

Canadian Government's Anti-Communist Falsification of History: Making Vietnam's Victory Over the U.S. a "Black Day"

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Global Research, February 09, 2015

[TML Weekly](#) 7 February 2015

Region: [Canada](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Mass demonstration in Toronto against the Viet Nam War.

The House of Commons began debating a private member's bill on February 5, which is to mark April 30 as the day South Vietnam supposedly fell under the power of an authoritarian and oppressive communist regime. Many Canadians and the Vietnamese Embassy in Canada have opposed this bill as a flagrant insult to the Vietnamese people for whom April 30, 1975 is an historic day when the Vietnamese people won total victory against the armed forces of the United States who were forced to retreat from Saigon and admit defeat.

The bill was introduced in the Senate by Conservative Senator Thanh Hai Ngo as the Black April Day Act, but in the face of the opposition to his outrageous bill, Senator Ngo changed its name to the *Journey to Freedom Act*. The bill has already received Senate approval.

During the Senate's consideration of the bill, Vietnam's Ambassador to Canada, To Anh Dung, was denied an opportunity to appear as a witness. The Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Dung, wrote directly to Stephen Harper to register his concern about the intention of the bill, warning that the bill presents a distorted version of history and could damage the bilateral relations both countries have worked to build. The Conservatives used their majority in the Senate to pass the bill.

Changing the bill's name does not change the intention



Clearly, changing the name of the bill does not hide the Harper government's real intentions. The bill is the latest example of the Conservatives' obsessive anti-communist crusade. It is rewriting history to turn truth on its

head and create political mystification and confusion to block the people from drawing warranted conclusions.

For the Vietnamese and world's people, April 30, 1975 represents the total victory of the Vietnamese people against barbaric U.S. imperialist aggression. This historic victory earned the Vietnamese people the greatest respect and admiration the world over for their courageous and heroic struggle which stands second to none in the annals of national liberation struggles.

It is also important to remember that in the spring of 1954 the Vietnamese people completely defeated the French colonialists at Dien Bien Phu. Military historians have recorded that Dien Bien Phu was "the first time that a non-European colonial independence movement had evolved through all the stages from guerrilla bands to a conventionally organized and equipped army able to defeat a modern Western occupier in pitched battle."

By 1955, the U.S. began its interference and subterfuge to sabotage the unity of the people of Vietnam and the scheduled democratic elections. What began with the U.S. military advising the puppet regime in South Vietnam escalated into full-scale military aggression to dominate Vietnam.

During its criminal aggression the U.S. military used vicious carpet bombing to kill and maim to force the Vietnamese people into submission. Vast numbers of B-52 bombers and fighter bombers, as well as assault helicopters and artillery were unleashed against the Vietnamese people. The weapons of mass destruction included not only conventional high explosive bombs but also napalm, white phosphorous and cluster bombs. It is estimated that 30 billion pounds of munitions were used by the U.S. military. In addition to the killing and wounding of untold millions, U.S. aggression in Vietnam had disastrous consequences for the natural environment. Rice paddies, orchards, farms and gardens were destroyed and polluted for generations to come. The U.S. military deliberately sprayed more than 70 million litres of herbicidal agents, mainly Agent Orange, all over the countryside. These defoliants still cause human suffering and casualties today. Children born decades after the war still suffer after-effects of the poison left by the American military.



The list of crimes committed in Vietnam is endless. Many of these facts were documented in a thoroughly researched book by Nick Turse titled, *Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam*, published in 2013. Turse carried out a decade of research into secret Pentagon archives and conducted many interviews with U.S. military personnel. His

book clearly exposes the sinister workings of a U.S. military machine that deliberately and systematically caused death and injury to millions of Vietnamese civilians.

The crimes committed by U.S. imperialism in Vietnam did not go unanswered. The Vietnamese people fought and they prevailed. From the early 1960s to 1975, all over the world the peoples demonstrated and took actions in support of their just war of resistance and for national liberation. In the U.S., the anti-war movement grew year after year and no attempts to suppress it through violence was able to turn it back. In Canada, youth and students in their hundreds of thousands organized protests in support of the struggle of the Vietnamese people. Thousands went to jail and some were even deported from Canada for fighting the police. All over the world, people did whatever they could to provide support for the National Liberation Front in Vietnam.



For all the progressive freedom loving people of Canada, the U.S. and throughout the world, April 30, 1975, could not come fast enough. It was the day they had all fought and wished for, so that the Vietnamese people could be free from all foreign aggression and create a life for themselves without any interference. With the liberation of Saigon on April 30, 1975, the National Liberation Front (NLF) in the south of Vietnam and the North Vietnamese Army in the north of the country achieved the main condition required to reunify their country. They showed the world that a people determined to defend their freedom and sovereignty are more powerful than any aggressive army, no matter how powerful and arrogant it is.

The reunification of Vietnam was finally proclaimed in 1976 and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was established. Since then the government of Vietnam has made important advances in rebuilding the country and establishing a stable prosperous economy.

Considering the history of Vietnam, what problem is the Conservative government of Stephen Harper trying to solve with this bill? Jason Kenney, the Minister of Multiculturalism, said that he supports the bill because it celebrates 60,000 people who “risked their lives in search of freedom and found it in Canada.”

If Mr. Kenney was really concerned about people “risking their lives in search of freedom,” would he not honour the more than 90 million Vietnamese people who risked their lives every day during more than 15 years of U.S. occupation and crimes and the millions who were mercilessly killed by U.S. forces, both Vietnamese and American? Neither Kenney nor Senator Ngo have anything to say about the crimes committed against the Vietnamese people. This glaring omission suggests that these crimes and victims were a necessary sacrifice to bring the Vietnamese people “freedom and democracy.”

Mr. Kenney does not seem to be concerned about these war crimes, or about seeing charges brought against those complicit in the crimes committed by the U.S. imperialists against the Vietnamese people. He is only concerned with how he can get 60,000 refugees to vote for the Harper government and impose its anti-communist agenda. By championing the demands of the corrupt elements from amongst these 60,000 refugees, who seek privileges in Canada for themselves, the Harperites think they can maintain their dictatorship. Like members of the Cuban Mafia who fled to Miami after the Cuban revolution, all kinds of people fled Vietnam after the victory over U.S. imperialism. Why did they leave? Surely this requires an inquiry? Certainly some of them left, especially those with money and connections, because they had assisted the occupiers in committing crimes against their own people and did not want to answer for their crimes. Canada is known to have provided refuge in Montreal to a general who was a drug lord.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a sovereign country with the right to determine its own social system and policies. It is shameful for the Harper government to support legislation which in fact harms the bilateral relations between Canada and Vietnam and the friendly relations between our two peoples. In the name of promoting freedom and democracy, the Harper government is mobilizing Canadians, particularly those of Vietnamese origin, against Vietnam and interfering in its internal affairs, including the people's right to select the political system of their choosing. It is an insult to the history of the Vietnamese people and a perversion of history in general. What should teachers in the classroom tell their students about Canada's alleged *Journey to Freedom Day*, April 30? The bill is also to criminalize communists, fomenting hatred against them and blaming them for the crimes the Americans and other imperialists and colonialists have committed against humanity. The fact that the Harper government is using a so-called private member's bill to enact this new law so as to give it the veneer of a democratic act of Canadians rather than the government move that it is, is a cowardly and despicable act. It fools no one.

The Members of Parliament debating this bill should keep in mind that they are being asked to rewrite history in a manner which is unacceptable to Canadians. They are also participating in an act which destroys Canada's diplomacy and relations with other countries. According to the UN Charter, all countries must respect the sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of all countries, which are to be treated equally whether they are big or small. Vietnam is a country which has conducted itself with honour and continues to do so. It has never harmed Canada in any way.

Oppose this so-called private member's bill! Oppose the Harper Government's falsification of history and its rotten intent!

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