

Vietnamese Political Organizations

There are several dozen political organizations formally registered with the Government of Viet-Nam and several other informal or unregistered political groupings. For the most part, they tend to be organized around specific personalities or as loose coalitions of several smaller groups rather than on a more formal or programmatic basis as in the U.S. The parties or groupings are often divided internally on the same basis. Reliable membership figures, estimates of voting and organizational strength, and size or nature of following cannot be determined precisely or are simply unavailable in many cases. Several of the more current or better-known political organizations are listed below.

Viet-Nam Nationalist Party (VNQDD, or Viet-Nam Quoc Dan Dang)

A militant nationalist organization and one of the original anti-French political parties, the VNQDD was formed in the late 1920's and survived suppression from the French, the Viet Minh, and the Diem regime. The party retains particular strength in parts of Central Viet-Nam. Within the party there are a number of groupings along personal and regional lines. Vu Hong Khanh, a prominent VNQDD leader, is a presidential candidate, as is Nguyen Hoa Hiep, leader of another party faction. Party members Nguyen Tuong Ba and Phan Khoang head senate slates, and several VNQDD personalities are included on other senatorial lists. The party claims 10 members in the present National Assembly.

Dai Viet Party

Another militant nationalist party, organized in 1938, the Dai Viet also is an important political force in parts of Central Viet-Nam. There are two major groupings within the party: the Tan (New) Dai Viet and the Revolutionary Dai Viet. The Secretary-General of the latter, Ha Thuc Ky, is a presidential candidate, and his group is running several senatorial slates including one headed by Nguyen Ngoc Ky and containing several National Assembly members. Some 15 to 20 Assembly members are believed to be Dai Viet party adherents in some degree.

Viet-Nam Socialist Party

Organized in the 1930's, the party was permitted to operate in a limited manner during the Diem period and split into two groupings after 1963. The party's nominal leader, Co Van Hai, is included on a senatorial slate. The party's Deputy Secretary-General, Pham Ngoc Hop, is a member of the National Assembly (elected from Saigon) and of the Saigon Municipal Council.

Viet-Nam Restoration Association

Primarily a Cao Dai organization, the group's Secretary-General is Tran Van Chieu, a vice-presidential candidate who is also Secretary-General of the United Nationalist Front (see below). Several prominent Cao Dai personalities are associated with the group, including Van Thanh Cao, a civilian member of the Directorate.

Social Democratic Party

Almost exclusively a Hoa Hao organization (though not necessarily representing the main Hoa Hao leadership), the party's following is located among the Hoa Hao population in the lower Mekong Delta. One of the party leaders, Phan Ba Cam, heads a senatorial slate.

Greater Solidarity Forces

This group has its following mainly among northern Catholics and was organized in 1964. It has six deputies in the National Assembly, and its chairman, Nguyen Gia Hien (member of the People's-Army Council) heads a senatorial slate.

National Union Party

The party's membership is largely made up of Catholics from the southern part of Viet-Nam. It is represented in the National Assembly by five party members, and two of its leaders are members of the People's-Army Council.