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“Six mois à Hanoi”: Marcel Cadieux,  
Canada, and the International  
Commission for Supervision and  
Control in Vietnam, 1954–5



*Abstract: Drawing on an unpublished memoir by Marcel Cadieux entitled “Six mois à Hanoi,” this article offers the first biographical study of a Canadian diplomat to serve on the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam. It argues that Cadieux’s pioneering experience on that commission during its first months in 1954–5 shaped his pro-American views on the Vietnam War as under-secretary of state for external affairs between 1964 and 1970. It also uses Cadieux’s tenure in Hanoi as a lens through which to explore larger issues of both long-standing and more recent interest to Canadian international historians, including the bureaucratic culture of the Department of External Affairs, Canadian diplomacy’s relationship with the decolonizing countries of the Third World, and the role of race, culture, religion, and anti-communism in the making of Canadian foreign policy.*

**Keywords:** Marcel Cadieux, biography, Canada, Vietnam, diplomacy, International Commission for Supervision and Control, Department of External Affairs, Cold War, Vietnam War, Third World, decolonization, communism, race, culture, religion

*Résumé : S’appuyant sur un mémoire inédit de Marcel Cadieux intitulé « Six mois à Hanoi », l’auteur présente la première étude biographique d’un diplomate canadien ayant siégé à la Commission internationale pour la surveillance et le contrôle au Viêt-Nam. Selon lui, l’expérience pionnière de Cadieux durant les premiers mois d’existence de cette commission, en 1954-1955, a façonné ses opinions proaméricaines au sujet de la guerre du Viêt-Nam alors qu’il était sous-secrétaire d’État aux Affaires extérieures, de 1964 à 1970. L’auteur se sert également du mandat de Cadieux à Hanoi comme d’un prisme pour aborder d’anciennes questions de fond ou d’intérêt récent pour les spécialistes canadiens en histoire internationale telles que la culture bureaucratique au ministère des Affaires extérieures, les relations des diplomates canadiens avec les pays du tiers monde en voie de décolonisation, ainsi que le rôle de la race, de la culture, de la religion et de l’anticommunisme dans l’élaboration de la politique étrangère du Canada.*

**Mots clés :** Marcel Cadieux, biographie, Canada, Viêt-Nam, diplomatie, Commission internationale pour la surveillance et le contrôle au Viêt-Nam, ministère des Affaires extérieures, Guerre froide, guerre du Viêt-Nam, tiers monde, décolonisation, communisme, race, culture, religion

In December 1973, nine months after the United States had withdrawn its last combat troops from South Vietnam, columnist W.A. Wilson of the *Montreal Star* observed, "Today the occasional all-out Canadian defender of the American involvement in Vietnam sounds almost Neanderthal, yet the government's files still contain the memoranda written by Marcel Cadieux, now Canadian ambassador in Washington but then under-secretary of state for external affairs, warmly defending the American position."<sup>1</sup> As under-secretary between 1964 and 1970, Cadieux laboured behind the scenes to discourage the Canadian government from bowing to popular and political pressure to condemn American military involvement in Vietnam. He counselled discretion for three main reasons. First, he was convinced that public criticism of us policy, far from altering it, would only damage Canadian-American relations. Second, he wanted Canada to voice its concerns privately to the United States through "quiet diplomacy," a prudent but increasingly maligned approach in the tumultuous 1960s. Third, he was among the estimated 23 per cent of Canadian diplomats who by 1965 had served on the Canadian delegation to the International Commission for Supervision and Control (almost always abbreviated as ICC) in Vietnam, a tripartite body active from 1954 to 1973 whose original purpose was to supervise the Geneva Accords that ended the First Indochina War (1946–54).<sup>2</sup> Most of these officers had returned to Ottawa critical of North Vietnam and sympathetic to American efforts to bolster the South. While this response is known, less familiar is how the individual experiences of these diplomats during their time in Vietnam shaped their views. Drawing upon an unpublished memoir by Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," this article examines how Cadieux's tenure on the commission during its crucial first months (August 1954 to February 1955) shaped the under-secretary's sympathies toward us

1 W.A. Wilson, "Government Still Hesitant: Timidity in US Relations," *Montreal Star*, 28 December 1973, A-7.

2 The 23 per cent statistic is from W.T. Delworth, "Vietnam Commission: Canadian Foreign Service Personnel Commitment," 30 August 1965, Records of the Department of External Affairs (RG 25), file 21-13-VIET-ICSC-2, pt.1, vol. 10122, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

policy in Vietnam during the war's most critical years.<sup>3</sup> This article does not engage in the debate over whether Canada's actions on the ICC made it "complicit" in America's war, an interpretation that has largely been rejected in favour of more nuanced understandings.<sup>4</sup> Instead, it offers the first biographical study of a Canadian diplomat

- 3 Marcel Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," Marcel Cadieux Fonds (MC), file 8, vol. 12, LAC. Most of the existing literature on Cadieux focuses on his role in the Canada-Quebec-France triangle of the 1960s or on his difficult relationship with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. See the chapter on Cadieux in J.F. Boshier, *The Gaullist Attack on Canada, 1967–1997* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 87–104; Robin Gendron, "Advancing the National Interest: Marcel Cadieux, Jules Léger, and Canadian Participation in the Franco-phone Community, 1964–1972," in *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909–2009*, edited by Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 121–35; Brendan Kelly, "The Politician and the Civil Servant: Pierre Trudeau, Marcel Cadieux, and the Department of External Affairs, 1968–1970," *International Journal* 72, no. 1 (2017): 5–27. The best general study of Cadieux's career is Robert Bothwell, "Marcel Cadieux: The Ultimate Professional," in *Architects and Innovators: Building the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909–2009*, edited by Greg Donaghy and Kim Richard Nossal (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 207–22, although it refers only in passing to how Cadieux's time in Hanoi shaped his views on the Vietnam War. While Cadieux's pro-us sympathies on the Vietnam War as under-secretary are referred to in Greg Donaghy, *Grit: The Life and Politics of Paul Martin Sr.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), their origins are not explored.
- 4 The "complicity thesis" was advanced in three main works: Charles Taylor, *Snow Job: Canada, the United States and Vietnam (1954 to 1973)* (Toronto: Anansi, 1974); James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, vol. 5: *Indochina: Roots of Complicity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Victor Levant, *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1986). This view was directly challenged by Douglas Ross, who argued that Canada used its position on the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICC) not to aid and abet us policy in Vietnam but, rather, to try to moderate it. See Douglas A. Ross, *In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam, 1954–1973* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). While also clearly rejecting the complicity thesis, Ramesh Thakur emphasizes the importance that Canada attached to good Canadian-American relations when it came to Vietnam. See Ramesh Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland, and the International Commission* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984). Subsequent histories of Canada's role on the ICC have generally discarded the complicity thesis in favour of more complex interpretations of Canadian policy that stress both Canada's undeniable support for the United States-led Western alliance as well as genuine interest in preventing a wider war in Vietnam. See John Hilliker and Donald Barry, "Uncomfortably in the Middle: The Department of External Affairs and Canada's Involvement in the International Control Commissions in Vietnam, 1954–73," in *Creating the Peaceable Kingdom and Other Essays on*

on the commission.<sup>5</sup> While the question of an individual's influence over government policy is central to political biography, the most effective biographies, political or otherwise, transcend their subjects to tell a larger story about the times in which their subjects lived. As American historian David Nasaw argues, "Historians are not interested in simply charting the course of individual lives, but in examining those lives in a dialectical relationship to the multiple social, political, and cultural worlds they inhabit and give meaning to."<sup>6</sup> Adele Perry and Brian Lewis have convincingly called the "biographical (re)turn" in history "contextualized biography" and see it as an "entry-point to a study of a broader world."<sup>7</sup> This is especially true of the biographies of diplomats who, by the very nature of their work, straddle national and transnational environments and thus offer insights into both their country of origin and the wider world. Therefore, in addition to analyzing Cadieux's personal experience in Hanoi, this article also considers what his gaze reveals about larger issues of both long-standing and more recent interest to Canadian international historians, including the bureaucratic culture of the Department of External Affairs (DEA), Canadian diplomacy's relationship with the world beyond the familiar confines of the North Atlantic (specifically the decolonizing countries of the Third World), and the role of race, culture, religion, and anti-communism in the making of Canadian foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

*Canada*, edited by Victor Howard (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 167–95; Robert Bothwell "The Further Shore: Canada and Vietnam," *International Journal* 56, no. 1 (2000–1): 89–114; Andrew Preston, "Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961–1965," *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 1 (2003): 73–111.

- 5 A handful of Canadian diplomats who served on the ICC, which included separate commissions in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, have published their reminiscences in Arthur E. Blanchette, ed., *Canadian Peacekeepers in Indochina 1954–1973: Recollections* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 2002). These autobiographical accounts were written mostly after the fact, and none of them covers the crucial 1954–5 period in Vietnam, the subject of this article.
- 6 David Nasaw, "AHR Roundtable Historians and Biography: Introduction," *American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (2009): 574.
- 7 Adele Perry and Brian Lewis, "Introductory Remarks: Special Issue on 'The Biographical (Re)Turn,'" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 21, no. 2 (2010): 3.
- 8 In what represents a shift in emphasis from the hitherto strong historiographical focus on Canada's place in the North Atlantic world, especially *vis-à-vis* Britain and the United States, a number of new works examine Canadian relations with other regions and nations. This broadening of the traditional geographic scope of Canadian international history has, in turn, facilitated greater engagement

At eleven chapters and nearly 160 pages, “Six mois à Hanoi” is the most comprehensive and revealing first-hand account by any Canadian diplomat to serve on the ICC.<sup>9</sup> Likely written in 1955 during the month Cadieux spent convalescing in Montreal following his return from Vietnam, the memoir has immediacy. It also highlights the importance of using (generally overlooked) French-language material to study Canadian diplomacy. But the account is not without its limitations. Since Cadieux spent most of his time in North Vietnam, he has comparatively little to say about the South, leading to a somewhat skewed picture of the situation prevailing in the divided country. More problematically, since it is the work of a single person, one might be tempted to attach less significance to “Six mois à Hanoi.” Yet Cadieux was the most important of the first wave of Canadian diplomats to serve in Vietnam.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, his opinions, as his frequent use

with the “new diplomatic history,” which originated in the United States in the 1980s and which is interested in how such factors as race, culture, and religion have influenced international relations. For works on Canada and the non-Western world that integrate one or more of these elements into their analysis, see, for example, John D. Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun: Canada Encounters Japan, 1929–41* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Patricia Roy and Greg Donaghy, eds., *Contradictory Impulses: Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Kevin A. Spooner, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960–64* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); John Price, *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Ryan M. Touhey, *Conflicting Visions: Canada and India in the Cold War World, 1946–76* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015); Laura Madokoro, Francine McKenzie, and David Meren, eds., *Dominion of Race: Rethinking Canada’s International History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017). In addition to often shedding new light on the bureaucratic culture of the Department of External Affairs (DEA) and the anti-communist underpinnings of Canadian foreign policy during the Cold War, the increased attention given to non-Western parts of the globe has also enhanced our understanding of Canada’s response to decolonization. See, for example, David Webster, *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009). For a discussion of these and other recent Canadian works that engage with the new diplomatic history, see David Meren, “The Tragedies of Canadian International History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (2015): 561–6.

- 9 The only previous uses made of “Six mois à Hanoi,” which did not become available for public consultation at Library and Archives Canada until 2008, seem to have been brief references in Ryan M. Touhey, “Dealing in Black and White: The Diefenbaker Government and the Cold War in South Asia 1957–1963,” *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (2011): 435; Touhey, *Conflicting Visions*, 95.
- 10 While R.M. Macdonnell, an assistant under-secretary in the DEA (and, thus, more senior than Cadieux), served as Canadian acting commissioner on the ICC in Vietnam, he departed the country early in the autumn of 1954.

of the collective personal pronoun “*nous*” makes clear, likely often reflected the viewpoint of the Canadian delegation as a whole. Returning to Ottawa, Cadieux became an iconic figure in the DEA, playing a major role first as assistant under-secretary and legal adviser (1956–60), then as deputy under-secretary (1960–4), and, finally, as under-secretary. To many young francophone officers struggling to succeed in Canada’s unilingual civil service, he was undoubtedly a role model. Finally, in writing “*Six mois à Hanoi*,” Cadieux, who had already published books on the life of a Canadian diplomat, was operating within an age-old, multinational tradition of diplomatic memoir and diary, one practised in Canada by eminent figures such as Douglas LePan, Escott Reid, Charles Ritchie, and Allan Gotlieb.<sup>11</sup> When candid and engaging, as “*Six mois à Hanoi*” is, such sources richly complement the dry official telegrams, dispatches, and memoranda that form the usual grist to the diplomatic historian’s mill. Yet Cadieux’s manuscript never received the attention it deserved, the author having died shortly after he retired. Given its polished prose and striking observations, had the document made its way into print, it likely would have been heralded as one of the most important Canadian diplomatic memoirs.

A francophone from Montreal, Marcel Cadieux (1915–81) joined the DEA in 1941. Posted first to London and then to Brussels, he witnessed the end of the Second World War and the start of European reconstruction. By the time he returned to Canada in 1947, the Cold War was underway. As a devout Roman Catholic from conservative Quebec, where church authorities often equated communism with the anti-christ, Cadieux was passionately anti-communist. Unsurprisingly,

11 See Douglas LePan, *Bright Glass of Memory: A Set of Four Memoirs* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979); Escott Reid, *Radical Mandarin: The Memoirs of Escott Reid* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Charles Ritchie, *The Siren Years: Undiplomatic Diaries, 1937–1945* (London: Macmillan, 1974); Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1946–1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981); Charles Ritchie, *Storm Signals: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1962–1971* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1983); Allan Gotlieb, *The Washington Diaries, 1981–1989* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006). For Cadieux’s books on Canadian diplomatic life, see Marcel Cadieux, *Le Ministère des Affaires Extérieures: Conseils aux étudiants qui se destinent à la carrière* (Montréal: Éditions Variétés, 1949); Marcel Cadieux, *Premières Armes* (Ottawa: Le Cercle du livre de France, 1951); Marcel Cadieux, *Embruns* (Ottawa: Le Cercle du livre de France, 1951). Regrettably, few women, marginalized in the DEA for much of the Cold War, have written their memoirs. For their often-neglected contribution to Canadian diplomacy, see Margaret K. Weiers, *Envoys Extraordinary: Women of the Canadian Foreign Service* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1995).

many others in the DEA shared these views, given that Canada was a liberal democracy with close (and growing) ties to its neighbour, the United States, the undisputed leader of the emerging Western alliance.<sup>12</sup> Also deeply committed to President Harry Truman's "containment" of communism, the Canadian government and the DEA played a key role in the 1949 formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). After serving as the DEA's personnel officer until 1951, Cadieux spent three years at NATO headquarters in Paris, an assignment that further bolstered his anti-communist outlook. As he recalled, his views on the world situation at the time were widely shared, from his colleagues on Canada's NATO delegation to the broader Canadian public: "Avec la délégation, avec le Gouvernement, avec le pays dans son ensemble j'avais certaines opinions au sujet de la meilleure façon de faire face au péril communiste."<sup>13</sup>

Cadieux was in France in May 1954 when its forces were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, in northwestern Vietnam. From the late nineteenth century, Indochina – whose component countries included Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia – had been the jewel of the French empire. During the Second World War, however, French supremacy over the region was challenged by Japanese occupation and, more importantly in the long term, by the formation of the Viet Minh, a communist-nationalist coalition committed to Vietnamese independence. In September 1945, its leader, Ho Chi Minh, quoting from the US Declaration of Independence, proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Meanwhile, the French Far East Expeditionary Corps, made up of French, colonial, and local troops, sought to re-establish French control over Indochina. When the People's Republic of China, founded in 1949 and whose territory straddled the northern border of Indochina, began supplying its fellow communists in Vietnam with increasing military and financial aid, the United States did the same for French forces. If the Korean War (1950–3) dramatized the extension of the Cold War to Asia, the First Indochina War captured the degree to which worldwide opposition to communism was sometimes bound up in Western projects of empire and Third World struggles for decolonization. Dien Bien Phu, Cadieux recalled, shook France to the core: "Je me souviens qu'à Paris, la ville en a ressenti comme un choc. Les inconnus se parlent dans la rue, les gens se rendent à l'Etoile [now

12 On Canadian international relations in this period, see Greg Donaghy, ed., *Canada and the Early Cold War, 1943–1957* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1998).

13 Marcel Cadieux, Diary, 8 January 1974, file 6, vol. 13, MC, IAC.

Place Charles de Gaulle], se cherchent pour affirmer leur solidarité dans la grande épreuve qui secoue le pays.”<sup>14</sup> The loss signalled the end of the French empire.

Defeated in Vietnam, France signed the Geneva Accords with the DRV in July 1954, capping a nearly three-month international conference on the aftermath of the Korean War and the situation in Indochina. As one of the belligerents in Korea, Canada was represented in Geneva by a delegation led by Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson, but it left when the discussion turned to Indochina, believing it had no role to play in that matter. The Geneva Accords mandated a ceasefire in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Vietnam, in particular, was temporarily divided along the seventeenth parallel pending nationwide reunification elections – elections that, according to the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference, were to be held in July 1956. The accords specified that France and the DRV were to withdraw their forces from the North and South respectively, no new military equipment was to enter Vietnam, no foreign military alliances or bases were to be established, no reprisals were to be exacted against people or groups in either zone, democratic liberties were to be guaranteed, and Vietnamese civilians were to be free to move either north or south of the seventeenth parallel during the maximum 300 days scheduled for the military withdrawals. To “supervise” and “control” the execution of the Geneva ceasefire, an international commission (the ICC) was established in Vietnam (with separate ones in Laos and Cambodia) that was endowed with both fixed and mobile “inspection” teams. Finally, three very different countries were chosen to serve on the ICC: Poland would represent the communist bloc, India (the chair) the neutral nations, and Canada the Western alliance. The United States, irked by Canada’s independent stand during inter-allied discussions in Geneva on the thorny question of the machinery needed to ensure free elections in Korea, preferred Belgium, but Belgium was a colonial power and thus unacceptable to India and China.<sup>15</sup> In the event, neither the United States nor the southern State of Vietnam, each suspecting that Ho Chi Minh would likely win the promised Vietnamese elections, endorsed the Geneva Accords.<sup>16</sup>

14 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 128.

15 Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945–1984* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 197.

16 The Geneva Accords have largely been reproduced in Marvin E. Gittleman et al., eds., *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 70–7.



When Cadieux returned to Canada in July 1954, the DEA was in administrative turmoil. The Canadian government had accepted the invitation to serve on the ICC reluctantly, knowing full well the challenges such involvement posed, but it also recognized the need to preserve the fragile peace in Indochina.<sup>17</sup> In August, Cadieux learned that he was being posted to Hanoi, the ICC's headquarters in Vietnam, to serve as chief political adviser to the Canadian commissioner. For Cadieux, as for most Canadians in 1954, Asia was foreign territory. Notwithstanding the recent Chinese revolution and Korean War, the region remained mysterious and a little ominous, pushing Cadieux to fall back on cultural and racial stereotypes: jungles, straw huts, and inscrutable faces. Indochina, for Canadian diplomats, was "un pays inconnu"; they knew little about such basic aspects there as accommodation, the clothes required, or the living conditions.<sup>18</sup> As a colleague who had just been sent to Paris recalled, since there was no good map of Indochina in Ottawa at the time of the Geneva Conference, his first assignment was to purchase one from the French and mail it home.<sup>19</sup> These details capture the Eurocentric culture of the department, from Pearson down to its predominantly white and Anglo officers. Their "mental maps," to use historian David Webster's term for the racialized ways in which Canadian policy-makers pictured and tried to understand a complex world spatially, placed the comfortable milieu of the West, especially the North Atlantic triangle of Canada, the United States, and Britain, at the centre.<sup>20</sup> Despite representing over half of the world's population, Asia was consigned to the periphery. Of the approximately sixty diplomatic and consular posts Canada operated abroad in 1954, only a handful were in Asia.<sup>21</sup> Watching his parents from the window of his plane at Dorval airport, Cadieux, who had recently recovered from an inoculations-induced fever, only to be diagnosed with pre-diabetes serious enough that he was almost forced

17 John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs*, vol. 2: *Coming of Age, 1946–1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 115–16.

18 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 3–4.

19 Peter Stursberg, *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1980), 125n3.

20 Webster, *Fire and the Full Moon*, 7. See also David Webster, "'Red Indians' in Geneva, 'Papuan Headhunters' in New York: Race, Mental Maps, and Two Global Appeals in the 1920s and 1960s," in Madokoro, McKenzie, and Meren, *Dominion of Race*, 254–83.

21 *Report of the Department of External Affairs 1954* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954), 40–1.

to stay home, wondered if he would ever return.<sup>22</sup> His mood captured how forbidding Asia, and especially Southeast Asia, seemed to the average Canadian diplomat of this period. That part of the world was still, as Cadieux sometimes called it, the “Orient.”

In hindsight, one wonders why Cadieux was sent to Asia, especially since the DEA’s ranks included several “mish kids” born to missionary parents in China, who thus knew the region far better than he.<sup>23</sup> In 1954, however, such officials were already appointed to other important assignments: Chester Ronning, who had previously suggested hiring officers of “non-Caucasian origin” to staff posts in Asia, had just been made head of mission in Norway (he was of Norwegian ancestry), though this appointment did not prevent him from attending the Geneva conference as a member of the Canadian delegation;<sup>24</sup> Herbert Norman, dogged by US charges of communism, was Canadian high commissioner to New Zealand; Arthur Menzies, recently returned from Japan, was the head of the DEA’s Far Eastern Division; and Ralph Collins was in the middle of a posting to England. There were also good reasons for sending Cadieux to Vietnam. By 1954, he was one of the department’s rising stars, an assistant under-secretary in waiting, but he needed to broaden his experience in the field. Moreover, as a francophone, he would have no trouble speaking to either the French or the French-educated Vietnamese elite in Hanoi. Finally, he was still a bachelor, making it easier for the DEA to post him to an unfamiliar locale than a married officer, particularly one with a family.<sup>25</sup>

Cadieux’s itinerary reinforced the impression that he was travelling to the “antipodes.” From Montreal, he flew to London, from London to Rome, from Rome to Beirut, from Beirut to Bahrain, from Bahrain to Karachi, from Karachi to New Delhi, from New Delhi to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Saigon, and, finally, from Saigon to Hanoi. The farther

22 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 6.

23 On the “mish kids,” see Alwyn Austin, “Missionaries, Scholars, and Diplomats: China Missions and Canadian Public Life,” in *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Marguerite Van Die (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 130–52.

24 On Ronning’s “non-Caucasian origin” suggestion, see Hilliker and Barry, *Coming of Age*, 58.

25 As Canadian diplomat (and future DEA under-secretary) J.H. Taylor, who served in Vietnam in 1955–6, recalled, “From the moment the Canadian government agreed in 1954 to serve on the three International Commissions for Supervision and Control in Indochina . . . every young and healthy bachelor in the Department of External Affairs knew his days were numbered . . . especially if he spoke French.” See J.H. Taylor, “Vietnam: A Year with Uncle Ho, July 1955–July 1956,” in Blanchette, *Canadian Peacekeepers in Indochina*, 15.

Cadieux moved from Europe's familiar sights, the more disoriented he became. In Bahrain, for instance, the air seemed to come out of an oven. From his hotel room in Calcutta, he heard a strange music that brought to mind that of a snake charmer, the epitome of the exotic in Western cultural representations of Asia.<sup>26</sup> The next morning, Cadieux was shocked to find the sidewalk in front of his hotel and the surrounding streets blocked with the still-sleeping homeless. Everywhere he looked in Calcutta, he saw congestion and decay, an unimaginable "spectacle de misère" that beggared belief. Like other Canadian diplomats who had never been posted anywhere but the West, Cadieux was forced to confront certain grim Third World realities: "Je n'aurais pas cru qu'en certains coins du monde il fût possible de vivre dans un dénuement aussi général et, semble-t-il, aussi absolu."<sup>27</sup> His colleague Douglas LePan, who in 1950 had accompanied Pearson to the Conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and then on a visit to New Delhi, recalled, "Nothing had prepared me for the desperate poverty of Asia, the sight and smell and endlessness of it."<sup>28</sup> Cadieux felt more at home with Saigon's French façade, which created a first impression of order and efficiency, but he compared rue Catinat, a main thoroughfare swarming with people, to a crushed anthill.<sup>29</sup> He was not the first to resort to insect imagery when experiencing the culture shock of Asia's teeming populations. During the Second World War, American soldiers in the Pacific theatre had done much the same.<sup>30</sup>

In August 1954, Hanoi was still under French occupation, but its handover to the Viet Minh camped in the nearby countryside was officially scheduled for 10 October. In the meantime, the ICC played a constructive early role in facilitating negotiations between the two sides over the exchange of prisoners of war and the transfer of civil administration in Hanoi. Like Saigon, Hanoi, the capital of French Indochina, was modern and unmistakably French. As the Eurocentric Cadieux noted, "La France a donné à ce coin perdu une physionomie claire et équilibrée." Having expected what he called "une architecture de pagode," he was agreeably surprised by the city's chic Parisian

26 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 6–13. Significantly, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which so influentially analyzed Western depictions of the East, featured on its cover French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1880 painting *The Snake Charmer*.

27 *Ibid.*, 13–4.

28 LePan, *Bright Glass of Memory*, 147.

29 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 14–5.

30 Peter Schrijvers, *The GI War against Japan: American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 137.

suburban look.<sup>31</sup> His comments on Hanoi's French allure were not uncommon. According to one historian of postcolonial Vietnam, "Echoing the attitudes of other colonial powers, French scholars and administrators admired the way that the city came to reflect the urban aesthetics of modern France."<sup>32</sup> To Cadieux, Hanoi's train station, opera house, apartment blocks, and many book stores and terrace cafés all testified to over seventy years of French rule and influence, an achievement he feared would crumble with the forced withdrawal of "l'âme française" animating it.<sup>33</sup> He and other Western diplomats perhaps failed to appreciate the juxtaposition in Hanoi between French culture and the city's more popular, distinctly Vietnamese forms.

Travelling to Southeast Asia, Cadieux had hoped to see new landscapes and architecture, but the Viet Minh were so strict where the movement of ICC personnel was concerned, the tropical heat so great, and the work on the commission so demanding that he experienced little of Vietnam outside of Hanoi. It may have been for the best. As Cadieux himself admitted, since he did not know the local language or culture, his surroundings did not impress him. Possibly because he was such a devout Catholic, Cadieux felt uneasy in Buddhist pagodas with their different smells and textures. Nor did he enjoy visiting temples: "Il me semblait que j'observais les marques d'une culture incompréhensible et décadente."<sup>34</sup> This dismissive statement betrayed a racialized sense of Western cultural superiority, one that predisposed Cadieux and likeminded colleagues to look more kindly on both the French presence in Vietnam and its Westernizing impulses. That said, Cadieux was not an uncritical observer. While he admired the prosperous and modern nature of Vietnam's cities, he speculated that France had built up a structure, including banks, airports, and railways, that favoured its own nationals. "Intellectuellement et moralement," he opined, "la France a perdu contact avec les Vietnamiens[.]"<sup>35</sup>

As Hanoi's transfer to communist hands drew near, the tension was palpable. Signs of the French evacuation were manifest: soldiers were leaving, shops closing, goods loaded up, and the sky filled with arriving and departing planes. One week before the handover, an evening curfew was imposed. Two days before it occurred, residents

31 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 17.

32 Patricia M. Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam: New Histories of the National Past* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 220.

33 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 21.

34 *Ibid.*, 157–8.

35 *Ibid.*, 136.

were ordered to stay at home. Hanoi's once-busy streets were now completely deserted. Everyone, except for the rats that rummaged insouciantly through the uncollected garbage, seemed to be awaiting the Viet Minh.<sup>36</sup>

On the day of Hanoi's transfer, which took place sector by sector, crowds flooded into the streets to greet the triumphant People's Army of Vietnam. The city was suddenly resplendent in gold and crimson, with Viet Minh flags and banners flying from almost every building. "Une telle floraison," Cadieux noted cynically, "suppose quelques préparatifs." The crowds cheered with an enthusiasm that seemed genuine, but when Cadieux studied various demonstrators, he noticed that their frozen smiles soon faded and their clapping trailed off.<sup>37</sup> His impressions of the arrival of the Viet Minh were echoed by the US consul general in Hanoi, who observed that the "enthusiastic popular participation" was informed by a "high degree of organization and direction." The People's Army had been given a "warm welcome," but "'cheer leaders' or agitators in [its] ranks and among [the] spectators [had] kept [the] applause and cheers going."<sup>38</sup> To Western observers, such stage management was typical of communist regimes. Cadieux and the other Canadians felt distinctly uneasy: "Les Français, nos alliés, nos amis, sont partis. Même comme membres neutres de la Commission, nous sommes un peu inquiets de nous trouver maintenant entre les mains du nouveau régime que nous ne connaissons pas et qui a combattu la France si tenacement, si cruellement."<sup>39</sup> Canadian diplomacy's attitude toward Vietnam was heavily influenced by Western solidarity, on the one hand, and disquiet over the Third World's often violent anti-colonial struggles, on the other. France was one of Canada's two "mother countries," a nation Canadians had either defended or liberated during two world wars and a key ally in the Cold War. As a good Western ally in its own right, but one that also believed itself untainted by colonialism, Canada hoped that decolonization in Asia (a phenomenon made all the more explosive by questions of race) would proceed peacefully through the gradual transfer of power to moderate nationalists – by evolution rather

36 Ibid., 20–1, 30.

37 Ibid., 33–4.

38 [Thomas J.] Corcoran [to the Department of State], 10 October 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952–1954*, vol. 13: *Indochina*, part 2 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1982), 2128; Corcoran to the Department of State, 11 October 1954, *FRUS, 1952–1954*, vol. 13: *Indochina*, part 2 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1982), 2132.

39 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 36.

than revolution, not unlike its own path to independence.<sup>40</sup> But, in Vietnam, such dreams were dashed by French obstinacy and Viet Minh determination.

With the Viet Minh's arrival, the atmosphere in Hanoi changed radically. Restaurants and cafés were closed. Bamboo arches bearing political inscriptions and slogans were installed. Loudspeakers broadcast propaganda. Soldiers drilled right under Cadieux's window. Party meetings were ubiquitous. "Alors que les observateurs attendent des Viet Minh l'affirmation du caractère régional de leur mouvement," Cadieux remarked, "ils ne peuvent que reconnaître l'aspect standardisé du communisme de partout."<sup>41</sup> Soldiers, patrols, and sentries were everywhere in the otherwise empty streets at night. During the day, citizens hurried to and fro with the same vacant expressions that Cadieux had noticed on the faces of people in Poland and Czechoslovakia during his brief trip behind the Iron Curtain in 1950: "Le régime étend son emprise et s'assure aussi la domination des pensées, des joies, de la vie entière de la population."<sup>42</sup> To most Canadian diplomats in this period, communists throughout the world were essentially the same. Thus, Cadieux often referred to the Viet Minh simply as "les communistes." In the words of another senior officer, "When I came to Indo-China . . . I wondered from the books I read if North Viet-nam was not more nationalist than anything else. Three days in Hanoi have convinced me that they are not less Communist than in Moscow or Peking. They have learned fast."<sup>43</sup> While the world's communist regimes were similar in many respects, by focusing on what Cadieux called "le communisme de partout," Canadian diplomats tended to downplay the key regional differences between North Vietnam and the other communist powers, pre-eminent among them Vietnam's long history of foreign domination, an experience that gave Vietnamese communism its distinctive nationalistic cast. For Cadieux, however, communism was communism.

Nowhere was the totalitarian side of that system more evident to him than in the problems arising from the issue of freedom of movement in Vietnam. Article 14(d) of the Geneva Accords stipulated that

40 On this point, see David Webster, "Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, and Decolonization," in *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, edited by Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 155–92.

41 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 39.

42 Ibid., 120. For Cadieux's impressions of Poland and Czechoslovakia, see Cadieux, *Embruns*, 73–104.

43 Léon Mayrand, quoted in Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, 141.

“any civilians residing in a district controlled by one party who wish to go and live in the zone assigned to the other party shall be permitted and helped to do so by the authorities in that district,” but it proved unenforceable. As acting commissioner of the Canadian delegation to the ICC and then as deputy to Canadian Commissioner Sherwood Lett, Cadieux ultimately saw that the Viet Minh, who devised an inefficient and arbitrary exit permit system and resisted publicizing the rights of civilians, were preventing people from leaving the North: “Dès les premiers jours, il nous revient de tous les côtés que le système établi par l’Accord de Genève ne tourne pas rond au Tonkin.”<sup>44</sup> As political scientist Douglas A. Ross has observed of the freedom of movement issue, “No other aspect of the Vietnam situation caused such serious anxiety for the Canadians or raised such disturbing, ambiguous, and finally insoluble moral difficulties.”<sup>45</sup>

At the heart of the mobility problem was religion. Freedom of movement was crucial to North Vietnam’s Catholic population, a minority group dating from the European missionary activities of the sixteenth century who were concentrated in certain key areas. Their leaders, who had generally supported the French, remained stoutly opposed to communism. An important source of Western information about civilian difficulties were Canadian Redemptorist priests, a congregation of the Catholic Church that had been active in Vietnam since 1925.<sup>46</sup> Cadieux was almost certainly already familiar with their work. French-Canadian missionary activity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America was widely publicized back home, whether through the writings or speaking tours of the missionaries themselves or through the various youth movements, organizations, and events that supported their efforts. In the 1930s, *Le Devoir* (which Cadieux read avidly while a student at the Université de Montréal) had devoted a regular page to missionary endeavours.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the Redemptorists were well known among French Canadians as the guardians of the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, one of the oldest pilgrimage sites in North

44 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 43–4.

45 Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, 94.

46 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 43. On the Canadian Redemptorists in Vietnam, see Éric Vincent, “La mission des Rédemptoristes canadiens-français au Vietnam entre 1925 et 1975” (MA thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2012).

47 Sean Mills, *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 54–5. Cadieux himself was even familiar with the activities of such non-French-Canadian missionaries as the French White Fathers of Africa, whose periodical *Grands Lacs* he knew. See Cadieux, *Premières Armes*, 141.

America. Nor should it be forgotten that, for much of the first half of the twentieth century, missionaries like the Redemptorists were almost the only Canadian presence in the non-Western world. Immersed as they were in local languages and cultures, these non-state actors had great influence upon Canadian diplomats who were new to Asia. Indeed, one of the first things Cadieux did after arriving in Hanoi was to visit a Redemptorist mission in the area. It proved a homecoming of sorts: “Quelle surprise, si loin du Canada, de pouvoir causer à cœur ouvert avec des compatriotes et d’apercevoir dans le hall d’entrée, par exemple, des photos de l’Oratoire St-Joseph.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, when the Redemptorists and other Catholic priests sounded the alarm about North Vietnamese restrictions on freedom of movement, Cadieux reacted.

The plight of North Vietnam’s Catholics not only evoked sympathy from Canadian officials, most of whom, like Cadieux, were Christian, but also from Western civil society, more religious then than today. As one historian has noted, “Newspapers, nongovernmental groups, and religious charities on both sides of the Atlantic worked hard to draw attention and money to the refugees’ plight.”<sup>49</sup> But what made religion such a potent force was its central place in the Cold War, which was seen by many at the time, in the words of another scholar, as “a global conflict between the god-fearing and the godless.”<sup>50</sup> Since religious freedom was constrained wherever communism held sway, including in North Vietnam, it was easy to view the situation there as part of the larger struggle between freedom and tyranny – indeed, between good and evil. Revealingly, Thomas A. Dooley, a US Navy doctor and devout Catholic serving in the northern city of Haiphong (still under French control and where French and US ships were waiting to transport refugees to South Vietnam), invoked the Lord’s Prayer when he entitled his best-selling memoir of the evacuation *Deliver Us from Evil* (1956).<sup>51</sup> For many Westerners both inside and outside

48 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 22.

49 Kathryn C. Statler, *Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 149.

50 Dianne Kirby, “Religion and the Cold War: An Introduction,” in *Religion and the Cold War*, edited by Dianne Kirby (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.

51 Thomas A. Dooley, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Story of Viet Nam’s Flight to Freedom* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956). While the most evocative part of Dooley’s memoir was undoubtedly his description of the atrocities he claimed the Viet Minh had inflicted on North Vietnamese Catholics, the lack of corroborating evidence has led scholars to conclude that he largely fabricated such tales for propaganda purposes.



of Vietnam at the time, the issue of freedom of movement in North Vietnam brought to the fore powerful humanitarian, religious, and ideological concerns.

Three events convinced the Catholic Cadieux that North Vietnam's approach to freedom of movement was a sham. The first was the visit in October of an ICC mobile team to Nam Dinh, a Catholic stronghold on the Gulf of Tonkin coast where the population was supposedly being prevented from leaving. Once on site, however, the ICC's investigators were mobbed by crowds protesting alleged French atrocities. The team returned to Hanoi with some 2,000 anti-French petitions.<sup>52</sup> When Acting Commissioner Cadieux reported to Ottawa that no one in Nam Dinh seemed to want to go south, he raised the possibility of Viet Minh interference.<sup>53</sup> That said, there was initially no hard evidence of communist wrongdoing. By November, however, Cadieux was sure something underhanded had occurred at Nam Dinh: while nobody in the area had expressed the slightest interest in moving to the ICC's mobile team, its fixed team at Haiphong reported that, during the same period, several thousand refugees from the Nam Dinh area had reached the city, many of them accusing the North Vietnamese authorities of having tried to block their exit.<sup>54</sup>

The second episode that exhibited what Cadieux later termed the "mauvaise foi" of the communists was the ICC investigation in early November of Phat Diem, another Catholic enclave near the coast where a reported 10,000 people wished to go south. Upon their arrival, however, ICC personnel were once again surrounded by a howling mob. No contact could be made with the Catholics, many of whom had taken refuge in and around Phat Diem Cathedral, where supplies were running low. After protracted discussions in Hanoi, the commission split its team in two so that it could both collect petitions and pursue its investigation. More problems developed, with the local authorities accusing the Catholic clergy of trying to embarrass the government. Under Canadian pressure, the ICC dispatched a group

52 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 52.

53 Marcel Cadieux to Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA), "Freedom of Movement in North Vietnam: Catholic Population," 19 October 1954, file 50052-A-40 pt. 4, vol. 4629, RG 25, LAC. This tentative conclusion was later phrased and developed with absolute certainty in Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 52-3.

54 Marcel Cadieux to Sherwood Lett, "Memorandum for the Commissioner: Reports from the Mobile Team which carried out an Investigation in the Nam Dinh area," 11 November 1954, file 5, vol. 3070, RG 25, LAC. See also Sherwood Lett to SSEA, "Weekly Progress Report for Vietnam," 12 November 1954, file 50052-A-40 pt. 5, vol. 4630, RG 25, LAC.

of senior political advisers to Phat Diem to assess the situation. They discovered that there were, in fact, thousands of people who wanted to leave, their provisions dangerously low. Visa and evacuation facilities had proven totally inadequate. Forced against their will to transport nearly 8,000 people from Phat Diem to Haiphong, the Viet Minh tried to save face by boasting that the South Vietnamese government could learn a thing or two from them about honouring the Geneva Accords.<sup>55</sup> For the Canadian delegation to the ICC, however, the “Phat Diem operation” was one of its crowning achievements.<sup>56</sup>

Such triumphs were rare. More often than not, ICC investigations into alleged North Vietnamese violations of freedom of movement met with frustration. On one occasion, for example, the French reported that “thousands” of refugees had assembled on a sand island at the mouth of the Tra Ly River.<sup>57</sup> Alerting authorities that high tide was expected in forty-eight hours, imperilling the refugees, the French asked for permission to enter DRV territorial waters and rescue them. The Viet Minh refused. The ICC sent a mobile team there, but repeated delays by the Viet Minh, whose cooperation was needed to reach the site, prevented the team from arriving at the island for several days. Once there it found no sign of life. Perhaps, Cadieux conceded, the island had never been occupied, or perhaps its alleged occupants had returned to dry land, or perhaps the French had simply exploited the incident for propaganda purposes. “Il n’en reste pas moins,” he insisted, “que la Commission a été effectivement empêchée d’aller là où elle voulait être, au moment décisif.”<sup>58</sup> Is it any surprise that, as political scientist Ramesh Thakur notes, freedom of movement in North Vietnam “was probably the single most decisive element in socializing Canadian officials [on the ICC] into a lasting posture of determined anti-communism”?<sup>59</sup> According to Ross, “Because the refugee issue engaged the most elemental humanitarian and ideological values of Canadian representatives in Indochina, it had a profound impact on ensuing

55 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 55–59.

56 Sherwood Lett to SSEA, “The Phat Diem Operation,” 2 December 1954, file 50052-A-40 pt. 6, vol 4630, RG 25, LAC.

57 Sherwood Lett to SSEA, “Weekly Progress Report for Vietnam,” 12 November 1954, file 50052-A-40 pt. 5, vol 4630, RG 25, LAC.

58 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 60–3. The recollections of this incident of an unidentified Canadian diplomat on the ICC who was both Catholic and conservative (thus quite possibly Cadieux) are quoted in Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, 111.

59 Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam*, 135.

Canadian bureaucratic perceptions of the nature of the Vietnam conflict and the legitimacy of the eventual American intervention.”<sup>60</sup>

In the end, 850,000 to 900,000 people emigrated from North Vietnam during the 300 days afforded by the Geneva Accords.<sup>61</sup> Most were Catholic, prompting Cadieux to remark that, to leave their homes and to risk their lives, either their faith was very strong or their terror very great.<sup>62</sup> His admiration extended to their priests, especially the Canadian Redemptorists, two of whom, he later told his friend, fellow Catholic and DEA under-secretary Jules Léger (whose brother Paul-Émile was the archbishop of Montreal and a cardinal), were to be esteemed as highly as those famous sons of the Church who had risked their lives to proclaim the Word of God.<sup>63</sup> As Sherwood Lett privately noted of Cadieux as the latter’s tenure on the ICC drew to a close, his religious faith and highly charged temperament made it hard for him to be detached when Catholic interests were at stake: “Mr. Cadieux has been very much upset with things this week. We’ve had another major occasion in which Catholics have been prevented from moving south. He is a very devout Catholic and his sense of frustration on these occasions, when one seems to be so helpless to prevent them, [is such] that he gets terribly wrought up and nervous. I will be most sorry to lose him as he has been a most valued adviser, but for his own sake I am glad he is to be relieved soon. I don’t think his temperament and religious faith would allow him to stand the strain much longer.”<sup>64</sup>

Yet, as we now know, the migration was about more than just religion. According to one scholar, it was a “complex phenomenon involving a multitude of individual, family and community decisions,” choices driven by such diverse factors as “the threat of famine over a disrupted economy, land reform and taxation in Viet Minh areas, experiences of collaboration with the French, the impact of war and the vast effort of propaganda made by all sides in 1954.”<sup>65</sup> Where propaganda was

60 Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, 95.

61 Neil L. Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 232.

62 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 50.

63 Marcel Cadieux, “Note pour le sous-secrétaire : la liberté religieuse dans le Nord Vietnam,” file 21, vol. 36, MC, LAC. Cadieux wanted the DEA to share the substance of a report by Father Thomas Côté on freedom of religion in North Vietnam with Cardinal Léger.

64 Quoted in Reginald H. Roy, *Sherwood Lett: His Life and Times* (Vancouver: UBC Alumni Association, 1991), 149–50.

65 Andrew Hardy, “Internal Transnationalism and the Formation of the Vietnamese Diaspora,” in *State/Nation/Transnation: Perspectives on Transnationalism in the Asia Pacific*, edited by Katie Willis and Brenda S.A. Yeoh (London: Routledge, 2004), 224.

concerned, the Central Intelligence Agency, circulating slogans like “Christ has gone to the South” and “The Virgin Mary has departed from the North,” engaged in a covert campaign to get Catholics to leave, although recent scholarship has queried just how influential that campaign was.<sup>66</sup> As Edward Lansdale, the head of the us propaganda effort, recalled, “People don’t just pull up their roots and transplant themselves because of slogans. They honestly feared what might happen to them, and their emotion was strong enough to overcome their attachment to their land, their homes, and their ancestral graves.”<sup>67</sup>

While Cadieux and other Canadian diplomats had ideological reasons for agreeing with Lansdale that fear drove the migration, their understanding of that migration was admittedly limited. Less so was their growing awareness of Viet Minh obstructionism. How many more civilians might have left North Vietnam if not for the government? While the conduct of the Viet Minh was predictable since the exodus from their regime was an embarrassment, nothing could have prepared Cadieux for the impotence of the ICC in handling it. The commission created at Geneva was a supervisory body with no enforcement powers whose major decisions required unanimity. In August 1954, Lester Pearson had instructed the Canadian delegation to the ICC to approach its work with “objectivity, impartiality and fairness.”<sup>68</sup> But what if India and Poland failed to do the same? By the end of Cadieux’s time on the ICC, he and other Canadian diplomats began to chafe under Pearson’s orders. As one of them complained to Cadieux, it was commendable to be perfectly neutral, but they had to take into account the larger ideological struggle underway and the methods of their counterparts on the commission: “Je suis convaincu que le peuple canadien et les nations du monde libre en général, lorsqu’il s’agira de rendre compte de notre mandat, se foutent joliment du fait que nous sommes demeurés ‘neutres’ s’il apparaît en fait que nous nous sommes fait rouler comme des gogos [suckers].”<sup>69</sup> The Indian and Polish tactics that Cadieux witnessed during the first six months of the ICC’s existence, together with the inevitable Canadian

66 See, for example, Peter Hansen, “Bắc Đì Cú: Catholic Refugees from the North of Vietnam, and Their Role in the Southern Republic, 1954–1959,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4, no. 3 (2009): 173–211; Van Nguyen-Marshall, “Tools of Empire? Vietnamese Catholics in South Vietnam,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 20, no. 2 (2009): 138–59.

67 Quoted in Hansen, “Bắc Đì Cú,” 183.

68 Quoted in Bothwell, “The Further Shore,” 93.

69 Raymond Crépault to Marcel Cadieux, 16 February 1955, file 14, vol. 35, MC, LAC.

reaction, set the tone on the commission for years to come. They also shaped how he and other Canadian diplomats later viewed the Vietnam War.

Although, in a comment that reflected the importance he attached to such factors as religion, culture, and the Third World's attitude to colonialism, Cadieux hoped that India's "hostilité" toward Christianity, Western civilization, and especially the French had not unduly influenced its conduct on the ICC, he had his doubts.<sup>70</sup> Prior to his arrival in Vietnam, he had assumed that Indian and Canadian diplomats, as fellow members of the Commonwealth, would find common ground on the ICC. This assumption was predicated on the belief that a shared language and imperial heritage could transcend differences of race and history. But what came to be called the "new" or "non-white" Commonwealth, including India, viewed British colonialism more critically than did the "old" or "white" Commonwealth, including Canada. Cadieux noticed that while the Indians on the commission owned expensive Parker pens, drank whiskey, bought their suits from good London tailors, and often spoke flawless English, the similarities ended there. Beneath the surface, the Indians remained faithful to what Cadieux called their "ancienne culture," a civilization he and many Western observers found bewildering. The main difference between the Indians and the Canadians was ideological: according to Cadieux, the two sides fundamentally disagreed over the concept of neutrality, which the West associated with the objectivity of countries like Sweden and Switzerland. However, for India, which had not gained its independence until 1947, its self-declared policy of "non-alignment" in the Cold War did not preclude its taking a stand on a given issue, pursuing its national interests, or even expressing support for certain controversial causes. Cadieux also found the Indian diplomats on the ICC generally sympathetic toward the Viet Minh, whom they tended to see as well-meaning nationalists who were novices in the art of governance.<sup>71</sup> While this benign interpretation struck Western cold warriors as preposterous, it was grounded in the shared anti-colonial experiences of an entire generation of indigenous leaders in the Third World. Of course, the Indian attitude was also based on a realpolitik that Cadieux and his colleagues well understood: if Ho Chi Minh reunited the two Vietnams, whether in the elections scheduled for July 1956 or by military conquest, it was in India's national interest to maintain good relations with North Vietnam's

70 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 66.

71 Ibid., 68–9, 71.

leadership.<sup>72</sup> As historian Robert Bothwell observes, “The Canadians, when they finished, could go home across a five thousand-mile ocean; but Indochina, as some of the Indians reflected, was not called *Indochina* for nothing.”<sup>73</sup>

The Indian position was understandable, but, from the Canadian perspective, its effect on the functioning of the ICC was disastrous. The chairman, M.J. Desai, did not hesitate to condemn French violations of the Geneva Accords but was reluctant to censure North Vietnam’s breaches of the same. Influenced in part by racialized views of culture, Cadieux invoked the stereotype of the “Oriental” as lethargic and slow to act, categorizing the Indians as “asiatiques” for always being willing to let time solve all problems (echoing Cadieux’s comments, Lett wrote to his wife that “what we in Canada and the USA consider slow and dilatory cooperation is by Oriental and Asian standards considered expeditious and wholehearted cooperation and assistance”).<sup>74</sup> On the freedom of movement issue, Cadieux noted the sharp contrast between the Canadians and their Indian counterparts: “Alors que nous tenons à élaborer un système logique et à vérifier son exécution les Indiens ne veulent jamais brusquer les choses et exiger des comptes.”<sup>75</sup> Suspicious of the United States for meddling in Asia and hostile toward France for its colonialism, the Indian delegation was far from impartial. The ostensible middle ground it carved out between the Polish and Canadian positions was largely opportunistic. As Cadieux observed, far from bringing the two sides closer together, the Indian strategy pushed them farther apart.<sup>76</sup> His references to the Indian “goût pour la manœuvre” and Desai’s being “calculateur” – Cadieux would later inform his colleagues back in Ottawa of the Indians’ “devious” moves on the ICC – evoked the cultural trope of the cunning Asian.<sup>77</sup>

His assessment of the commission’s Indian personnel, whom he otherwise viewed as quite competent, was scathing: “Ils manifestent en particulier à l’égard des Viet Minh une tolérance frisant la complicité et, dans leurs réticences, ils font preuve d’un détachement excessif

72 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 70.

73 Bothwell, “The Further Shore,” 97.

74 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 70; Sherwood Lett, quoted in Roy, *Sherwood Lett*, 143. On this stereotype, see Anthony Pagden, “Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent,” in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, edited by Anthony Pagden (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

75 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 69–70.

76 *Ibid.*, 74–5.

77 *Ibid.*, 75, 130. On “devious” moves, see Touhey, *Conflicting Visions*, 96.

à l'endroit du devoir de la Commission de rendre un compte exact et complet. Leur attitude ne cadre certes pas avec les conceptions occidentales de l'objectivité."<sup>78</sup> While Cadieux may have been wrong to judge the Indians by Western standards, he was the first of many Canadian diplomats on the ICC who would do so. Nor should his view, which reflected Canadian diplomacy's uneasy relationship with a Third World that did not fit neatly into the bipolar Cold War, obscure the fact that India, the neutral third of a supposedly neutral international commission, had been anything but neutral. Back in Ottawa, Cadieux made this known. As historian Ryan M. Touhey has demonstrated, several months after returning from Vietnam, Cadieux penned a devastating memorandum, based closely on his chapter on the Indians in "Six mois à Hanoi," attacking Canadian High Commissioner to India Escott Reid's proposals for a "special relationship" with that country.<sup>79</sup> In a different study, Touhey notes that Cadieux's frustration over how India and its officials differed far more than he had imagined from the white Commonwealth and its own diplomats "provides a revealing glimpse at how cultural and racial assumptions of Indians could profoundly influence the perspectives of both anglophone and francophone officials."<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Cadieux's views played a major role in shaping the critical perception of India in the Canadian foreign service. From the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, no issue did more to poison Indian-Canadian diplomatic relations than the DEA's vexing experience of Indian neutrality in Indochina. According to the department's Far Eastern Division in 1969, "Exposure to Indian policies and practices has soured virtually every Canadian FSO [Foreign Service Officer] and military officer who has served in Indochina," a conclusion Cadieux himself had reached a few years before as under-secretary and bluntly shared in a meeting with the Indian high commissioner to Canada.<sup>81</sup> As with the freedom of movement issue, disillusionment

78 Ibid., 78.

79 Touhey, *Conflicting Visions*, 95–6.

80 Ryan M. Touhey, "Romanticism and Race: Escott Reid, the Department of External Affairs, and the Sundering of Canada-India Relations, 1952–57," in Madokoro, McKenzie, and Meren, *Dominion of Race*, 197.

81 Far Eastern Division to Peacekeeping and Military Assistance Division, "Defence Review: Canadian-Indian Relations in the Indochina Commissions," 24 March 1969, file 27-1-1 pt. 8, vol. 10272, RG 25, LAC. As Cadieux told the Indian high commissioner to Canada, "A whole generation of Cdn officials had served in Commissions and ... their experience had affected Cdn-Indian relations. Their views on Indian policy had become much more concrete and detailed and this process had had a very sobering effect. Quality of relationship between Indian and Cdn officials had changed as result of experience in Indochina." Quoted in Bothwell, "The Further Shore," 112–13.

with India's role in Vietnam strongly influenced Canadian diplomacy's view of the war there when the fighting eventually resumed.

While the conduct of the Indian diplomats on the ICC surprised Cadieux, that of the Poles did not. A Soviet satellite since its "liberation" by the Red Army in 1945, Poland was as obviously communist as Canada was liberal democratic. There had never been any doubt about either country's sympathies. The difference was that, in Cadieux's view, the Poles were the "avocats," "complices," and "conseillers" of the Viet Minh. Their methods were various: they delayed the departure of mobile teams for sites in North Vietnam, paralyzed their ability to act, weakened commission reports, and challenged the results of investigations. At the same time, they strongly supported any and all Viet Minh accusations and never missed a chance to propagandize. When faced with an unfavourable decision by the ICC, the Polish commissioner, Przemyslaw Ogrodziński (whom Lett described as "the Polish version of Machiavelli" and a "formidable opponent"), would argue until he obtained certain concessions. Then, on one subcommittee or another, one of his subordinates would raise new issues, causing yet more delays that gave the Viet Minh time to change the situation on the ground to their advantage.<sup>82</sup> Even though Canadian diplomats saw the collusion between the Poles and the Viet Minh as typical communist behaviour, Cadieux was still infuriated by the egregious nature of Polish bias. That partiality was sometimes glaringly obvious. At Phat Diem, for example, the Indian representative had asked a group of Catholics to raise their hands if they had had nothing to eat. All of them did so. Back in Hanoi, the Polish delegate, who had been present, disputed the evidence. A survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, he claimed that truly starving people could not possibly lift their arms and that what had transpired at Phat Diem was just a propaganda stunt.<sup>83</sup> More disturbingly, in the ICC's Petitions Section, presided over by the Polish Madame Ciechanowska (whose first name remains elusive), petitions critical of the Viet Minh had a way of somehow disappearing, prompting the Canadians to fear for the safety

82 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 85–7; Sherwood Lett, quoted in Roy, *Sherwood Lett*, 145. According to Ross, the Polish members of the mobile teams did "their utmost to slow team movement by tardiness, by sickness (which may not have been feigned), or most deviously, by demanding lengthy entries under the 'nothing to report' sections of team report memoranda, whenever designated sites were found to be empty." See Ross, *In the Interests of Peace*, 124.

83 *Ibid.*, 88.



of those who submitted them. Lengthy efforts finally succeeded in curtailing her suspicious activities.<sup>84</sup>

In Cadieux's view, the Canadians spent most of their time either trying to rouse the Indians from their apathy or preventing the Poles from making the ICC an arm of the Viet Minh propaganda machine.<sup>85</sup> He was not an unbiased observer, but his summary anticipated Thakur's later conclusion on the positions of the three countries: "Poland would agree with North Vietnam, Canada would seek to shape the Commission into a forceful body willing to assert its authority, and India would move away from an initial broad view to a position of searching out the highest common factor, if necessary by compromise."<sup>86</sup> Because the Indians proved so unreliable and the Poles so partisan, Cadieux deeply regretted Canadian Commissioner Sherwood Lett's lack of astuteness. A future chief justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Lett's legalistic approach to his duties (Pearson had instructed him to act with "judicial impartiality") left him vulnerable to both Indian and Polish machinations. He also took a restrictive view of the delegation's relationship with journalists and allied diplomatic missions, insisting that it keep its distance from both. Although Cadieux praised Lett for his commitment to the work at hand and for his undeniable uprightness, he nonetheless found him a novice in diplomacy. For example, in another example of the bonds linking the Catholic authorities in Vietnam to certain Canadian diplomats on the ICC, when the apostolic delegate to Indochina offered the Canadian delegation detailed accounts of how the Viet Minh were obstructing population movements, Lett refused even to read the documents. At commission meetings, Cadieux could only stand by and watch a flustered Lett be outmanoeuvred by his Indian and Polish counterparts.<sup>87</sup> Since the DEA was a close-knit department with a somewhat insular institutional culture, Cadieux's criticisms may have reflected the fact that, as a (distinguished) army officer and lawyer, Lett was a "non-career appointment" – in layperson's terms, an outsider. Given the complexity of the situation in Vietnam and what was at stake there, Canadian diplomats on the ICC may have resented the fact that their government had chosen a commissioner from outside their ranks.

84 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 90–1. On Madame Ciechanowska, see Sherwood Lett to SSEA, "Polish Attitude: Petitions Section," 21 January 1955, file 50052-A-40 pt. 8, vol. 4630, RG 25, LAC.

85 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 90.

86 Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam*, 69.

87 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 141–6. For a more favourable view of Lett in Vietnam, see Roy, *Sherwood Lett*, 133–56.

To Cadieux, the ineffectual ICC stood in stark contrast to a resolute Viet Minh leadership whom he viewed as fanatical, a first impression that stayed with him throughout his career and influenced his views on the Vietnam War. He noted that, as with Asians generally (in a not unfounded cultural assumption given the importance of the concept of “face” to Asian societies), the Viet Minh also attached the upmost significance to questions of prestige.<sup>88</sup> Their leaders fused communism and nationalism, but Cadieux, like most Canadian diplomats, focused almost exclusively on their hated ideology. First, there was Ho Chi Minh, the avuncular North Vietnamese president who dressed plainly and sported sandals. As Cadieux noted, however, “Uncle Ho” did everything with an eye to propaganda, a political weapon Western observers associated with totalitarian states. Then there was Pham Van Dong, the minister of foreign affairs whose speeches were passionately pro-communist and virulently anti-American. Finally, there was General Vo Nguyen Giap, the strategist behind the Viet Minh triumph at Dien Bien Phu, who exuded a youthful vigour.<sup>89</sup> As defence minister, Giap was responsible for North Vietnam’s implementation of the Geneva Accords. In January 1955, he and Cadieux had a conversation about freedom of movement in Vietnam. When Giap told him that Catholics were free to leave but should refrain from propagandizing and using aggressive tactics, Cadieux expressed concern about whether their exit really was guaranteed. Although vexed, Giap told Cadieux the next night, “Je ferai tous les efforts pour régler ces incidents comme vous le désirez.”<sup>90</sup> A few days later, Cadieux was surprised to learn from the head of the Red Cross in North Vietnam that the North Vietnamese vice-ministers of health and foreign affairs were refusing to accept supplies from Canada on the grounds that it was not a neutral country. In particular, they claimed, its deputy commissioner on the ICC had accused the Viet Minh of failing to meet their obligations and had publicly called General Giap a liar. Fearing for his

88 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 115. Although the concept of face is universal, there is a crucial difference between its strong collective (family, group, and so on) associations in Asian societies and its far more individualistic meaning in Western cultures. On this question, see Stella Ting-Toomey’s pioneering article “Intercultural Conflict Styles: A Face-Negotiation Theory,” in *Theories in Intercultural Communication*, edited by Young Yun Kim and William B. Gudykunst (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988), 213–35.

89 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 104–5.

90 The account of this conversation is based on Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 105–7; Marcel Cadieux, “Memorandum for the Commissioner: Conversation with General Giap,” 14 January 1955, file 4, vol. 39, MC, LAC. There are slight discrepancies between the two versions.

safety, Cadieux drafted a memo for Lett in which he meticulously detailed his conversation with Giap. Even then, he was far from reassured: he had never seen a Cabinet minister lie so brazenly and then misrepresent the conversation. That said, by making them feel watched, Cadieux believed the Viet Minh were forced to relent, if only slightly, thus allowing more people to flee south.<sup>91</sup>

All the same, Cadieux resented how the Viet Minh manipulated the Canadian delegation and made a mockery of the ICC's work. For example, the Canadians sometimes found themselves pressured to attend dubious social events, including one celebrating the fifth anniversary of Soviet diplomatic recognition of the DRV, at which they were asked to make a speech.<sup>92</sup> On another occasion, the Viet Minh invited ICC members to tour Hanoi's university. It soon became clear that the expedition's real purpose was to demonstrate that classes were now open to everyone instead of just the privileged few, an indirect attack on the French to which the commission's presence was designed to give legitimacy.<sup>93</sup> The Viet Minh had other ways of making Canadian lives unpleasant. Their servants, who wore the insignia of the party and had been told that the Canadians were the least important members of the commission, had been ordered to spy on them. Their residence, moreover, for weeks on end, lacked a functioning water heater and, only marginally less vital to their well-being, a sufficient number of liquor glasses. As Cadieux asked, "Pouvons-nous nous plaindre sans avoir l'air ridicule? Les orientaux sont maîtres dans l'art d'humilier et de jouer subtilement ceux qu'ils n'aiment pas," a racialized cultural trope that drew on the idea that Asians were naturally treacherous.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, his specific criticisms of Viet Minh behaviour were valid.

What frustrated Cadieux most, however, was the Viet Minh's circumvention of the ICC's investigative system. Many of the incidents, both large and small, that the Canadians learned of seemed to be part of a larger campaign to obstruct efforts by the International Commission for Supervision and Control to do what it had been created to do: supervise and control. The ICC was also helpless to prevent the introduction into North Vietnam (and South Vietnam) of military equipment. While fixed teams might guard various points along the Chinese border,

91 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 108.

92 Ibid., 108–9.

93 Ibid., 116.

94 Ibid., 117. On this stereotype, see Alan J. Levine, *Race Relations within Western Expansion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 87.

there were alternate routes into the country. The ICC was hard pressed to supervise a regime that knew the lay of the land better than anybody. Above all, there was the human tragedy of Viet Minh rule, one that evoked for Canadian diplomats the situation behind the Iron Curtain. Working at his desk one Sunday, Cadieux heard a commotion in the hall outside. A Vietnamese man claiming to be a refugee had entered Canadian headquarters seeking protection and transportation south. Only after he had made a statement to the ICC Secretariat was he handed over to the local authorities. Several days later, the Viet Minh Liaison Mission said that he was merely a mental patient who had been allowed to wander around Hanoi. On another occasion, a family alleged that relatives had been arrested upon leaving a cathedral. The Viet Minh replied that the police had no knowledge of the situation. Such responses exasperated Cadieux: "Le mensonge, le cynisme ne peuvent être plus flagrants. Les Viet Minh se moquent bien de la Commission!" Near Haiphong, a group of refugees had tried and failed to disarm Viet Minh sentries at a guard post, leading to deaths, injuries, and the taking of prisoners. Those among the migrants who managed to reach safety petitioned the ICC to meet with the prisoners. As Cadieux recounted, in prison the would-be refugees underwent a sudden "conversion": they had come to see the light regarding the Viet Minh regime and no longer wanted to leave it.<sup>95</sup> The Canadians were undeceived, but such tactics continued unabated.

Despite his contempt for the Viet Minh, Cadieux could not help but admire how, virtually alone, they had defeated France and won the right to govern their own country – or at least half of it. Their great misfortune, as he saw it, was that their ideology denied them the very liberty that they had achieved at so high a cost – communist rule naturally entailing both a loss of national independence and military dictatorship. As Marxists, the Viet Minh opposed religious freedom, causing a mass exodus to South Vietnam that worked against the prospective reunification of the country. The result, as Cadieux recognized, was incongruous: on the one hand, the DRV upheld and defended the Geneva Accords because they promised national elections; on the other, it surreptitiously did everything it could to undermine the agency created by the Geneva Accords, the ICC. To Cadieux, the bad faith of the Viet Minh was typically communist: "En somme, au Vietnam, le communisme nous montre sa face haineuse, luisante de méchanceté."<sup>96</sup> The Viet Minh were certainly ruthless, like all

95 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 112–3.

96 Ibid., 121–2.

totalitarian regimes, but their leaders, especially Ho Chi Minh, were also genuinely popular with many Vietnamese, who saw them as anti-colonial freedom fighters. By fixating on communism, Canadian diplomacy underestimated the degree to which communism in the Third World was leavened by nationalism. In equating communism with a loss of national independence, an argument that became less persuasive the farther one moved from Eastern Europe, Cadieux and other Western diplomats failed to appreciate fully the ways in which a recently decolonized country like North Vietnam, far from being a puppet of the Soviet Union and China, could use its ideological kinship with the larger communist powers to secure their support for its own national aims. From the Vietnamese perspective, the Vietnam War was really a civil war.

What of the other side in that civil war – South Vietnam? For the ICC, the most controversial issue there was Article 14(c) of the Geneva Accords, which forbade “reprisals or discrimination against persons or organizations on account of their activities during the [First Indochina War]” and guaranteed “democratic liberties.” As Cadieux noted, the Viet Minh, helped by the Poles, exploited this clause to discredit the South Vietnamese government. Early on, for example, Hanoi charged Saigon with harming and provoking people formerly under its rule. There had certainly been local protests against the South Vietnamese government and demonstrators shot. Although Cadieux conceded that Saigon had been clumsy and its soldiers trigger happy, the Canadian delegation to the ICC insisted that the commission also consider why force had been necessary in the first place.<sup>97</sup> Its interest in the question seems justified in light of the fact that, in September 1954, the North Vietnamese Politburo had ordered the military struggle for Vietnam to be replaced by a political one, with propaganda representing the major communist thrust in the South.<sup>98</sup>

Soon Hanoi was accusing Saigon of terrorizing the population, particularly its sympathizers. What Cadieux termed the second phase in the communist propaganda campaign was less successful. The South Vietnamese government was found guilty of scattered reprisals but no reign of terror, though the ICC still condemned Saigon’s lapses. The Canadian willingness to do this deeply impressed the Polish legal adviser on the commission: “It was a period when most of the cases were against the Southern authorities; whenever there was justifiable

97 Ibid., 96.

98 Pierre Asselin, *Hanoi’s Road to the Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 17.

suspicion that the Southern authorities were treating their citizens in an inhumane manner, the Canadian delegates never hesitated in condemning the crimes. I always considered this to be extremely significant.”<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, Cadieux regretted that the ICC’s repeated censure of the South gave the North the appearance of legality and moderation.<sup>100</sup> The Canadians were convinced (not wrongly), in an issue that would loom increasingly large in the years ahead, that much of the unrest in South Vietnam was being fomented by communist subversion, putting Saigon’s repression in a different light. They also believed that, compared to Hanoi, Saigon was the lesser of two evils. Such thinking of course dominated the Western approach to the Cold War, with the United States supporting reactionary regimes in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, notably Syngman Rhee’s government in South Korea, in an effort to check Soviet influence.

It was obvious to Cadieux that South Vietnam’s leaders felt ambivalent about the Geneva Accords, which one recalls they had not signed. While they wanted the ICC to facilitate the departure of Catholics from North Vietnam, they kept their distance from the commission for fear that recognizing its authority would imply a tacit acceptance of the election process. As Cadieux informed South Vietnamese foreign minister Tran Van Do, by delaying the departure of the ICC’s mobile teams in the South, Saigon made it harder to protest when Hanoi did the same.<sup>101</sup> Such behaviour was all the more tragic since, from the Canadian perspective, the situation was much worse in North Vietnam, where the slightest delay could jeopardize the success of a mission. Shortly after Lett’s arrival, Cadieux accompanied him on a courtesy visit to Ngo Dinh Diem, the fervently Catholic and anti-communist prime minister (soon president) of South Vietnam. “Je ne me souviens pas d’avoir assisté à une entrevue plus pénible,” Cadieux recalled. For long stretches of the visit, Diem remained silent. When he did speak, it was only to point out that, if the communists ever dared to permit real freedom of movement in the North, there would be a flood of people south. But when the Canadians stressed the need for cooperation from both North and South Vietnam in implementing the Geneva Accords, Diem’s face hardened, and he fell silent once more. The only time he became animated was when Cadieux mentioned that the Canadian priests in Hanoi, who in 1946 had sheltered Diem

99 Mieczyslaw Maneli, *War of the Vanquished*, translated by Maria de Görgey (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 35.

100 Cadieux, “Six mois à Hanoi,” 97–8.

101 *Ibid.*, 123–4.

from the Viet Minh, spoke highly of him. Demonstrating the religious zeal that would make him such an appealing figure to conservative Catholic elites in the West (though not to South Vietnam's predominantly Buddhist population), Diem replied that in a very short time the Canadian Redemptorists had performed a missionary miracle in Indochina.<sup>102</sup> Cadieux's other impression of Diem, this one formed from afar, was his reluctance to be cast as a stooge of the United States, which, after some initial hesitation, gave him strong backing.<sup>103</sup> As with Ho Chi Minh, Diem was no puppet, although the amount of American assistance he was able to secure invariably created such an image. Later, us policy in South Vietnam was summed up by a critical journalist as "Sink or swim with Ngo Dinh Diem."<sup>104</sup>

Despite the ICC's difficulties with the South Vietnamese government, Cadieux insisted that at least once a month the commission visit Saigon, if only to escape the grim atmosphere of Hanoi and to avoid appearing partial to the regime there. He had also hoped that in the South the Indian chair of the ICC would face tough questions from a free press, but either the journalists were not persistent enough or M.J. Desai deftly evaded their queries.<sup>105</sup> Still, Cadieux found Saigon a relief with the luxury boutiques on rue Catinat and the fine wines available at the Pointe des Bagueurs Café. And yet he could not shake off the sense of foreboding inspired by its radically different atmosphere: "La ville donne une impression factice d'abondance de vie qui séduit à l'arrivée du Nord. A la réflexion, il est facile de s'aviser cependant que cette facilité, ces lumières, ce luxe, fournissent la preuve du danger mortel qui menace le Sud. Au Nord, tous les sacrifices sont exigés, tous les efforts sont tendus pour assurer la victoire ultime. Au Sud, par contraste, chacun poursuit ses projets personnels. Si, un jour, il faut en venir à la lutte, il est fatal que le régime le plus austère mais le plus discipliné aura de grands avantages."<sup>106</sup> This comment was highly prophetic. Moreover, Cadieux's six months in Vietnam ensured that, when open war finally erupted

102 Ibid., 124. See also Sherwood Lett to SSEA, "Call on M. Diem, Prime Minister of the National Vietnamese Government," 23 November 1954, file 50052-A-40 pt. 5, vol. 4630, RG 25, IAC.

103 Marcel Cadieux, "A Canadian Looks at the USA" (Speech to the National Defence College, Kingston, Ontario), 3 March 1980, file 9, vol. 37, MC, IAC.

104 The *New York Times* journalist Homer Bigart, quoted in Seth Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin: Ngo Dinh Diem and the Origins of America's War in Vietnam, 1950–1963* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 129.

105 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 125.

106 Ibid., 125–6.

between North and South Vietnam, his sympathies lay entirely with the South and its American ally.

In February 1955, Cadieux, whose uncertain health had been steadily deteriorating, left North Vietnam for Canada. On the day of his departure, the British consul general in Hanoi wrote of him, "He did not take long to size up the political situation here. He arrived with the idea that the Geneva agreement might be made to work, given a spirit of reasonable compromise; he has however been disgusted with the evasions and prevarications of the Vietminh, and by their 100% Communist approach. He is somewhat impatient of the manoeuvrings which still go on in the Commission to preserve a united front and gloss over widely divergent views, and says he intends to speak his mind when he goes to Ottawa."<sup>107</sup> Cadieux did, indeed, speak his mind. Many of the Canadian diplomats who succeeded him on the ICC spoke their minds as well. Their presence in key positions in the DEA during the 1960s had a major influence on Canadian policy toward the Vietnam War. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Cadieux's pro-US sympathies on the issue as under-secretary of state for external affairs. In 1966, after a meeting on Vietnam in Ottawa with Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin Sr and several of his officials, including Cadieux, William P. Bundy, the US Department of State's assistant secretary for far eastern affairs and a key architect of American policy on Vietnam, noted that Cadieux had had "extensive experience in Indochina and [saw] the North Vietnamese as yielding only to relentless pressure."<sup>108</sup> While six months was hardly "extensive experience," they were enough for Cadieux to form a lasting impression of the North Vietnamese.

In conclusion, "Six mois à Hanoi" not only explains how Cadieux's assignment on the ICC shaped his views on the Vietnam War, but it also sheds new light on a host of broader themes in Canadian international history. For example, Cadieux's deep personal involvement in the freedom of movement question and his admiration for the Redemptorists suggests the influence of religion on Canadian diplomacy. Similarly, his impressions of Asia, Vietnam, and the Indians on the ICC offer new insights into the bureaucratic culture of the DEA and the influence on it of questions of race and culture. Finally, his

107 Geoffrey Baker to F.S. Tomlinson, 22 February 1955, file 371/117159, Foreign Office Records, United Kingdom National Archives.

108 William P. Bundy, "Memorandum for the Record: Dinner Meeting with Paul Martin and Other Canadian Officials, June 21, 1966," 22 June 1966, file POL CAN-US, box 1990, 1964-6, Department of State Subject Numeric Files, National Archives and Records Administration.



staunch anti-communism is a useful reminder of the extent to which alliance considerations dominated Canada's approach to the Cold War from Europe to the Third World. As the last line of Cadieux's memoir reads, "Pour la première fois [dans ma carrière] ... j'ai eu l'impression que la diplomatie canadienne prenait un rôle actif et assumait des tâches d'une certaine importance pour le compte de ses Alliés de l'Occident."<sup>109</sup> At first glance, this seems like a strange comment. After all, the members of the ICC were supposed to be neutral. In fact, Canada had deliberately been chosen to represent the West, India the non-aligned, and Poland the communist bloc. From its inception, a tension had been built into the ICC between neutrality and the larger geopolitical interests believed to be at stake in Vietnam. Nor was the conduct of the Viet Minh, whether motivated primarily by communism or by nationalism, easily forgotten. According to both his family and a colleague, Cadieux arrived in Vietnam with dark hair and left it with white.<sup>110</sup> In part because it engaged so many different factors in Canadian diplomatic thinking, service on the ICC was an ordeal, especially before early 1958, when the commission's headquarters were moved to Saigon. In the words of Saul Rae, Cadieux's replacement in Hanoi, "Marcel was the first of the Mohicans, and no comments from me [are] necessary about the effort he put into this mission, and the contribution he made."<sup>111</sup>

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109 Cadieux, "Six mois à Hanoi," 158.

110 François and René Cadieux, interview with the author, Montreal, 22 May 2012; Touhey, *Conflicting Visions*, 95. The colleague in question was Arthur Menzies.

111 "Excerpt from personal and confidential letter from Saul Rae, Hanoi to L. Stephens, dated July 11/55," Records of the Civil Service Commission, file 3-6, vol. 104, LAC.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Robert Bothwell, the editors of *The Canadian Historical Review*, and the three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. The research on which it is based was supported by a Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.