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Organizing Autarky: Governor General Decoux's Development of a Substitution Economy in Indochina as a Means of Promoting Colonial Legitimacy

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Cut off from the metropole and coerced into trade with Japan, the French administration in Indochina under Governor General Jean Decoux had to find ingenious ways to produce locally what it had been accustomed to importing. Through the creation of a substitution economy, the nurturing of the *artisanat*, and appeals to Indochinese solidarity, Decoux designed policies to minimize the impact of Indochina's isolation and exalt the benefits of French tutelage, as part of a final effort to convince the peoples of Indochina that French civilization could drive their societies forward — an approach founded on linearity that in itself reveals much about the colonial mind.

Keywords: Governor General Jean Decoux, Indochina, French colonialism, Vichy, World War II, Gouvernement général d'Indochine.

Both French- and English-language historiography has largely ignored French colonial policymaking in Indochina during World War II. The handful of books that examine the topic focus mostly on Vichy France's efforts to implement its National Revolution there. One area that has received very little, if any, attention is the colonial authorities' reorganization of economic production to address the difficulties that resulted from a situation of increasing autarky. Cut off from the metropole — Indochina's principal trading partner for decades — and coerced into joining a Japanese-led Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere that failed to meet local consumption needs,

the administration of Governor General Jean Decoux (June 1940–March 1945) had to find ways to produce locally what Indochina had previously imported. At stake for the French was nothing less than demonstrating that, in spite of defeat in the metropole and the stationing of foreign troops in Indochina, they remained capable of administering the colony through European ingeniousness that justified, in their minds, their continued presence in Southeast Asia. The economic reorganization of Indochina to confront the scarcities caused by war was to be proof that the French could — some would have said needed to — guide it in the post-war era through continued and benevolent tutelage. This article examines the measures taken by the General Government of Indochina (GGI) during World War II to ensure the survival of the colony's economy. It focuses particularly on the creation of a substitution economy. These measures, while ultimately unsuccessful, were critical components of the overall French endeavour to ensure continued sovereignty in Indochina after peace returned. Decoux's administration understood that, if it were to have any chance of maintaining French control over Indochina, it would need to demonstrate to the people of the colony that it was able to maintain its role of their protector and tutor.

Background and Challenges

On 19 June 1940, days before the signing of the armistice in Europe which put an end to the hostilities between France and Germany, Japan demanded that French Indochina close its border with China to ensure that no supplies reached Chiang Kai Shek's army. The Japanese had sought the closure of the Indochina-Yunnan railway since 1937. They suspected that it served to transport arms to Chinese Nationalist forces. Severed from a French government in the midst of collapse, faced with the threat of a Japanese invasion that would have toppled the French authorities, and receiving no sign of military support from the British or American governments, Governor General Georges Catroux (September 1939–June 1940) decided to appease Tokyo. On 16 June 1940, he prohibited the transport of fuel across

the border and allowed the presence of Japanese representatives to oversee its closure. One week later, Minister of Colonies Albert Rivière dismissed Catroux on grounds that he should never have given in to the Japanese ultimatum and allowed the presence of foreign troops in the colony. The government immediately appointed Admiral Jean Decoux Governor General of Indochina. Born in 1884, Decoux had entered the École Navale in 1901, two years after the Dreyfus Affair had reached its climax.[1] An admirer of Admiral Antoine Schwerer, one of the navy's staunchest conservatives and most vocal anti-Semites, Decoux was known for political opinions close to the positions of Action Française, the monarchist movement led by Charles Maurras (Hood 1985, pp. 154–55). Rivière appointed Decoux at the suggestion of Admiral François Darlan, the commander of the French navy. Darlan trusted Decoux not to break with the chain of command at a time when the metropole desperately needed to cling to France's empire in order to strengthen its bargaining power vis-à-vis the German armistice commission. He knew Decoux's character and convictions, and was confident that Decoux, who headed French naval forces in the Pacific at the time of his appointment, would obey orders from the metropole.

Initially in favour of continuing the fight against Germany from the colonies and refusing to give in to Japanese pressures even at the risk of an inevitably futile military conflict, Decoux reluctantly fell in line with the metropole's position of ceasing hostilities with the Wehrmacht and preserving of Indochina rather than nobly resisting the invader. In August, Japan demanded that the French allow its troops passage through Indochina as well as use of local airfields. As Vichy and Tokyo negotiated, Decoux continued to oppose compliance, warning the Ministry of Colonies of the parlous consequences of succumbing to Japanese threats. Again, his superiors reminded him of the need for discipline, and, again, the admiral, with his strong sense of duty, complied. What followed was the signing of two agreements, one in August and another in September, which ultimately allowed for the presence of 6,000 Japanese troops in Tonkin. Other agreements, both economic and military, would follow, including

one that extended the Japanese presence across the colony. But these first two were the watershed in Franco-Japanese relations that would preserve France's sovereignty in Indochina — until, in the event, the Japanese *coup de force* of 9 March 1945 — in exchange for its subservience to the Japanese war effort (Catroux 1959, pp. 96–108; Decoux 1949, pp. 99–112).

After overcoming the deep economic crisis of the early 1930s, Indochina had a healthy yet underdeveloped economy when war broke out in Europe, one based almost exclusively on what it could grow from its soil or extract from the earth. The colony depended on the export of its agricultural products and mineral resources to fund the import of finished or semi-finished goods that its nascent industrial sector could not produce in sufficient quantities. Trade with the metropole made up half of the colony's activity, amounting to 45 per cent of its exports and 50 per cent of its imports, and a system of protective barriers ensured that the French goods dominated the local market. The armistice of June 1940 practically cut Indochina off from France. The agreement to end hostilities with Germany soured relations with Great Britain, whose fleet hindered maritime exchanges between the French colony and the metropole. All traffic ceased in 1942, after the start of the Pacific War. It was forced to reorganize its economy and to seek commercial partners in Asia. The signing of trade agreements between Tokyo and Vichy formalized the inevitable; Japan's military domination of the Pacific meant that Hanoi had to turn to the Land of the Rising Sun to secure goods that it could not manufacture locally, for which it could offer agricultural goods in exchange.

Indochina's isolation posed significant challenges to the GGI's ability to retain legitimacy. In the eyes of many of the local people, defeat in Europe and concessions to the Japanese had already eroded France's prestige and weakened its claims to be a protector of and mentor to its colony. Economic isolation further threatened to reveal that France was incapable of providing for the population under its supposed tutelage. The authorities had to take necessary action to provide the population with basic goods and food. This

need meant redeploying resources to face the situation of autarky in which the colony found itself. As early as September 1940 Decoux appreciated the difficult position in which a severance of maritime relations with the metropole would place the economy, threatening, in French minds, the way in which local people perceived their colonial tutors. He instructed administrators "to utilize all the means at [their] disposal to explain the depth of the oeuvre undertaken by the French government" in Indochina in order to maintain the "morale of the populations entrusted to [their] administrations" (CAOM, RSTNF 5738, Telegram No. 3811, Decoux to ADLOC, 7 September 1940).

Supplying the population with sustenance was more than a humanitarian issue for colonial authorities; in their view it was an endeavour on which their continued presence in the region depended. Indochina's inability to import goods for production or consumption put at risk the legitimacy of the French authorities' place as the keystone of the Indochinese federation and their boasts of the benefits of their *mission civilisatrice*. Governor General Alexandre Varenne had already declared in 1926 that Indochina could not make do without French protection. He suggested that the changing global economic context and the colony's dependency on France meant that it would collapse were France no longer able to contribute its knowhow and guns (Varenne 1926, p. 57). Governor General Pierre Pasquier, Varenne's successor, adopted the same themes and spoke of an overarching Indochinese consciousness. Pasquier arguably did more to push the concept of an Indochinese Federation than any of his predecessors. He put forward in 1928 a nineteen-point Indochinese Charter that positioned France as the cement that held together the culturally and ethnically diverse Indochinese entity and called for the creation of a "Federal Unit" (Goscha 1995, pp. 53–54). In many ways, this document found inspiration in Governor General Albert Sarraut's original charter of 1919, though it went further because it opened the administration to educated Indochinese and evoked "government by the locals" (Goscha 1995, pp. 53–54). Decoux understood that France needed to demonstrate that it could continue

to provide leadership in spite of the worsening economic situation so that it could preserve its colonial legitimacy in Indochina. His administration would reorganize the economy on the basis of the principle that only France could keep an Indochinese Federation together. Economic solidarity between the different *pays* — the five regions into which the French divided Indochina administratively: Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina, Cambodia and Laos — was an integral part of the federation. As the only cohesive force, France would employ its technical and managerial knowledge to solve its problems. Decoux wrote to his administrators that all "Indochinese who can think must understand that the French federal link alone has the power to maintain the cohesion of Indochina. Without this link, the federation will dissolve fatally" (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled Box, Decoux to ADLOC, 29 September 1944, p. 3). The dissolution of the federation would mean the end of French colonialism. Decoux's specification of "every Indochinese who can think" (*tout indochinois qui réfléchit*) reveals the nature of his policies, policies designed to preserve the goodwill of the urban elite.

Economic Agreements with Japan and the Impact of Economic Isolation

With an overwhelmingly large portion of its economy dedicated to agriculture, Indochina relied heavily on trade in the years leading up to World War II. In 1939, the last full year of commerce unaffected by war-time circumstances, Indochina's exports reached 4.7 million tonnes, including 2.1 million tonnes of rice and maize, 1.8 million tonnes of coal, and 215,000 tonnes of minerals. Conversely, imports totalled 587,000 tonnes, with a value of 240 million piastres. They included more than 100,000 tonnes of hydrocarbons, 60,000 tonnes of chemical products, and 20,000 tonnes of textiles. One year later, the end of pre-war trade patterns meant the collapse of prices for Cochinchinese rice and Cambodian maize as well as the reduction by more than half of mining activities in the colony (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled box, "L'Effort économique de l'Indochine", p. 2).

From June 1940, transportation between Indochina and France became uncertain and, on 17 September 1940, Decoux requested special consideration from Vichy to allow Indochina to maintain commercial relations with the Japanese, the Americans, and the British, lest the economy be condemned to rapid asphyxiation. Decoux warned Minister of Colonies Charles Platon that the inability to meet the demand of goods in the Indochinese market would only further damage the French position, after the erosion of the prestige and perception of French sovereignty that relations with Japan had already caused (CAOM, FM, 1/tel689, No. 2405, Decoux to Platon, 17 September 1940). The British were open to maintaining trade with Decoux's Indochina, even though their relations with Vichy had turned bellicose, because they wanted to protect their shipping lanes in Asia and to avoid giving the Japanese any pretext for further military intervention in Indochina, intervention that could potentially expand to the rest of Southeast Asia (National Archives [UK] cab/66/17/5, "Measures concerning merchant shipping in the event of war or general hostilities with Vichy", 17 June 1941). Unfortunately, the rules imposed by the German-led armistice commission on metropolitan France made it difficult for British and Dutch ships to dock in Indochina, as a state of war existed between the Third Reich on the one hand and Britain and the Netherlands on the other. These restrictions threatened not only imports of goods for consumption in the Indochinese market but also exports, as Britain expressed its reluctance to engage in unilateral traffic. The potential consequences were devastating; without sacks from India, Indochinese rice, the basis of its export economy, could not be packaged for transport (CAOM, FM, 1/tel690, No. 3455, Decoux to Platon, 5 December 1940). In spite of these difficulties, from mid-1940 through the end of 1941, Franco-British relations in the region allowed Indochina to receive thousands of tonnes of much-needed goods from Asian ports — particularly Hong Kong, Manila and Shanghai — and from the metropole. To facilitate the colony's supply of goods and materials, Vichy granted Hanoi customs autonomy from 1 January 1941, thus ending the preferential status of French goods in place

since 1928 and imposing a single tariff on all imports, regardless of origin (CAOM, FM, 1/tel683, No. 658R, Platon to Decoux, 27 October 1940).[2]

Unable to trade in sufficient amounts with its traditional partners, Indochina was forced to turn to Japan for goods that it could not produce. As early as October 1940, a Japanese mission headed by Ambassador Matsumiya Hajime proposed an economic agreement between Tokyo and Hanoi. This proposal led to the trade agreement of 6 May 1941, which was negotiated in Tokyo by a commission headed by members of the Vichy Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thereby signalling the political rather than economic nature of the agreement (CARAN, 72AJ/1905, Tupinier Interview, pp. 3–5). Renewable after three years, the agreement gave Japan the status of most favoured nation in its trade with Indochina, its goods subject to only the minimum tariffs on imports. In theory, Japan paid for Indochinese goods in piastres, and Indochina paid for Japanese products in yen, allowing Japan to keep its dollars for the international market (CAOM, INF 1226, Dardaud to Catroux, 21 December 1940). French circles sardonically described this policy as "Take everything and pay with monkey money" (*tout prendre et payer en monnaie de singe*) (CAOM, INF 1145(2), Bulletin de renseignements No. 304, "Note du Sous-Lieutenant Loisel sur la situaton matérielle et morale des français en Indochine", 15 June 1943). In reality however, an imbalance in trade in favour of exports to Japan meant that Japan often lacked sufficient piastres and that it thus paid for Indochinese goods partly with its own products and partly with gold-backed currencies, at least while shipping lanes were safe.[3]

French and Japanese authorities also agreed on lists, reviewable every year, of the type and quantity of goods to be traded between Tokyo and Hanoi. Despite efforts to represent the agreements as amicable, the French were in no position to adopt a tough stance in their negotiation of terms (Decoux 1949, p. 428). The situation became all the more difficult because the authorities could not directly blame the unequal terms of the agreements with Japan for the scarcity of resources in Indochina. Yet neither could they assume

responsibility for that scarcity themselves lest they lose prestige and legitimacy. Luckily, the British and Americans provided useful scapegoats for Decoux's propaganda, and as the Allies advanced in the Pacific and as the disruptions caused by U.S. bombardments did hinder efforts that may have otherwise assuaged suffering, his accusations took on greater validity.

The trade agreements with Japan theoretically opened a market for Indochinese rice, maize, coal, and minerals while providing the French colony with finished goods. Initially, Indochina continued to trade with Australia and the United States, though always under the watchful eye of the Japanese locally and the German occupation authorities back in the metropole. However, these relationships stopped after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the situation worsened over the course of the war. While Japan's expansion in Southeast Asia progressed, its need for Indochinese raw materials diminished. Fewer exports of finished goods thus reached the French colony, goods that Indochina had difficulty producing itself because of its low levels of industrialization and its own inability to procure necessary raw materials. Conversely, as the Allies reconquered territories occupied by Tokyo, the United States Navy sank Axis merchant ships. Already by the second half of 1942, stocks of Indochinese rice and rubber destined for Japan remained in Saigon for months before they could be loaded on boats (CAOM, INF 1150, "Quelques aspects de l'économie Indochinoise"). Rice never reached Japan in sufficient quantities to meet the quotas stipulated by the agreements of 1941 and 1942. In 1943 only a small fraction of the 950,000 tonnes of rice earmarked was ever loaded on ships, as maritime exchanges with Japan ceased during the second half of that year. Commerce was practically non-existent in 1944 and 1945 (Grandjean 2004, p. 89; Devillers 1952, pp. 82–83).

Quotas for imports into Indochina were never met either, leading to significant shortages of products for consumption and industrial use. As early as September 1941, the French colony had received almost nothing from Tokyo, in spite of the 530,000 tonnes of rice and approximately 20,000 tonnes of rubber that had reached Japan.

These realities led Decoux to tell a reporter for *Nichi Nichi*, "We are having trouble getting what we need from Japan, so we are reserving judgment [on the agreement] until articles promised have arrived." (Thompson 1941, pp. 272–73). Decoux may have been disappointed when he gave this comment in 1942, but that was as good as it ever got for the French, and, underscoring how unequal the relationship was, he never went public with his discontent.

Table 1 shows the quantity of goods imported annually and their value by principal categories, compared with the Tokyo agreements' target numbers (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled box, "L'Effort économique de l'Indochine", p. 6). Starting in 1942, the GGI turned to its neighbours — particularly Shanghai, Thailand and Kwangchouwan[4] — to compensate for the inadequacy of exchanges with Japan. Trade with these partners was based on a system of "balanced exchanges". Imports were paid for with exports of similar value (CAOM, INF 1267, Rapport du Commissaire Martin au Conseil de l'Indochine, 3 February 1945, p. 5). Imports from countries other than Japan totalled 35,000 tonnes in 1942, 23,000 tonnes in 1943, and 12,800 in 1944, when they came only from Thailand and Kwangchouwan (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled box, "L'Effort économique de l'Indochine", p. 7).

Isolation from international markets led to a scarcity of goods, but the inability to transport goods between different regions exacerbated the problem, particularly in the latter years of the war when Allied

TABLE 1
Quantity of Imported Goods (in tonnes) and Their Value by Principal Categories

	Tokyo agreements (per annum)	1942	1943	1944
Textiles	10,700	6,700	4,000	1,500
Paper	4,300	3,700	2,000	1,800
Chemicals	40,000	4,000	6,000	2,600
Machinery	52,360	5,000	2,000	0
Tobacco	2,800	730	2,000	0
Miscellaneous	n/a	16,500	13,000	2,500
Total	n/a	36,600	29,000	8,400
Value in Piastres	n/a	112M	117M	25M

bombardment destroyed infrastructure and disrupted trade routes. Until the bombing made transportation nearly impossible, Cochinchinese rice fed Tonkin and Northern Annam and fuelled their vehicles with alcohol derived from rice, while Cambodian cotton supplied Vietnamese factories. Decoux was led to exalt the strengthening of federal ties between the five countries of the Indochinese Union (CAOM, GGI 65296, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, Session July 1942, 15 July 1942 opening speech, pp. 4–5).

By March 1944, however, French intelligence reported that railways were almost paralysed and that the French commercial fleet found it increasingly difficult to navigate (CAOM, RSTNF 6636, IPP Bulletin d'information, March 1944). During the first half of that year, junks replaced railways as means of transport, even though the former had higher freight and insurance costs — further contributing to inflation. Similarly, while trains took an average of forty days to travel from Cochinchina to Tonkin, junks required between forty-five and sixty days. Bombardment and mining had rendered the port of Haiphong non-operational by 1943, contributing significantly to the famine of 1944–45. No matter the mode of transport, delays led to the loss of 20 to 25 per cent of the merchandise through spoilage (CAOM, RSTNF 6703, "Transports à destination du Tonkin", Haelewyn to Decoux, 31 May 1944). Road circulation fared no better, as a lack of tyres and spare parts threatened to reduce traffic in Tonkin by 60 per cent in 1944 (CAOM, RSTNF 6703, "Situation économique du Tonkin", 1944).

The Colonial Information Services (IPP)[5] warned of the political dangers accompanying the impossibility of providing for Tonkin's growing population, which threatened to give rise to anti-imperialist and nationalist sentiments, exacerbated by incessant bombardment and the scarcity of affordable food (CAOM, RSTNF 6636, Bulletin d'Information, April 1944). Difficulties in transportation had significant human costs, and the GGI had no choice but to push Tonkin and North Annam to exist in a closed circuit. They must, that is, develop their own productive capacities as means of survival rather than importing rice from Cochinchina (SHM, GG2 171,

Exposés et entretiens, 23 July 1943, p. 23). The emergence of this need was hardly a demonstration of France's ability to provide for its protected peoples.

Developing a Substitution Economy

Governor General Decoux believed that the best way to compensate for the lack of international trade, and also to fight inflation, was to develop domestic production (SHM, GG2 171, Directives politiques, 22 September 1941). The creation of a substitution economy represented an integral part of the colonial authority's politics of prestige. It was intended to demonstrate that French leadership could harness Indochinese creativity and make use of the natural riches of the colony. Decoux considered it critical to find ways to produce the essentials that were lacking. He also sought to use propaganda to make the population understand the motives behind the measures taken and the reasons for certain restrictions and delays (SHM, GG2 171, Directives politiques, 10 September 1943). This logic may account for his never publicly admitting that inflation was inevitable: his propaganda machine was focused on explaining that the administration would end the scarcity of goods, a goal requiring increased government spending. It could not acknowledge that increased spending could lead to inflation and the subsequent affordable food in the markets. Similarly, promises of the creation of new economic sectors that would serve as a healthy and potent economic base once peace returned did little to fill hungry stomachs in the present.

The goods produced in Indochina as part of the plan for economic substitution targeted the tastes of the urban elite, of the "Indochinese who can think" and who were susceptible to "unrealistic aspirations or dangerous illusions" of local nationalism (CARAN, 3W/152, Decoux to Goucoch, 16 May 1944). By 1942, most of these consumers could find very few, if any, of the goods imported into Indochina before the war — milk, butter, wheat flour, potatoes, medicine, leather, fuel, tyres, wool, or bicycles — to which they were accustomed.

Through increased control over the economy, the government pushed the production of substitution goods locally. The Labbe factories in Saigon produced tyres for bicycles, and the large distilleries in Nam Dinh (Tonkin) and Phnom Penh made spirits and fruit wines. Rice flour replaced wheat flour for baking bread, a change that one French source qualified as "acceptable". Cochinchina and Cambodia produced milk — which was sterilized for transport to Tonkin — in quantities sufficient for "pressing needs", and an office of fisheries managed the increase in the supply of fish for consumption. The government imposed restrictions to ensure that substitution products went where they were most needed: alcohol for vehicles, milk for children, and medicine for the sick (CAOM, INF 1145(2), Bulletin de renseignements No. 304, "Note du Sous-Lieutenant Loisel sur la situation materielle et morale des français en Indochine", 15 June 1943).

Fuel and textiles are two product categories that illustrate well the Decoux regime's efforts to build a substitution economy because of their importance for consumers and trade. Before the war, Indochina imported 110,000 tonnes of petroleum products annually to fuel power stations and motor vehicles, to power electric lighting, and to meet the need for lubricants (CAOM, INF 1129, Bulletin de renseignements No. 239, 10 May 1944, p. 6). As early as 1941, increasingly severe restrictions on traffic had helped reduce gasoline consumption. Drivers required permits to operate vehicles. They were prohibited from travelling on itineraries served by public modes of transportation except under exceptional circumstances. These measures reduced the consumption of gasoline from 3,000 to 2,000 tonnes per month that year (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, Rapport No. 6, "Industrialisation de l'indochine", Session December 1941, p. 11).

The government also used hydrated alcohol derived from rice to replace gasoline and tried with limited success to produce fuel from rubber. Only a few months after the conflict with Thailand of late 1940 and early 1941,[6] Decoux asked Vichy to lift the law prohibiting trade with the former enemy so that Indochina could secure more

rice. In making this request, he specified the colony's need for fuel, not food (CAOM, FM, 1/tel727, No. 5979, Decoux to Platon, 16 October 1941).[7] By 1943, distilleries in Cambodia, Cochinchina, and Tonkin produced between 15,000 and 20,000 hectolitres of rice alcohol to fuel vehicles, while 3,000 other vehicles were equipped with gasogenes, which enabled them to run on wood or charcoal (*Indochine*, 20 July 1944, p. 10).

Mixtures of fish, copra, and peanut oils replaced fuel oil and products derived from local vegetable oils substituted for lubricants derived from petroleum. The colonial government imposed minimum quotas for the production of these oils, to be delivered at set prices. It gave a monopoly on the trade, transport, and treatment of oleaginous goods to the Union des Coopératives Agricoles in Tonkin and Annam and to the Comptoir des Corps Gras in the South (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled box, "L'Effort économique de l'Indochine", p. 9). Tightly controlled by the authorities, these monopolies, called *comptoirs*, were private organizations with exclusive rights to ensure the supply of specific goods. Use of the *comptoirs* represented an essential piece of the economic strategy of the colonial government (CAOM, INF 1267, Rapport du Commissaire Martin au Conseil de l'Indochine, 3 February 1945, p. 7). From 1940 to 1942, the area devoted to the production of peanut oil grew from 25,000 to 43,000 hectares; for castor oil the increase was from 6,000 to 10,000 hectares. By the first quarter of 1942 and thanks to the completion of factories in Cambodia, the average monthly production of vegetable- and animal-derived fuel oil reached 640 tonnes, up from only 12 tonnes in the second half of 1941 (CAOM, INF 1129, Bulletin de renseignements No. 239, 10 May 1944, p. 6). Cochinchina's electric plants burned paddy when it became impossible to transport Tonkinese coal south (Sabattier 1952, p. 60).

The textile sector experienced similar efforts to produce goods with substitute materials. Prior to 1940, Indochina imported 20,000 tonnes of textiles, mostly cotton and silk destined for Tonkin's large factories and the colony's cottage industries. The problems caused by the sudden drop in imports after the beginning of hostilities

(to 8,000 tonnes in 1942 and 6,000 in 1943) were aggravated by the types of material imported from Japan. Most consisted of expensive fabrics like rayon, poorly adaptable for indigenous clothing. In Indochina, one thousand tonnes of cotton were locally produced, but jute was practically non-existent. To promote the growing of crops from which substitution textile products could be made, the authorities launched propaganda campaigns. Local administrators also pressured farmers to grow certain crops or to expand areas cultivated to them, even at the risk of diverting resources from the production of food crops. The government fixed prices and imposed quotas on regions where land was devoted to the cultivation of certain crops, using compensation to give peasants incentives to grow those crops while at the same time coercing them to comply (SHM, GG2 171, Untitled box, "L'Effort économique de l'Indochine", p. 10).

In the first example of a system of coerced cultivation of cash crops in Indochina, a textile *comptoir* regulated the production, collection, and distribution of cotton, though it quickly became apparent that compelling reluctant farmers to hand over the entirety of their harvests would have political ramifications. To minimize discontent, the administration allowed farmers to keep a portion of their production. In 1944, only 2,500 of a total of 6,500 tonnes of cotton grown in Indochina were, as a result, handed over to the *comptoir* (CAOM, INF 1267, Rapport du Commissaire Martin au Conseil de l'Indochine, 3 February 1945, p. 8). While there was never any question of attempting to grow a sufficient quantity of cotton locally to replace pre-war exports fully, the area devoted to cotton cultivation grew from 7,000 hectares in 1939 to 19,000 by 1942 and 52,000 by 1944, though insect pests, poor choice of seeds, and improper soil types kept yields lower than expected (CAOM, INF 1129, Bulletin de renseignements No. 239, 10 May 1944, pp. 6–7; INF 1267, Rapport du Commissaire Martin au Conseil de l'Indochine, 3 February 1945, p. 8 and Marr 1945, p. 32).

Until relations were broken with India, Indochina annually imported 20,000 tonnes of sacks made from jute, necessary for the transportation and export of rice. To compensate for the cessation of

trade with the British colony, 12,700 hectares of jute were cultivated by 1942, as opposed to just 500 in 1939. Along with rush plants from Cochinchina, the harvest from that area served to make sacks (CAOM, INF 1129, Bulletin de renseignements No. 239, 10 May 1944, pp. 6–7).

The Artisanat

One area in which Hanoi followed Vichy policy closely was the promotion of artisan crafts, or the *artisanat*. Whereas, however, Vichy was incompetent and even duplicitous, Hanoi encouraged the *artisanat* as an integral part of Indochinese tradition and saw it as a cornerstone of its efforts to ensure economic survival. Vichy's glorification of the *artisanat* as a return to a more stable past fell short of the reality of its authoritarian and centralizing policies.[8] Inspired by social philosophers such as Gustave Thibon and René Gillouin, the Pétainist discourse of Vichy blamed the fall of France on its departure from the traditional small-scale craft and peasant world that had been its strength only a few years before the war. Charles Maurras, one of the ideologues of the National Revolution's ultraconservative wing, criticized the atomization of French society during the Third Republic (1870–1940). He argued that tradition allowed civilizations to endure as transmitted capital, and that tradition must always be greater and more important than the individual. There could be no society without tradition (Curtis 2010, pp. 120–21). Yet, by the end of 1942, with the impetus of the National Revolution weakened significantly, the government had resettled a mere 200 artisans in the French provinces (Paxton 2001, p. 215). In contrast to France, the effects of machinery on the fabric of society never reached Indochina, where well over 90 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and the industrial base was almost non-existent. The *artisanat* was a ubiquitous way of life for the peasantry, which needed to supplement income while waiting for the next harvest. A discourse stressing the return to traditional ways of production would have been absurd in a context without notable

industrial production. Rather than introduce Vichy's discourse, then, Decoux's government tried to direct and coordinate the Indochinese *artisanat* to sustain and develop the substitution economy borne of war-time isolation.

Colonial authorities under the Third Republic had mostly encouraged the development of Indochinese artistic artisanry (jewellery, silk and ivory work for example), in contrast to utilitarian artisanry (weaving, woodwork and pottery, for example). This preference stemmed from the colonists' desire to stop the perceived decline of traditional arts, and efforts focused mostly on high-end goods targeted at the elite rather than on goods for everyday use. Without officially discouraging production of utilitarian arts and crafts, the French colonial presence had accelerated its decline in Indochina, as cheap mass-produced goods flooded the market. Those who made their living from cottage industry could no longer compete. The French placed few restrictions on imports to protect this sector, though they did try to preserve the artistic artisanry in efforts ranging from opening small museums to founding cultural institutions to the restoring of Angkor (Tully 2002, pp. 216–17).

The fear that artistic traditions, or "national art" in the words of Penny Edwards, would disappear was particularly acute in Cambodia, where a 1917 study counted 130 artisans of art out of an estimated population of 1.5 million, most of whom found farming more profitable. The colonial administration created the School of Cambodian Arts in the same year to organize, conserve, and popularize Khmer art in all its forms, and in 1924 it established the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de l'Indochine to train artists (Edwards 2007, pp. 146–49). A report published in 1937 insisted that it was France's duty to revive the artistic pursuits: "It seems that our role must be to preserve the proper character and originality of the national art of the people of whom we have taken on the education, and to help [these people] rediscover the elements they poorly know or have forgotten" (Les Ecoles de l'art d'Indochine, Report made for the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Technique de Paris, 1937, cited in Brocheux and Hémery 2001, p. 226). The emphasis in all of these undertakings remained on artistic rather than utilitarian artisanry.

The governments of the 1930s became aware of the need to nurture local utilitarian artisanry to fight peasant poverty and minimize the need to industrialize Indochina, two forces that, they feared, could lead to the proletarianization of the population. Industrialization risked hurting factories in the metropole and favouring the "bolshevization" of the workers and people in the countryside to whom urban Indochinese workers retained strong ties. In March 1938 Minister of Colonies Marius Moutet announced, "It would be a grave error to rush our colonies toward poorly planned industrialization. We must not create a proletariat that, exploited and unhappy, would rapidly be dangerous for French sovereignty" (Marseille 2005, pp. 456–57). Justin Godart, Senator from Rhône, asked upon his return from Indochina in 1937,

> Is it desirable to see the number of workers increase, that is to wish for the development of industry in Indochina? I don't think so. Here is a stable and definitive base for Indochina: small property. We must defend it where it exists; we must create it where there is room. If, along with this agrarian policy we can build an artisan policy, we will bring a new and effective palliative to the current situation. (cited in Hémery 1977, p. 25)

The authorities sought to reverse rural poverty by accelerating the promotion of utilitarian artisanry, which they hoped would supplement incomes and increase supplies of goods for local consumption. Tonkin had the largest population of artisans in the Indochinese Union. Yet less than 7 per cent of its inhabitants drew the majority of their income from this type of production (Brocheux and Hémery 2001, pp. 258–59). Of course this figure does not reflect the aggregate quantitative output a peasantry whose primary activity derived from the land but whose members often supplemented their income through artisanal production. Colonial authorities may or may not have considered this production "national art", it may thus not have been counted in official statistics, but it remained a critical part of the local economy. And in the years preceding the war the government tried to stimulate utilitarian artisanry through credit schemes to permit the craftsman to purchase tools and raw materials without having to go through usurers. These schemes operated through the intermediation

of cooperative societies, which also standardized and regulated the quality of production. The colonial government opened workshops to revive lost artisanal crafts, as in Ha Dong, and artisans' schools, as in Bien Hoa, to teach skills and prepare people for careers.

During the late 1930s the French wanted to give a sense of national artisanry to the Indochinese peoples while at the same time moulding tastes. A focus on artisanry for mass consumption rather than for the elite led to a closer association between utilitarian and artistic artisanry. No longer were notions of national arts reserved for the production of art on grand or intricate scales. Standardization and quality-control were critical in developing the artisanal sector and commoditizing its production rather than seeing artisanal practice as an art form. Colonial authorities estimated that during this time the export of artisan's goods contributed three to five million piastres to Indochina's balance of trade. Further expansion of the sector could promote the diversification of the Indochinese economy, without the need for costly — and dangerous, if they were to lead to the radicalization of a growing proletarian class — programmes of industrialization (CAOM, INF 1150, "L'Action de la France en Indochine au point de vue économique", pp. 9–10).

Unfortunately the effects of these measures proved negligible, as they awaited full implementation by the time that war broke out (CAOM, FM, INF 2749, Programme d'action sociale et culturelle, p. 13).

Since the colonial authorities of the Third Republic had focused on nurturing artisanal arts and achieved very little to stimulate utilitarian artisanry,[9] Decoux's government inherited a weak sector. The sector required further encouragement and direction if it was to fulfil its potential, be an integral part of the substitution economy, and help alleviate rural poverty (CAOM, FM, INF 1126, Rapport du médecin commandant Eugène Kernevez, 20 March 1944). In 1941, the GGI reported that artisanry in Indochina still lacked financial concentration and principles of standardization, as it had developed haphazardly and under the sole impetus of individual need. The quality and quantity of production remained well below

the vast potential of the sector. It still could not provide a normal means of subsistence to a populace that often knew food shortages (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral indochinois, "Rapport No. 5: Le Problème démographique; surpopulation et colonisation", Session December 1941, p. 5). Adults could expect to earn between 0.06 and 0.10 piastres and children 0.02 to 0.10 piastres a day through artisanry, and since they mostly sold to middlemen — who profited greatly from sales — and raw materials were subject to markups of up to 300 per cent according to government sources, producers were squeezed financially. Moreover, selling to middlemen meant that artisans had no direct exposure to fluctuations in demand or tastes (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, "Rapport No. 6: Développement de l'artisanat", Session December 1941, pp. 2–4).

Decoux's regime understood that, to increase consumption levels and wealth in the colony, production ideally needed to increase in both quantity and quality. It needed to flood the local market, to drive exports and thus to make possible the increased import of goods (CAOM, FM, INF 2749, "Principes généraux de la future économie Indochinoise", p. 17). The government also counted on a healthy *artisanat* to curb rural-urban migration, which threatened to pull wages down as the number of available workers in cities increased (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 6 January 1942). Reduced migration would leave the administration with the problem of an overpopulated countryside, but the supplemental income from artisanry would alleviate the effects of rural population pressure.

In the event, these policies were never able to overcome the devastating effects of war-time isolation and bombing on Indochina's economy. Much of the population remained desperately poor and hungry. Decoux rightly recognized the potential of artisanry as a provider to the substitution economy that had to emerge under conditions of autarky, but the economy itself could not develop in wartime. Decoux's solutions, no matter how creative, were doomed from the start.

With no alternatives and hoping to ride out the war, Decoux's government tried to direct the Indochinese *artisanat* through control

of its production and its channels of distribution. Though these initiatives sought to address the immediate problems posed by the war, Decoux positioned the development of substitution products as a long term-plan to raise standards of living in the colony. He proposed that the rupture in external communications that had forced Indochina to live in a closed circuit presented an opportunity to make up for important weaknesses in the colony's economic organization. For the *artisanat* to continue to develop once the war was over, the Admiral thought it indispensable to organize the sector so it could survive international competition (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 27 April 1944). He never addressed the question of how French industrial conglomerates, which had purposefully kept the Indochinese economy dependent on its exports, would react once trade relations returned to normal. This failure signalled either his *naïveté* or a vulgar attempt on his part to rally support for his ambitions by leaving these issues to his successor. Still, the government took it upon itself to assist, organize, and orient artisanal production (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, "Rapport No. 6: Développement de l'artisanat", Session December 1941, p. 6).

Decoux had an unprecedented opportunity to implement corporatist structures to cure through shock therapy the difficulties caused by the war. His administration envisioned an economy organized as a pyramidal structure with large modern industry at the summit, processing and extraction industries below, and, at the base, "the thousands of small family workshops". To these latter the French would give the means to modernize their methods and to produce new articles (CAOM, INF 2749, Programme d'action sociale et culturelle, p. 13). Properly directed, the authorities believed, the *artisanat* could provide goods to small industry, which in turn could supply large industry (SHM, GG2 171, Tournées, 30 April 1943). The French believed they needed to guide artisanal production away from art and ornamental trinkets towards utilitarian products, such as those made of leather, rope, or metal (CAOM, FM, INF 1129, Bulletin de renseignements No. 238, 10 May 1944). The relationship between a developed and coordinated *artisanat* and heavy industry

would prove symbiotic. It could help Indochina as a whole after the war, provided that workshops improved the quality of their goods (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 9 December 1943). Under wartime conditions, this policy made sense, but, again, it failed to take into account the reactions of industry in the metropole once these conditions ended.

To build this pyramid and ensure the production of utilitarian goods, Decoux's government sought to organize the *artisanat* at the local and regional levels. In August 1941, it created not only the Council on Industrial Production but also the *comités locaux de l'artisanat* (local committees of the *artisanat*). In each of Indochina's five *pays*, the head of the local administration directed these committees, which were attached to the Inspection générale des mines et de l'industrie (General Inspectorate of Mines and Industries). They were responsible for implementing measures to expand fabrication, while improving quality, perfecting work methods, and facilitating the sale of products (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 10 March 1943). In each province the authorities established cooperatives for every major artisanal activity, such as weavers (a group further broken down by the materials with which they worked), dyers, basketmakers, and varnishers. The Union of Cooperatives (UNICOP) worked with these local cooperatives to ensure that the artisan corps of every *pays* worked, according to its capacity and its means, on articles responding exactly to the demands and needs of the customers, thus minimizing competition between the different artisan groupings (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, "Rapport No. 6: Développement de l'artisanat", Session December 1941, p. 9).

The 27 July 1942 decree creating the Office of Popular Credit continued the formalization of groupings of artisans around cooperative societies. It divided the *pays* of the Union into a number of zones in which only one cooperative per zone would be allowed for every trade. These cooperatives oversaw the production of specific goods and the equitable distribution of raw materials. By the end of 1943, Indochina counted 14 cooperatives resulting from this scheme,

13 of which were less than a year old. The government set aside 660,000 piastres to fund these cooperatives, compared to 140,000 piastres the year before (*Indochine*, 30 December 1943). Unlike in the metropole, in Indochina these cooperatives did not have a voice in defending their political interests; they had no dialogue with the government of policies to be adopted. But their organization into natural groupings on the basis of professional or vocational knowledge, was anchored in Maurrassism, even as Decoux preferred to allude publicly to Pétain (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 16 December 1943; 27 April 1944).

The government of Indochina expanded schools to train artisans and set standards of production on a scale never before seen in the colony, most of whose previous administrations had had concern for the production of artistic crafts rather than utilitarian products. It set these "centres of perfection" (*centres de perfectionnement*) up in areas with high concentrations of artisanal activity and placed them under the supervision of the Service technique de l'artisanat (Artisanal Technical Service), responsible for improving the quality of goods and for orienting production towards customer demand (CAOM, GGI 65295, Conseil Fédéral Indochinois, Rapport No. 6, "Développement de l'artisanat", Session December 1941, pp. 10–11; SHM, GG2 171, Directives politiques, 16 March 1943). These centres were intended to elevate artisans, and as one newspaper put it, teach them that their professions

> did not consist in producing, according to circumstances, to respond to the vogues of the moment, to sell as much as possible, but also to put out *finished*, *cared for work* [*du travail fini, soigné*]. … The dignity of the profession of artisan demands from those who practice it, in addition to professional probity, the search to ameliorate, to perfect, quality. (*Voix d'Empire*, 26 January 1942)

These goals represented nothing less than a French attempt to overhaul local culture. The French appropriated Indochinese artisanry in efforts to manage the colony effectively and returned their version of local crafts to the population in a transformed, somehow more elevated, form. Under the leadership of Europeans, these schools

sought to correct a perceived lack among local craftsmen of the professional consciousness that characterized the French artisan, a certain self-esteem through which his work somehow reflected his soul (*La Tribune Indochinoise*, 2 February 1942). The French went so far as to push the idea that Indochinese artisanry depended on them to flourish. They evoked Charles Crévost, the "father of the Tonkinese *artisanat*", who, working in the Agricultural and Commercial Services of Tonkin in the administration of Governor General Paul Beau (1902–7),

> had for [his] only ambition to guide workers, because the latter needed to be advised, the latter not being sufficiently aware of the tastes and needs of the principally French customers at the time. (SHM, GG2 171, Tournées, 10 March 1943; *La Tribune Indochinoise*, 21 January 1942)

In a fit of absurdity and paternalism, the French presented the idea that the Indochinese peoples could not produce their own national treasures — reflecting the culmination of centuries of accumulated experience — without their assistance. Even as the shift occurred away from artistic artisanry towards utilitarian artisanry, the French saw themselves as the saviours of local tradition.

French authorities organized fairs in Hanoi and Saigon to show the public that the Indochinese *artisanat* was thriving, and that, with French guidance, it could play an important part in addressing some of the Union's socio-economic problems. While these fairs existed before the war — with the last such event held in 1938 — the wartime isolation of the colony led Decoux's regime to emphasize, for propagandistic purposes, Indochina's ability to survive by adapting its own resources and thus replacing goods that had become unavailable. These fairs were a critical tool in building popular enthusiasm for the government's efforts to salvage the economy through redirection. Visitors learned about how the government guided local artisans to find and produce solutions to energy problems using vegetable oils, about efforts to cultivate cotton and jute, and about the placement of gazogenes in vehicles (CAOM, FM, 1/tel767, No. 36, "Decoux to Platon", 3 January 1942).

Decoux used the fairs to promote the necessity of French tutelage for tapping the ingenuity of the local people. He also used them to emphasize the spirit of Indochina-wide solidarity, calling on visitors to reflect on the importance of common work and the strength of collective ties (SHM, GG2 171, Discours prononcés, 30 November 1941).[10] Again, once internal transportation broke down two years later, there was nothing upon which to base these collective ties. Decoux would then call for Tonkin to fend for itself. In 1941, no one appreciated the dangers posed by a change in the Allies' fortunes. Indeed, editorialist wrote,

> Essentially this Hanoi Fair is symbolic: it attests that the French of Indochina and the Indochinese aren't giving up the fight, that on the contrary it is fascinating to them precisely because it is difficult. They trust, they know that their effort, their inventive spirit, their consistency assures the future, and that Indochina will surmount all the crises, simply because they want it. (*Voix d'Empire*, 5 December 1941)

The fairs were supposed to feature not only artisanal goods, but the spirit of the Indochinese Union. The government wanted the fairs to display nothing less than Indochina's effort in the struggle for its existence, an effort that the solidarity that bound its people to one another and France made possible. The fairs presented the *artisanat* as a linchpin in the economic transformation that was occurring (SHM, GG2 171, Tournées, 30 November 1941). Brought together, artisans from all parts of the colony could learn from one another, ending what one newspaper called the "lack of cohesion of the different family workshops… [which impeded] equally professional development and perfectibility" (*L'Annam Nouveau*, 26 October 1941). This process of solidarity was part of a moral and commercial education from which technical improvements would surely follow. It all amounted to an undisguised effort to push the idea that France, as the cement that held the Union together, brought peoples together and allowed them to perfect their own national treasures (*Indochine*, 10 June 1942, p. 4). One editorial summarized the intents of the government vis-à-vis the fairs as follows:

> The *Foire-Exposition* brings to Indochina proof that its natural resources and the working spirit of its sons allow it to suffice for itself; it establishes a balance sheet of riches until now fairly unknown, and we are talking not only of material riches, but also moral riches. Face to face with a grave situation, Indochina, federation of countries considered until now, rightly or wrongly, weak and minor, acts as one nation, a courageous and coherent nation, distant member and, for now, isolated from a vast and powerful whole that is the French empire. (*Indochine*, 18 December 1941, p. 2)

The fairs attracted large crowds — two million visitors attended the 1943 *Foire-Exposition* in Saigon — and inspired the authorities to open permanent *artisanat* exhibits in Saigon, Ha Dong, and Hanoi (*L'Action*, 11 March 1943). The government hoped that these centres would encourage trading houses to familiarize themselves with the production of family workshops and establish relations between buyers and producers. The former could inform the latter of customers' latest tastes and desires and advise them on how to improve their work methods (CAOM, RSTNF 6419, Fondation d'une maison de l'artisanat à Hanoi). The centres represented the colonial authorities' continued efforts to promote the Indochinese *artisanat*, recognizing it as an essential element of the Indochinese economy. But they also signalled the authorities' complete disconnection from the questions of how the post-war empire would accept the changes that they sought to promote, should Indochina remain a part of the empire. Further, whatever success efforts to elevate the *artisanat* would have had fell victim to the infrastructural collapse of the colony. Locally produced goods remained locally consumed. Decoux's vision of an *artisanat* whose goods were distributed across Indochina, with glimpses of specialization by region in an economy shaped by comparative advantage, never came to fruition. Nor could it do so after 1945, during years of conflict in the fight for independence.

The Futility of Success

By 9 March 1945, the day the Japanese seized power from the French authorities, Indochina's economic situation was catastrophic, with the

famine of the winter of 1944–45 causing widespread deaths. The colony's difficulties had begun as early as the summer of 1940, when Vichy and London severed relations. While Britain and Decoux's Indochina continued to trade to a limited extent until the attack on Pearl Harbor, nothing could compensate for the end of regular maritime communication with France, which had accounted for half of Indochina's commerce before the war. Indochina's negligible industrial base could not supply the products necessary to maintain local standards of living, at least for the urban elite. French colonial authorities had no alternative but to turn to Japan for the goods that Indochina could not manufacture, and to exchange agricultural and mineral commodities for those goods. Unfortunately, over the course of almost four years, Japan never met the quotas set by the agreement of 6 May 1941. By the end of 1943, Hanoi could no longer count on receiving products in any quantity from its partner in Tokyo. It is difficult to determine the degree to which the Japanese intended to keep their commitments — even at the outset. But the advance of American forces in the Pacific disrupted maritime traffic between Indochina and Japan, at the same time that the former's internal trade suffered from the continuous bombardment of its railways. To confront these hardships, the GGI reorganized the economy of the colony by investing in or finding alternative uses for its natural resources. It used Indochina's rich and extant artisanal sector. Governor General Decoux saw in the *artisanat* not national moral salvation — though he did use Pétainist rhetoric to fetishize small-scale production as an alternative to the dehumanization of large industry — but rather the means to build the substitution economy that would save Indochina from autarkic penury.

Decoux's pragmatic effort to reorganize the economy of Indochina transcended an attempt merely to avoid famine and destitution. In the eyes of the French, its success would be proof that the colonists were legitimate tutors of the Indochinese people and should remain so in the post-war era. The authorities' reorganization of the economy in response to isolation became a means of promoting the French oeuvre in the region. In conformity with a major theme of French

colonial rule, whether calling on Franco-Indochinese solidarity or praising the moral purity of artisanal creativity, Decoux's regime wanted to show that France was the only guide that could deliver socio-economic development to the region through tutelage and through the "gift" of its civilizational achievements. The French needed to show the peoples of Indochina that, in spite of any hardships that the colony might face, France was the necessary tutor, the keystone of "a union between [French and Indochinese] peoples [that would] be intimate, deep, that allow[ed the Indochinese] to look toward the future with confidence … in complete fraternal confidence" (*La Tribune Indochinoise*, 11 July 1941). Decoux used efforts to alter economic production to find solutions to isolation in order to nurture sentiments of Franco-Indochinese symbiosis, which could overcome any tribulations by means of French creativity and Indochinese sweat. It was part of the authorities' discourse that described Indochina as "a veritable harbour of calm and peace in a world singularly troubled" (CAOM, RSTNF 6620, Cousseau, Head of IPP, Tonkin, to newspaper heads, 6 December 1943), a description that, as subsequent developments would make clear, said much about the disingenuousness of colonial rhetoric.

Ultimately, the creation of a substitution economy and the promotion of the *artisanat* that was a necessary part of this endeavour proved successful, insofar as colonial authorities made considerable headway in overcoming the lack of imports. Decoux's success in channelling these efforts into political gains is, however, impossible to gauge. The collapse of the Indochinese economy was due in large part to the Allied bombing campaigns that destroyed the region's infrastructure and to the destruction of shipping.[11] Any success the French had in finding solutions to economic problems was swamped by the impossibility of transporting goods from one *pays* to another. The Decoux regime was unable to achieve its aim to demonstrate France's place as a tutor and leader of the Indochinese Federation through its ability to maintain minimum levels of consumption for the urban population. Without accessible roads and railways, it did not matter that French scientists found ways to derive fuel from rice

alcohol or to grow enough crops to manufacture sacks for rice. Any success in creating a substitution economy and in developing an *artisanat* could not overcome the devastation of the Pacific War.

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NOTES

1. The Dreyfus Affair divided France from 1894 to its resolution in 1906. It began with the conviction for treason of Captain Albert Dreyfus, an officer of Alsatian Jewish descent, for having allegedly communicated French military secrets to the Prussians during the Franco-Prussian War.
2. One report warned of the disastrous effects of lifting tariffs, in the context of the higher costs of French goods vis-à-vis Japanese goods. See CAOM, INF 1201, Note pour le ministre, 21 August 1940.
3. For a detailed account of payments and the breakdown of monetary exchanges as well as the role of the Banque d'Indochine in the matter, see CARAN, 72AJ/1907, "L'Armistice Franco-Allemande et les relations Franco-Japonaises".
4. Known also as Fort Bayard, present-day Zhanjiang in Guangdong Province, a French concession that had traditionally been governed as part of Indochina but ironically remained under Free French authority during World War II.
5. Known as the Service de l'information, de la propagande et de la presse (IPP), this department comprised three branches: intelligence (*information*), propaganda and censorship of the press.
6. The Franco-Thai War (November 1940–May 1941) was fought over certain territories claimed by Thai irredentists. The Japanese brokered the peace, which, when signed, placed the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap in Cambodia and Champassak and Sayaburi in Laos under Thai control.
7. Admittedly, scarcity of foodstuffs was not as pressing a problem in October 1941 as it would be three years later.
8. For a more extensive discussion on the failure of Vichy's rhetoric to live up to its actions, see Freud 2013.
9. A possible exception was the Popular Front government under Léon Blum (1936–37), which began to implement policies to guide the *artisanat* towards more utilitarian production, though with limited success.
10. Inculcating an Indochina-wide identity and spirit (*esprit*) was a pillar of the

policymaking of the Decoux regime. By promoting solidarity amongst the different nations that constituted Indochina as a colony while positioning France as the bond that held the Indochinese Federation together, Decoux hoped to facilitate the administration of the colony in the short-term (during the period of autarky) while solidifying France's role as a tutor nation and thereby securing France's hold on its possessions in the post-war era. See Freud, 2013.

11. This collapse undoubtedly played a significant role in development of the conditions that led to Vietnam's August 1945 Revolution, particularly after the 1945 famine in Tonkin.

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