

NHAT LINH (1906-1963) (Nguyen Tuong Tam). Well-known novelist and founder of the Self-Reliance Literary Group (Tu Luc Van Doan) in colonial Vietnam. Born in 1906, Nhat Linh (real name, Nguyen Tuong Tam) studied painting in Hanoi and science in Paris. Returning to Vietnam in 1930, with his younger brother Nguyen Tuong Lang (Hoang Dao) he founded the Self-Reliance Literary Group, a collection of writers anxious to Westernize Vietnamese literature.

During the next few years he wrote a number of celebrated novels, including Doi Ban (Friends), Doan Tuyet (Rupture), and Buon Trang (the White Butterfly). Romantic in style, they reflected an implicit mood of rebellion and individualism against the accumulated evils in modern Vietnamese society. In the late 1930s Nhat Linh became actively involved in politics, joining the VNQDD and spending World War II in exile in China. After World War II he served briefly as minister of foreign affairs in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In the spring of 1946, however, he left suddenly for China and joined the anti-communist national United Front set up in Hong Kong. He later withdrew from the Front to protest against what he considered the pro-French attitudes of other members of the organization.

Nhat Linh moved to South Vietnam after the Geneva Conference in 1954. Arrested by the Diem regime in 1960, he committed suicide in 1963, reportedly in protest against Diem's policies. (See Hoang Dao; Literature; Ngo Dinh Diem; Tu Luc Van Doan)