The worst example of French Suppression took place at Nghe-Tinh, Central Vietnam, in September 1930, when nearly 7000 peasants, nationalists and communists protested against rising prices, unemployment, the lack of famine relief and social injustices. Rallies of this nature were common in Vietnam in these times of economic hardship. However, protesters refused to comply with French orders and thus riots broke out with approximately 130 being killed and 3000 Vietnamese falling victim to the army’s gun fire. In addition 3500 protesters had been arrested for rioting, with over 50% of ICP members jailed.

Ironically, this did not suppress the movement instead inspired members and thus provided the basis for Ho Chi Minh’s reference of French gaols being “a communist/nationalist nursery and breeding ground for revolution”

Throughout this time, Ho continued his travels throughout Russia and China and believed that independence was attainable through the establishment of a broad national opposition to French and the use of communist political ideology. Ho’s ideas differed from those of mainstream Russian communities in two ways:

1. He placed main emphasis on the achievement on national independence, rather than an ongoing equality for all people within Vietnam

2. He believed that peasants rather than urban workers would be the main force for change.

Japanese Occupation and the Formation of the Viet Minh

The Japanese occupation of Indochina during World War II provided a valuable opportunity for Ho’s ICP to advance their cause, as French power in Vietnam was now vulnerable. There were decreasing numbers of French troops in Vietnam as they were sent to fight the Germans.

May 1941

- Ho moved from China to Vietnam and created the Viet Minh (League for Independence of Vietnam)
- Ho established his headquarters in a remote region in Tonkin called Viet Bac. This had the advantage of being an impenetrable mountain range surrounded by dense jungles.
- Ho proclaimed the Vietnam’s Army of National Salvation as the military army of the Viet Minh. Its objectives were to gain nationwide support via armed propaganda for a policy which reminded people that independence could be obtained through active resistance against the Japanese and French.

Advantages of Armed Propaganda Terms:

- Well versed in Vietnamese history, culture and guerilla warfare
- Teams volunteered to work for their food when they entered villages
- Utilised visual materials, songs and drama to convey their message
- Stressed the importance of nationwide support and how this was critical in a nationalist movement.

December 1944

- December 22nd: The People’s Army was created

March 1945

- Japanese power was deteriorating, so they seized control of Vietnam and arrested French military and confiscated all their war material.
- This further enabled the Viet Minh’s propaganda terms as they were able to extend their influence without being harassed by the gendarmerie. As a result, they created 500 guerrilla cells from Hanoi to Saigon.
June 1945
● Ho met with America’s Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and came to arrangement with them- the OSS would train the Viet Minh and provide them with guns and ammunition. In return, the Viet Minh would attempt to locate US pilots shot down over Vietnam and assist in gathering intelligence about the Japanese army.

● The reason why the OSS was willing to strike a deal was due to the anti-Japanese stance of the Vietnamese.

August 1945
● The Viet Minh’s militia and guerrilla cells had been built up to members exceeding 200,000

● 24 hours before the Japanese surrendered, Ho proclaimed General Order Number One: Armed Insurrection (refusal of obedience or order) against the French and Japanese.

● This was achieved by using the following methods:
  ○ Confiscation of French Property
  ○ Blocking retreat routes of Japanese troops
  ○ Urging the Vietnamese to promote chaos, confusion and total disobedience against anyone who was not Viet Minh

● August 14th: Emperor Bao Dai, a Francophile, accepted Japanese surrender in Hanoi
● August 19th: People’s Army peacefully entered Hanoi and claimed it
● August 25th: Bao Dai stepped down and asked the Viet Minh to form a new government: Viet Minh take control of Hanoi, Cochinchina and Saigon

September 1945
● September 2nd: Ho read Vietnam’s Declaration of Independence to a large crowd. This declaration was heavily influenced by the US Declaration of Independence in 1776 due to his admiration for their anti-colonialist stance. Ho proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a new nation.

  “His declaration came at the end of a war fought in the name of democracy and self-determination” - Challenge, Change and Continuity

THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DRV:

1. French troops back in Vietnam at full strength- too powerful for People’s Army

2. French officials did not recognise Ho’s claim as a leader of a new nation- new dialogue necessary to preserve peace

3. The US did not recognise his new government and nation as an ally. President Truman did not want to condone a communist nation.

The Viet Minh | Challenges, Change and Continuity Quotes that summarise

● The Viet Minh where a group of Vietnamese nationalists who fought to gain independence from foreign control of Vietnam

● The Viet Minh was a coalition of nationalist groups largely influenced by its ICP leadership.
• Its goal was Vietnamese independence from foreign rule, or **decolonisation**, and its membership included both nationalists and communists.

• At the same time, Ho Chi Minh was recognised primarily as a nationalist fighting for Vietnamese liberation rather than as a communist.

• The Viet Minh succeeded in coordinating support for:
  a) Overthrowing Japanese control of Vietnam during World War II
  b) preventing the return of the French