revolutionary fighters in Hoa Lo Prison

In Hoa Lo Prison, the French colonialists applied a very harsh detention regime against prisoners. In the quarters for men and women prisoners,

the French ordered two rows of iron-wooden floors installed with fetters to shackle prisoners' legs. In the middle of the room was an open-air WC, sometimes without being cleaned, thus feces and urine spilled all over the floor, giving out very filthy, slimy and stinking smell. If two persons/1m² bed was calculated, Hoa Lo Prison could only be able to hold 500 prisoners. It was nevertheless often overcrowded, holding up to 800 prisoners in 1917, so nearly half of them had to lie on the floor.

In the Hoa Lo Prison complex, there was a special dungeon (cachot) for prisoners who were sentenced by the French for violating the prison's rules and regulations and for having opposing acts (organizing struggles and escape and revolutionary agitating activities). Cachot rooms were dark, narrow and stuffy and lack of oxygen.

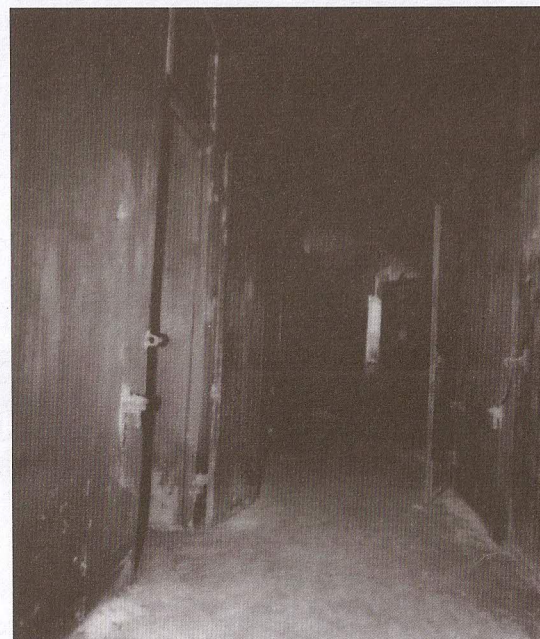


Detention rooms in Cachot area

The floor of detention rooms was made of cement and designed in a way that when lying down the prisoners' heads were in a lower position than their legs which were shackled round the clock (24/24 hours). The prisoners were beaten, left hungry or punished with tasteless meals and cold water thrown at them from time to time in frozen winter. They had to defecate and urinate on spot. Those who were held in the dungeons, after being released, could not drag their legs, could not see things because of blindness, and could neither raise their arms nor hold chopsticks and their body was full of scabies and puffed with oedema.

In the southwestern corner of Hoa Lo Prison (in the corner of Tho Nhuom and Quan Su Street), cells (also called cells for death sentenced prisoners) were built to hold prisoners who had been sentenced to death by the French colonialists. This quarter was built especially solid with walls of 0.40m thick and 3m high and were painted with black pitch, both inside and outside. In these cells, prisoners were shackled round the clock and had to defecate and urinate on spot. The door was only opened twice a day when meals were given to the inmates.

Under regulations, death sentenced prisoners were held in those cells for 10 months (since the date being sentenced by the Court of Assizes). After this period, they were supposed to be resented, some of them to live imprisonment. However, in fact, death sentenced prisoners could be executed at any time (sometimes only two or three days after receiving the death sentence by the Court of Assizes).



Quarter of cells for death sentenced prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison

In Hoa Lo Prison, the French colonialists used different types of torture and suppression against Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters. They included barbarous beatings and torture such as forcing prisoners

to fold their arms, to bend down and strip off their clothes for search and shackling their feet and then using clubs, sticks and canes to beat their head, body, and limbs; putting them in dungeons (cachot), punishing them with tasteless meals and forcing them to do hard labour such as repairing houses, pounding rice, working at the housing area of jailers or doing hard labour in the French battlefields etc.

The most barbarous crime of the French colonialists against Vietnamese political prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison was the use of guillotines to execute them.

The guillotine being displayed in the Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic was imported from France to Hanoi in 1894 (2 years before the construction of Hoa Lo Prison). It was invented by French medical doctor named Guillotane. This killing tool was considered by the French "more humane" than other execution methods used in the Middle Age (hanging and cutting off different parts of body, using horses to tear body apart etc).



Guillotine - used by French colonialists to behead Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters

The French took the guillotine to many parts of North Vietnam, killing many Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters; Mr. Hai Hien and Doi Nhan and others from the Ha Thanh Poisoning Incident with the pictures of their heads hanged at different Hanoi gates (1908). They are

evidence of the French barbarous and bloodcurdling crimes; 7 prisoners of the Vietnam Quang Phuc Hoi organization, who were beheaded in front of Hoa Lo Prison gate (1913);. On June 17, 1930, 13 Vietnamese patriotic fighters from the Vietnam Nationalist Party, including Nguyen Thai Hoc and Pho Duc Chinh, were beheaded in Yen Bai Provincial Town. On July 31, 1932, Nguyen Duc Canh and Ho Tung Mau were executed by guillotine in Hai Phong and many other barbarous guillotine executions took place in front of the Hoa Lo Prison gate.



Three bigwigs leading the Ha Thanh Poisoning Case: Nguyen Tri Binh, Dang Dinh Nhan and Duong Be were beheaded with heads displayed on July 8, 1908

2.2. On prisoners' food regime

The "Prison regulations" stipulate food rations for prisoners and political prisoners, ensuring sufficient rations for them. But in fact, the jailers in connivance with contractors cut down the lion's share of prisoners' food rations. They gave prisoners poor quality or out-of-date food and food-stuff. Most of the rice was fusty and mixed with rice husks and grits; dried fish was stale with muckworms; meat was stringy, including aged buffalo meat; most of the vegetables were old, often called by prisoners as "trousers ribbons"; and the soya curd was stale and sour.

The prisoners' daily food rations were given in wooden tray and iron basin. Bowls, spoons and chopsticks were not allowed by the French for

fear of being used by prisoners as weapons. To eat their meal, prisoners had to make their own bowls and spoons from dried coconut cover and chopsticks from tropical almond branches or broken basket rims.

Due to poor quality food and poor sanitary conditions, many prisoners contracted diseases such as beriberi, typhoid, dysentery, malaria, etc. or were unable to cope with their illnesses. Many of them died before their prison terms expired. Within only a year (June 1920 - June 1921), 87 out of 800 - 900 prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison died.



Belongings of prisoners: wooden buckets to contain rice, bowls (made of dried coconut cover), and chopsticks (made of tropical almond branches)

3. The struggle of patriotic and revolutionary fighters in Hoa Lo Prison

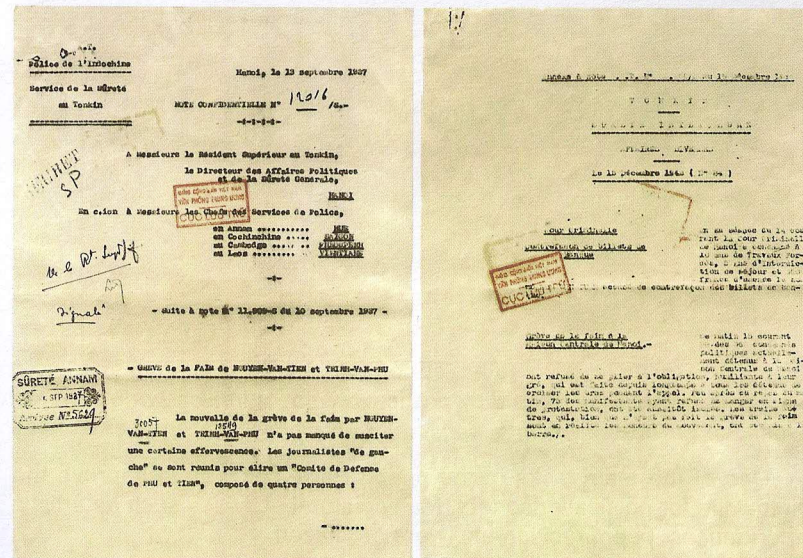
Where there was oppression there was struggle. In Hoa Lo Prison, being led by the Party Cell, struggles against French harsh prison conditions often took place under different forms such as shouting and going on hunger strike etc. forcing the enemy to make concessions.

3.1. Party Cell in Hoa Lo Prison and its activity of "turning imperialist prison into revolutionary school"

In 1930, 1931, the revolutionary struggle movement of the Vietnamese developed to its climax. Being so fearful that the French colonialists conducted frenzied massacres and fierce searches, resulting in the arrest of many members of the Communist Party of Vietnam who were imprisoned

in Hoa Lo Prison. To continue the struggle without compromise with the enemy, in late 1931, the first Party cell was established in Hoa Lo Prison with Mr. Ha Ba Cang (or Hoang Quoc Viet) as its General Secretary who was the future Chief Inspector of the Supreme People's Inspectorate of the Vietnamese Government.

Since its establishment, the Party cell organized many activities to turn Hoa Lo Prison into "a revolutionary school", established many mass organizations such as Youth Union, Women's Union and especially the Association of Prisoners (in August 1932). Many hand-writing journals such as *Red Prison* (later became Prison Magazine), *Prisoners' Life* (1930 - 1945), and *Prisoners' Voice* (1947 - 1954) were circulated among prisoners to enlighten the masses, condemn the imperialist crimes and call for unity in the struggle.



Some French documents written about the Party cell in Hoa Lo Prison

The newspapers such as *Đuốc đưa đường* (Road Guiding Torch) *Con đường chính* (The Main Road), and *Đuốc Việt Nam* (Vietnam Torch) with Le Duan and Truong Chinh as editors-in-chief ran many polemics in the fierce struggle by Communist prisoners, Nationalist Party prisoners and patriots who left the Nationalist Party over to the Communist rank (1931, 1932). On the occasions of the anniversary of the Communist

Party of Vietnam (Feb. 3rd), May Day (May 1st), and holidays, political prisoners organized solemn *celebrations with hammer* and sickle red flags (1930-1945) or the yellow-star red flags and Uncle Ho portraits (1947 - 1954). They sang loudly revolutionary songs such as let's join the red army, L'Internationale, and Marching to the front and shouted slogans regardless of the fierce and frenzy oppression by jailers and guards. Many classes of different levels, including political classes were run by core Party members in Hoa Lo Prison such as reading and writing classes and more advanced classes of Vietnamese literature and foreign languages. The teaching aid was created by the prisoners themselves including pens made of tropical almond braches, pen nibs made of Antigon flower buds, chawks made of half-baked bricks and charcoal, writing papers made of newspapers or using bricks to write on the floor. Those who could read and write taught the illiterates and those who could speak French or English taught those who could not.



Some belongings created by political prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison (combs, rings, tobacco pipes)

One of the main tasks of the prison Party cell was to improve the spiritual life for political prisoners. Many cultural activities such as artistic performances, poem reciting etc. were organized.

In Hoa Lo Prison, the Party cell always showed its leading role, an important element creating a collective strength and lifting up the struggle morale of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters.

3.2. Struggles of patriotic and revolutionary fighters in Hoa Lo Prison

In the prison, despite being shackled, patriotic and revolutionary fighters were staunch, persistent and undaunted in their struggles against French harsh prison conditions under different forms such as shouting, going on hunger strike etc. forcing the enemy to make concessions.

Going on hunger strike was a typical form of struggle by political prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison, demanding the French administration to ensure their lives and food rations with good quality and sanitary conditions; observe the political prisoners' regime; eliminate regulations that offend prisoners; and oppose death sentences.

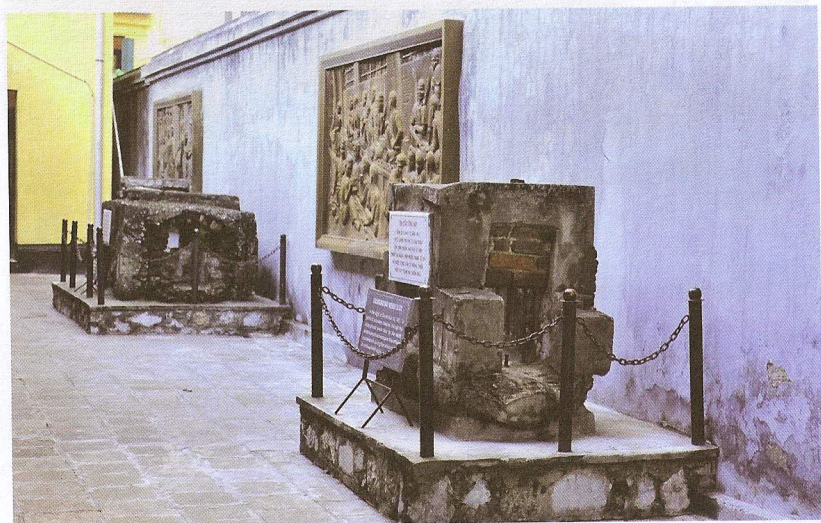


Patient room in Phu Doan Hospital where 7 political prisoners successfully escaped in the evening of Dec. 24, 1932

Among the struggle forms undertaken by political prisoners, escape from prison was the most dangerous one and the limit between life and death was very narrow. However, political prisoners, braving sacrifices, were determined to escape from the prison to be back to the Party and the people to continue their revolutionary struggle. In Hoa Lo Prison, many escapes took place under different forms, but the most typical cases were seen in 1932, 1945 and 1951.

In late 1932, in Hoa Lo Prison, Le Duan, Nguyen Luong Bang, Nguyen Tao, Bui Xuan Man, Nguyen Trong Dam, Du (the old woman), and Nguyen Tuan Thuc secretly discussed an escape plan. Seven men were selected including Nguyen Trong Dam, Bui Xuan Man, Nguyen Tao, Hao Lich, Le Dinh Tuyen, Nguyen Luong Bang and Vo Duy Cuong who ingeniously created their fatal diseases and asked to be sent to Phu Doan Hospital for medical treatment. In the evening of Dec. 24, 1932 (Christmas Eve), they cut the iron window bars, crossed the barbwire fence and successfully escaped.

In March 1945, the Japanese overthrew the French. Taking the advantage of Japanese army being confused and loosening their guard, under the leadership of Tran Tu Binh and Tran Dang Ninh, political prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison organized escapes through underground sewers in J Quarter. For several nights from March 11 to 16, 1945, more than 100 political prisoners successfully escaped from Hoa Lo Prison. They came back home to lead the general uprisings, resulting in the August 1945 Revolutionary Triumph and gaining back independence for the nation. Among the more than 100 escapees, many of them became future high-ranking leaders of the Vietnamese Party and State such as Do Muoi - Party General Secretary; Tran Dang Ninh - Director General of the Department of Supplies; and Tran Tu Binh - Chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army.



Two underground sewer's gates through which patriotic and revolutionary fighters escaped from Hoa Lo Prison

In the evening of December 24, 1951, 16 political prisoners who had been sentenced to death attempted to escape through the underground sewer in the yard of the quarter for death sentenced prisoners. They were divided into three groups which took turn to sneak into the sewer, trying to find the way out. Due to the fact that they conducted the escape earlier than schedule and were discovered by the jailers, only 5 persons successfully escaped and 11 others were re-arrested. The escape, though not completely successful, shook the public in Vietnam and France.

3.3. Hoa Lo Prison after the signing of the Geneva Accords

Following the Dien Bien Phu historic victory (May 7, 1954), the French were forced to sign the Geneva Accords on ending the war and restoring peace in Indochina. To carry out the exchange of prisoners of war, the Vietnamese Government took the initiative to discuss with the French Government a plan to release prisoners from Hoa Lo Prison. A Military Conference was held in Trung Gia from July 4 to 27, 1954. One of the basic contents of the conference was the exchange by batches of injured and sick prisoners and improvement of the physical and spiritual life for prisoners of war.



The opening of the Trung Gia Conference

In Hoa Lo Prison, all prisoners were very happy waiting to be released to come back home and continue their revolutionary activities. However, the French did not observe the Geneva Accords and the Trung Gia Truce Talks. They attempted to secretly kill political prisoners, ordered jailers to mix political prisoners and other prisoners, and turned non-criminal prisoners into prisoners of war and political prisoners. Members of the Party cell executive including Nguyen Ngoc Kien, General Secretary and Nguyen Huu Thuy, Le Van Thuyet and Le Toan (Hai) kept close contacts with the Municipal Party Committee and led political prisoners in the struggle demanding for the release of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Accords.

Under the agreement between Vietnam and France, prisoners from Hoa Lo Prison were released in two places: Viet Tri on August 18, 20, 23, 24, 30 and 31 and Sept. 1, 1954 and Sam Son on August 19 and 31, 1954. But the French colonialists obstinately refused to release all political prisoners. They kept 34 political prisoners who were held together with non-criminal prisoners in K Quarter, intending to wait for a chance to kill them. In face of this situation, these political prisoners went on hunger strike and prepared leaflets to be dispersed on the way to inform people for help if they were taken to be killed. Thanks to the intervention of the Trung Gia Military Committee and the struggle of political prisoners in Hoa Lo Prison and people in Hanoi, on Sept. 24, 1954, the French were forced to release all of the last 34 political prisoners from Hoa Lo Prison in Sam Son, Thanh Hoa Province.



Vietnamese soldiers taking over Hoa Lo Prison in 1954

In the 6 decades since its construction under the French Administration, Hoa Lo Prison was a "hell on earth" in the capital city of Hanoi. Thousands of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters were held and persecuted there. They included leaders such as Phan Boi Chau, Luong Van Can, Nguyen Quyen, Ho Tung Mau, Nguyen Luong Bang and five others who later became General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam such as Nguyen Van Cu, Truong Chinh, Le Duan, Nguyen Van Linh and Do Muoi. Hoa Lo Prison also witnessed the "staunch and indomitable" will of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters who had turned the imperialist prison into a "revolutionary school" and a "kiln" forging the iron will and morale of the communist fighters who were ready to lay down their lives for the cause of national liberation.

Part 2

Captured American pilots in Hoa Lo Prison (1964 - 1973)

Since the restoration of peace (October 10, 1954), North Vietnam was liberated the Vietnamese Government used Hoa Lo Prison to jail people who break the law. From August 5, 1964 to March 29, 1973, part of the prison was used to hold captured American pilots shot down during their bombing raids against North Vietnam.



Exhibition room displaying documents and objects on American POWs

From August 5, 1964, when the US started the war of destruction against North Vietnam to 7 a.m on December 30, 1972, when the US had to declare an end to all bombing raid activities from the 20th Parallel northwards, the North Vietnamese army and people shot down 4,181 US craft, killed and captured hundreds of experienced American pilots.

In particular, during the 12 days and nights of December 1972, North Vietnamese army and people shot down 23 B52 and 2 F11 aircraft, captured alive many American pilots, smashing the large-scale strategic surprise B52 attack by the US Air Force against two Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Hai Phong, winning the "Dien Bien Phu Victory on the air", defeating the supremacy of the US Air Force and forcing the US to sit at

the negotiating table at the Paris Conference that led to an end to the war and restoration of peace in Vietnam.



Military medical doctors giving treatment to American pilot John McCain, who was shot down in Truc Bach Lake, Hanoi, October 26, 1967

During the wartime in Vietnam when people faced numerous difficulties and shortages in their daily life, US prisoners of war including pilots were humanely treated by the Vietnamese Government which gave them the best possible living conditions. Captured American pilot in Hoa Lo Prison were given sufficient personal belongings including smallest things to meet their daily needs. In addition to treatment of their injuries, they were given periodical health check-ups and healthcare.

In the prison, captured pilots were created favourable conditions for entertainment, cultural and sports activities, chess playing, listening to Voice of Vietnam radio (English broadcasts), watching films and enjoying music. Parties were organized for them during New Year festivals and holidays, what were impossible for the Vietnamese at that time.

Religious activities played an important role for captured US pilots. On Christmas Eve, those pilots who followed Christianity were allowed to dress like tourists mingling among other Catholics to attend masses in Da Minh Church. For those who were Protestants, the Prison Management invited parsons to organize masses for them in their religious rites.



Captured US pilots playing basketball in the prison yard

On Jan. 27, 1973, the Paris Accords were signed in the Clebe International Conference Centre in Paris, France by four ministers representing the four-partite armies including the Democratic Republic



Captured US pilots released in the first batch leaving Hoa Lo Prison for home on Feb. 12, 1973

of Vietnam, the United States, the Republic of South Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Government fully observed the spirit of the Accords by handed over to the US Government all pilots captured during the war in Vietnam. Among the captured US pilots held in Hoa Lo Prison were Douglas Pete Peterson, who later became the first US Ambassador to Vietnam and John McCain who was future Senator and 2008 Republican presidential nominee.

In addition to the exhibition rooms, Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic also has a monument dedicated to patriotic and revolutionary fighters who laid down their lives in Hoa Lo Prison. The monument inaugurated in 2000 and sculptured with the images of prisoners, is of high aesthetic and artistic value. It was titled "Work in celebration of the 990th Anniversary of Thang Long-Hanoi" and becomes a highlight, enhancing the significance and value of this historical relic. It has been rated as one of the beautiful monuments in Vietnam "containing an interesting and daring idea, suitable to the exhibit contents of the historical relic".

In the Monument area, activities are often held such as incense offerings, services reporting, interactive events and quizzes on the history of Hoa Lo Prison, and ceremonies to admit new Party and Youth Union members of different offices and schools in the capital city.



Memorial monument area of Vietnamese patriots and revolutionary fighters



Room displaying nameplates of patriotic and revolutionary fighters held by the French in Hoa Lo Prison (1899 - 1954)

To honour Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters held by the French in Hoa Lo Prison, the Relic has installed golden nameplates of 1624 persons.

Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic is a special relic form rarely existed in Vietnam. It is an evidence of the endurance of hardship and the iron and undaunted will of Vietnamese patriotic and revolutionary fighters in their struggle against the enemy. It is also a verdict condemning the cruel and harsh prison regime of the French during its occupation of Vietnam. It shows the lofty humane spirit of the Vietnamese State toward captured US pilots held in Hoa Lo Prison.

Hoa Lo Prison Historical Relic was classified by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism under Decision No. 1543/QĐ-VH dated 18 June 1997 as a national historical relic and becomes an interesting tourist destination in Hanoi and a "Red address" for education and communication on the patriotic and revolutionary tradition for Vietnamese people of all strata, especially young generations.

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