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Vietnamese **BULLETIN** *vietnamien*

Vietnamese Canadian Federation

Fédération vietnamienne du Canada

Vietnamese Canadian Federation

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FEDERATION NEWS

Arrest of Vietnamese dissident lawyer Le Cong Dinh

Following the arrest of dissident lawyer Le Cong Dinh by Vietnamese Communist authorities on June 13, 2009, VCF President Ut Van Ngo and Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, have written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to express their concerns. Following is the letter sent by Mr. Dewar.

June 25, 2009

Hon. Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Cannon:

I am writing you this letter to express my serious concerns regarding the detention of Le Cong Dinh, Vietnamese lawyer and dissident writer arrested by Vietnam on June 13, 2009.

Mr. Le Cong Dinh have been charged with 'spreading propaganda against the state' – an

offence which carries up to twenty years in prison. In the process, his home and office were searched and his documents were seized by the officials.

The arrest of this individual fits a pattern of activities by the Hanoi government, intended to quash opposition to the regime. In recent years we have witnessed the detention of pro-democracy and human rights advocates in Vietnam including Father Nguyen Van Ly, then writer Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, lawyer Le Thi Cong Nhan, lawyer Le Tran Luat and now lawyer Le Cong Dinh.

Minister, I request that you voice Canada's concerns regarding Vietnam's treatment of political dissidents and call upon Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Le Cong Dinh in accordance with Article 19 of the United Nations International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights to which Vietnam is a signatory.

Sincerely,

Paul Dewar, M.P.
Ottawa Centre

VCF intervenes on behalf of mistreated Vietnamese workers in Malaysia

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation is a member of the Coalition to Abolish Modern-day Slavery in Asia (CAMSA), spearheaded by the Boat People SOS Committee based in Virginia, U.S.A. CAMSA has intervened on behalf of numerous Vietnamese workers who were unfairly treated by foreign employers outside Vietnam.

At present, CAMSA is helping a group of 15 Vietnamese workers employed by JR Joint Resources Holdings, a labor resource company that recruited workers for Sony in

Malaysia. Following is a letter that VCF's President Ut V. Ngo sent to the Malaysian Ambassador to Canada on this case.

June 29, 2009

His Excellency Selwyn Das
High Commissioner
Embassy of Malaysia
60 Boteler Street
Ottawa, ON
K1N 8Y7

Dear Sir:

I am writing to bring to your attention the mistreatment and exploitation of Vietnamese workers by JR Joint Resources Holdings, a labor resource company that recruited workers for SONY EMCS (Malaysia) SDN BHD in Selangor.

JR Joint Resources Holdings hired 15 Vietnamese women to work at the Sony EMCS Malaysia factory. The contract signed with the workers specifically stated that they were to work for Sony and outlined the salary structure and duties of the parties. Because of the way the contract was written, these 15 women believed they would be working for Sony for 3 years. Long before the 3 year contract was to end, the women were told that Sony no longer had work for them. These women were sent to work in local restaurants, a frozen food company, and to clean out hen-coops in the forest-work they did not sign up for; they got paid much less than the amount promised in their contracts.

We have alerted many governments keen on combating human trafficking, the international media, anti-trafficking organizations, about the appalling practices of Sony's subsidiary in Malaysia. Our goal is to ensure that Sony and JR Joint

Resources Holdings honor their contracts, fully compensate the workers for financial and emotional damages, and rehire those that have been unfairly dismissed or, if this is impossible, ensure their safe repatriation.

I respectfully request that your good office makes this case known to the Malaysian government, particularly agencies entrusted with the enforcement of Act 670. This case presents a good test of the new legal framework to combat trafficking in persons.

Yours sincerely,

Ut V. Ngo, President

c.c. Her Excellency Deanna Horton,
Ambassador of Canada to Vietnam

Persecution of Dissident Lawyer Le Tran Luat in Vietnam

Following is a letter that VCF sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade regarding the persecution of Lawyer Le Tran Luat by the Vietnamese government

April 8, 2009

The Hon. Lawrence Cannon, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Int. Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0G2

Re. Persecution of Lawyer Le Tran Luat

Dear Sir:

I'm writing to request your intervention in the case of a human-rights lawyer who is being subject to persecution by the Vietnamese Communist government.

The lawyer in question, Mr. Le Tran Luat, had agreed to defend 8 Catholics of Thai Ha District in Hanoi who participated in the prayer sessions for the return of the Catholic Church's land illegally confiscated by the government. In addition, he also agreed to defend, free of charge, some political dissidents who were involved in a peaceful movement for democracy and freedom in Vietnam, including Messrs. Nguyen Xuan Nghia, Pham Thanh Nghien, Pham Van Troi, and Vu Hung who have been detained without trial for several months.

In response to Mr. Luat's actions, Vietnamese authorities at present subject him to a plan of constant harassments including the following incidents:

- On February 25, 2009, his office in Saigon was searched by the police who took away his photocopiers and computers to execute a decree in favour of a competing law firm in a private dispute;
- On March 3, 2009, he was prevented from taking a flight from Saigon to Hanoi to meet his clients. Subsequently he was detained for interrogation at the police station for the whole day.
- His associates Hung and Dat and his assistant Ta Phong Tan were also summoned by the police for questioning. Specifically, Ms. Ta Phong Tan was interrogated 10 times over 10 consecutive days.
- On March 25, 2009, the police delivered to his office a notice of termination of its operation permit. Consequently, he had to suspend all the services that he had committed to

his clients and to return the retention fees that he had received.

- Since then, his office has been kept under watch by a group of about 20 secret police agents, and everyone who visited this office was searched and interrogated afterward.
- In order to prepare for his eventual disbarring, the government has mounted a vicious campaign in the state media to denounce him as a crook and a criminal. The Investigation Bureau has submitted to the Ministry of Justice a request to withdraw his legal practice permit.

All the above incidents point to the possibility that Mr. Luat will be prevented from practicing his profession as a lawyer and will be subject to detention and eventual imprisonment.

The persecution of Mr. Luat by the Vietnamese government is an insult to Canada's commitment to help Vietnam *improve the administration of justice and increase knowledge of, and access to, the legal system* in the current \$12 million legal development assistance project. I would therefore like to suggest that you suspend it until Vietnamese authorities show their own respect of justice by ending all their harassments against this courageous lawyer.

Trusting that our request will receive a favourable response from you, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Ut Ngo, President

News Update

Community Parade &

Arrival of the last refugee family sponsored by the Vietnamese community in Ottawa

Community Parade, May 31, 2009

In celebration of the Asian Heritage Month and the 30th anniversary of Project 4000, and to mark an important milestone on the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation has organized a parade and a ceremony for the dedication of the future site of the Museum on May 31, 2009 with the collaboration of the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa and Vietnamese organizations in Ottawa in other cities.

The parade was led by the Ottawa Firefighters Band and, despite the unusual rain in May, was joined by about 300 people, including: Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre Paul Dewar, Member of the Provincial Parliament of Ontario for Ottawa Centre Yasir Naqvi, representatives of the Ottawa Police, members of Vietnamese communities in Ottawa, Montreal, Kitchener-Waterloo, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Veterans Association of Ontario, the Association of Former Cadets of Thu Duc Military Academy in Ontario, and the Vietnamese Red Berets Family of Montreal.



Following the parade, a ceremony for the dedication of the future site of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum was held at the corner of Preston Street and Somerset Street West where a piece of land was purchased for the Museum by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation on April 30, 2009. The ceremony was concluded with a reception and an entertainment program featuring Ottawa singers Tuan Hoa and Ivy O.

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation was supported in the organization of this event by the Celebrate Ontario Program, the Vietnamese Alliance Church of Ottawa, the Vietnamese Canadian Senior Citizens Association of Ottawa, the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Ottawa (Tu An Temple), the Hieu Giang Temple, and the Pho Da Temple, and the Ottawa Vietnamese Canadian Cultural Organization.

In addition, financial support was also given by TD Canada Trust, the Catholic Immigration Centre, the Somerset West Community Health Centre, Dr. Thanh Duong, Mrs. Hue Chau Truong, Ms. Cuc Lam, VN Printing, Drs. Trang Nguyen and Vu Nguyen, Den Garage, Chez Nam Restaurant, Lawyer Khanh Vu, Lyan Pharmacy, Woodroffe Pharmacy, Lawyer Nhung Hoang, and Mr. John Phan and ReMax Realty.



The Honourable Jason Kenney -- Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism -- was unable to attend this event but his warm message of greetings was read by the MC to everyone at the beginning of the Museum site dedication ceremony.



Some pictures taken at this event can be seen in the following Picasa photo album:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/LDCan2006/CommunityParadeVBPMsiteDedication#>

Greetings from the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all those attending the

Vietnamese Community Parade and the Dedication of the Future Site of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum, organized by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation. On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I would like to thank all Canadians of Asian heritage for their contribution to Canada.

Every year, Asian Heritage Month helps to enrich that diversity by giving Canadians the opportunity to share and appreciate the various traditions of our families, friends and neighbours. As Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I am keenly aware of the many contributions that Asian Canadians have made to Canadian society. The Asian community has long enriched Canadian society with skills, knowledge and talent, and your efforts continue to contribute to the social, economic and political fabric of our country. The hard work and perseverance demonstrated by the members of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation in organizing events such as these, is a great example of the virtues that Asian Canadians have demonstrated for many years.

While celebrating today's events, I would also encourage you to reflect on the hardships that were endured on that perilous journey made by the Vietnamese Boat People, the settlement challenges they faced, and the great achievements of these brave individuals. The Vietnamese Boat People Museum will not only be a legacy to those who made the journey, but it will also showcase the culture and traditions of the Vietnamese Community, which help make our country so beautifully diversified.

Thank you, and best wishes for a wonderful event.

Sincerely,
The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism

Arrival of last Vietnamese refugee family sponsored by the Vietnamese community in Ottawa

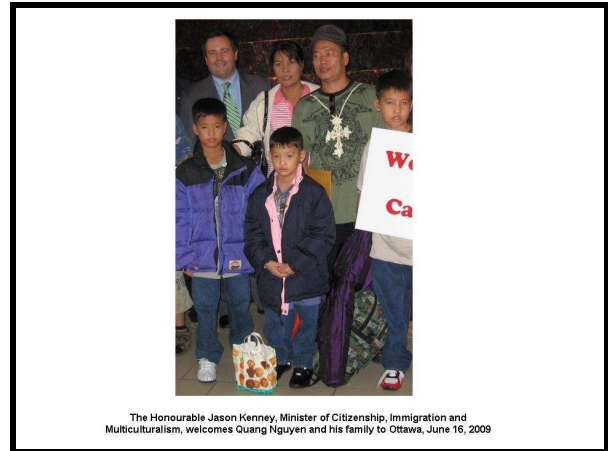
The last of 16 Vietnamese refugee families sponsored by the Vietnamese community in Ottawa under the *Freedom at Last* Project of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation arrived here on June 16 . Quang Nguyen, his wife Mary Grace (Emelia) and their three young children Kenny (7), Kevin (9), and Phi Kelly (11) joined 15 other families who have arrived in Ottawa since April last year under the same project, initiated by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation in 2007 to resettle 90 refugee families who were stranded in the Philippines for almost 20 years. This project was initiated by the Federation following the announcement made by the Honourable Diane Finley -- former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration -- that the government would facilitate the resettlement of these people in Canada based on humanitarian and compassionate consideration.

Of the 90 families (275 persons) eligible for application for admission to Canada under this project, 87 families (265 persons) have been admitted to the country. They were sponsored by community groups in Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa/Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and Saskatoon. In Ottawa, there are 8 such groups, including 4 religious organizations (the Dieu Khong, Pho Da Buddhist Temples, the Vietnamese Catholic Community, and the Vietnamese Alliance Church) and 4 private groups (Ottawa Friends / Lac Viet (Montreal), Lien Hoa, New Horizon, and NVC/LQS & Friends). The Nguyen family was sponsored by the New Horizon group. It is expected that the rest of the refugees

will come to Canada over the next couple of months if their applications are approved.

Through the coordination *Freedom at Last* Project and VOICE (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Community Empowerment), a non-profit and charitable organization based in the U.S., the refugees were assisted in making their journey from the Philippines to Canada, from submission of application to the Canadian Embassy in Manila, to medical examination, obtaining exit visas, and making travel arrangements. Once in Canada, the sponsor groups assist them in the basic tasks of rebuilding their lives in Canada such as arranging for accommodation, medical insurance, enrolling the children in schools, and looking for employment for the adults. Most of the refugees who have arrived here earlier were able to work and become self-sufficient shortly after their arrivals.

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism, Member of Parliament for North Vancouver Andrew Saxton, also Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister, responsible for liaison with the ethnic communities, together with the representatives of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (Danh Nguyen, Vice-President; Can D. Le, Commissioner for External Affairs and National Coordinator, *Freedom at Last* Project), the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa (Danh Lam Forsythe); Citizenship Court Judge Hai T. Ngo; the New Horizon Sponsor Group (Thanh Dung Nguyen and her husband Khanh Nguyen); the Dieu Khong Temple Sponsor Group (Ho Tran); Duong Nguyen and his son Williams (who came from the Philippines to Canada in July 2008), and other members of the Vietnamese community in Ottawa were at the airport to welcome the new refugees to Canada.



Following is the distribution of the refugee families (persons) resettled under the *Freedom at Last* Project.

Toronto, 27 (81); Vancouver, 22 (72);
Ottawa, 16 (57); Calgary, 12 (41),
Edmonton, 7 (16); Winnipeg, 3 (4);
Hamilton, 2 (3); Saskatoon, 1 (1)

Vietnamese Canadian Federation
June 23, 2009

Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project – Background and Update

Background

The Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project is organized under the auspices of the Vietnamese Canadian Centre (VCC), a registered charity established by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) in 1987.

VCF is a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-partisan organization founded in 1980 to coordinate activities of local Vietnamese communities of common interest to the whole Vietnamese community in Canada.

Originally founded with 5 Vietnamese community associations in Eastern Canada

(Sherbrooke, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa-Hull, and Toronto), VCF now has 11 chapters from coast to coast; other members are Vietnamese associations of Nova Scotia, Windsor, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, and British Columbia. In addition, there are two Vietnamese community associations -- in Kitchener-Waterloo and Whitehorse -- with observer status.

VCF's office is located in Ottawa.

Achievements

- Together with its member associations and other Vietnamese communities in Canada and with the support of the Boat People S.O.S. Committee in the U.S., VCF helped sponsor about 1,000 boat people in 1988 - 1992; organized the *Freedom at Last Project*, in collaboration with SOS VietPhi and the Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Community Empowerment (VOICE) based in the U.S., for the resettlement of 274 stateless Vietnamese who were stranded in the Philippines for almost 20 years.
- Built the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument in Ottawa in 1995, in memory of those refugees who lost their lives in their quest for freedom, with contributions from members of the overseas Vietnamese community;
- Organized numerous conferences, workshops; published many documents on social, economic, cultural, and political issues;
- Provided testimonies to parliamentarians on issues related to refugees and democracy, freedom, and human rights in Vietnam;

- Organized many all-candidates meetings in municipal, provincial, and federal elections;
- Provides social services to newcomers and acts as a resource centre on Vietnamese culture, and on socio-economic issues related to the Vietnamese community in Canada.
- Initiated the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project in 2005.

Vietnamese Boat People

- Refugees started to flee Vietnam to seek freedom in other countries following the fall of South Vietnam to the Communists in April 1975. They were often referred to as the Boat People because the majority of them fled in small makeshift boats;
- The exodus peaked in 1978-1982;
- Initially they were denied admission to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia and even pushed out to sea;
- Thousands of refugees never made it to freedom because they were killed by pirates or died through starvation or drowning in the perilous South China Sea;
- Summer 1979: Project 4000 was established by then Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar to help settle the boat people; other sponsor groups were subsequently formed, including Operation Lifeline in Toronto, the Mennonite, Catholic, United Churches, and other organizations throughout Canada;
- In 1988-1992, the VCF, its member associations, and other organizations in the Vietnamese community in Canada, sponsored about 1,000 refugees who were threatened with forced repatriation.

- In 2007-2009, 274 stateless Vietnamese who were stranded in the Philippines for close to 20 years were resettled in Canada by the VCF in collaboration with SOS VietPhi and VOICE under the government's humanitarian and compassionate designation.

Objectives of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum

- To present the historical facts of the quest for freedom of Vietnamese refugees, the majority of whom were the boat people, and their reception worldwide;
- To showcase the contribution of the Vietnamese community to the resettlement countries.

Requirements

- To be located in Ottawa, with exhibit areas, office and meeting facilities totalling about 10,000 sq ft; will have retail space on the ground floor to secure long-term viability;
- Estimated cost: \$ 2 million.

Development Plan

- 2006: develop business plan, fund-raising strategy;
- 2006-2009: initiate fund-raising campaign, purchase the land;
- 2010: design and build the museum.

Progress to Date

- Launched on December 17, 2005;
- Publicized worldwide;
Strong support received from the overseas Vietnamese community as well as prominent politicians and

citizens in Canada, including: former Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar; Ottawa Mayor Bob Chiarelli; Ottawa City Councillor Diane Holmes; Richard Patten, Member of Provincial Parliament of Ontario, Ottawa; Senator Mac Harb; Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament, Ottawa; Premiers: Rodney MacDonald, Nova Scotia; Shaun Graham, New Brunswick; Pat Binns, Prince Edward Island; Jean Charest, Quebec; Dalton McGuinty, Ontario; Gary Doer, Manitoba; Lorne Calvert, Saskatchewan; Ralph Klein, Alberta; Gordon Campbell, British Columbia; Dennis Fentie, Yukon; Joseph Handley, Northwest Territories; and Tom Hedderson, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;

- Initiated Phase 1 (December 2005 – November 2007) and Phase 2 (December 2007 – March 2009) fund-raising campaigns. A total of \$355,000 was either contributed or firmly committed;
- August – December 2008: worked with architects and the City of Ottawa to sort out building by-laws issues;
- December 2008 – March 2009: commissioned consultants to carry out environmental assessments in accordance with the requirements of the city's site development process;
- April 30, 2009: signed the agreement to purchase the land for the site of the museum: 105 Preston St., Ottawa (at the northeast corner of the intersection with Somerset St. West, opposite the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument, built in 1995 under VCF's coordination).

- May 31, 2009: official dedication of the future site of the Museum at 105 Preston St., Ottawa (Northeast corner of the intersection of Preston St. & Somerset St. West, opposite the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument that the Federation helped build in 1995).

Donations to the Museum Project can be sent to:

Vietnamese Canadian Centre – Museum Project
249 Rochester St., Ottawa, ON K1R 7M9
Canada

All donations above \$5.00 will be issued an income tax receipt.

MEDIA REPORTS

Enemies of the Internet

(Reporters without Borders; March 12, 2009)

Internet monitored and controlled, even in democracies

After joint appeal with Amnesty International for an end to online censorship, Reporters without Borders issues report on “Enemies of the Internet”.

Reporters without Borders today issued a report entitled “Enemies of the Internet” in which it examines Internet censorship and other threats to online free expression in 22 countries.

“The 12 ‘Enemies of the Internet’ - Burma, China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam - have all transformed their Internet into an Intranet in order to prevent their population from

accessing ‘undesirable’ online information,” Reporters Without Borders said.

“All these countries distinguish themselves not only by their ability to censor online news and information but also by their virtually systematic persecution of troublesome Internet users,” the press freedom organization said. Reporters without Borders has placed 10 other governments “under surveillance” for adopting worrying measures that could open the way to abuses. The organization draws particular attention to Australia and South Korea, where recent measures may endanger online free expression.

“Not only is the Internet more and more controlled, but new forms of censorship are emerging based on the manipulation of information,” Reporters without Borders said. “Orchestrating the posting of comments on popular websites or organizing hacker attacks is also used by repressive regimes to scramble or jam online content.”

A total of 70 cyber-dissidents are currently detained because of what they posted online. China is the world’s biggest prison for cyber-dissidents, followed by Vietnam and Iran.

Former Vietnamese refugee claims Dylan Thomas Prize

(CBC, Nov.11, 2008)

Australian Nam Le, who escaped on a boat with his parents from Vietnam when he was three years old, has grabbed the lucrative Dylan Thomas Prize for his debut collection of short stories, *The Boat*.

'He [Nam Le] is, in this panel's opinion, a phenomenal literary talent.' - Peter Florence, judging panel chair. "Nam tackles his own

background and circumstances as well as that of others with a clear eye, focused intelligence and wonderful use of words," said judging panel chair Peter Florence.

"He is, in this panel's opinion, a phenomenal literary talent, and I look forward to following his career as it progresses."

The \$261,000 award, sponsored by the University of Wales, highlights writers under age 30 whose work has been published in the English language.

"It's been a crazy week," Le told the Sydney Morning Herald. "I thought it couldn't get much better than Barack Obama winning the U.S. election."

The 29-year-old author, who was raised in Melbourne, is the second winner of the award.

He was based in New York, where he was the fiction editor of the Harvard Review, but will be moving to Britain next year for a fellowship at the University of East Anglia. Le says he's working on a novel about pirates in the South China Sea.

The Boat's stories take the reader from the slums of Colombia to the streets of Tehran and New York, and from a tiny fishing village in Australia to a vessel in the South China Sea.

Florence was effusive in his praise for *The Boat*: "[Le has] demonstrated a rare brilliance that is breathtaking both in the scope of its subject matter and the quality of its writing." Le fought off competition from five other authors including:

- British writers Ross Raisin (*God's Own Country*), Edward Hogan

(*Blackmoor*) and Caroline Bird (*Trouble Came To The Turnip*).

- South African-born Ceridwen Dovey (*Blood Kin*) and Ethiopian Dinaw Mengestu (*Children Of The Revolution*).

The Dylan Thomas award is handed out once every two years. The inaugural prize in 2006 was also won by a collection of short stories, Rachel Trezise's *Fresh Apples*.

PROFILE

Profile: Professor TonThat Thien
(Jeff McMurdo, Jordan)

The online Wikipedia encyclopedia recently saw the addition of an article on

Dr. Tôn Thất Thiện who is a well known Vietnamese nationalist of the post-WWII generation, currently retired and living in Ottawa. He has the rare distinction of serving and watching at close quarters the two historic leaders of post-World War II Viet Nam: presidents Ho Chi Minh in the Viet Minh-led coalition in 1945-1946, and Ngo Dinh Diem 1954-1955/1956-1959/1963.

He played a significant though understated role in the nationalist attempt to preserve a non-communist Viet Nam as a government official, Cabinet Minister, journalist, newspaper editor and professor.

As a 'Third Force' nationalist opposed to colonialism and communism, and dedicated to a mix of Confucian traditions and Western political ideals he is most closely aligned with the evolutionary reformist vision of the famous Vietnamese nationalist, Phan Chu Trinh and the efforts of the

government of Ngo Dinh Diem to create a non-communist Viet Nam. He was a leading supporter of freedom of the press and vociferous in his belief that the most effective strategy in fighting the Communists was to counter their claim to be the true and only nationalists fighting for Vietnam's national independence.

A generation of domestic and foreign journalists in the 1950s and 1960s were influenced by Thien's English-language critiques of the political crises in Vietnam. As an independent political commentator after 1966 he could be equally critical of misguided South Vietnamese government policies and abuses and the heavy handedness of U.S. intervention in Viet Nam.

His writings on the communist threat and the negative impact of American cultural, economic and political interventions showed a balanced and analytical approach that was recognized as distinctive in its time. In 1968 he served briefly as Minister of Information during which time he enacted libertarian reforms that removed all government censorship. In the same year he was awarded the Magsaysay Award in Manila for "significant contributions" to journalism, literature and creative communication arts in Asia.

Contrary to many educated Vietnamese, in his writings Thien considered development to be the primary objective of Vietnam, with

independence as only a secondary objective. In his view, it was this error in setting the priority of objectives which led to the costly and lengthy wars from 1945 to 1975. He viewed these national traumas as unnecessary for the country to achieve freedom and independence, but indispensable for the Communists to secure and retain power. He holds the Communist Party accountable for this development and sees the consequence as the ruin of the country, the exhaustion of its people, and the establishment of a brutal dictatorship.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ton_That_Thien

The Vietnamese Bulletin *vietnamien* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation.

The Federation welcomes contributions to this publication from its member associations and from the public, as well as suggestions or comments that may help improve its format or enrich its content.

Additional copies can be obtained by writing to:

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Website: <http://www.vietfederation.ca>**

E-mail: vietfederation@yahoo.ca