Hoang Anh’s career has included experience in three different fields—defence, finance and agriculture. His first Ministry was that of Finance, which on balance was not conspicuous for its successful record but does not have to stand up to public scrutiny; indeed the appointment of a Finance Minister lacking in financial experience manifests the relative unimportance of the Ministry which is overshadowed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) National Bank.

Little is known about Anh’s early public life. He first attracted notice during the Indochina War as President of the Viet Minh Resistance and Executive Committee for Interzone V—i.e., Central Vietnam. After the war his promotion in the party machine was steady. In 1955, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Defence, and was identified as a Deputy to the National Assembly. Three years later, he became Minister of Finance. From 1956 to 1959, he was Chairman of the Central Physical Culture and Sports Committee.

In 1959, he took charge of currency reform—a devaluation of the dong. Under the reform, the old currency was exchanged for a new “heavy” dong at the rate of 1,000 old dong for one heavy dong. It did not bring him popular success; nor did it alleviate for long North Vietnam’s shortage of foreign currency and her adverse balance of payments.

In the same year, he was already mentioned as a member of the Secretariat of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, in which post he also made a contribution to political “re-education”. In 1960, he was re-elected to his government and party posts, and to the new post at the head of the Board of Finance and Trade. In 1963, he was replaced on the Board by Pham Hung. In April, 1965, he relinquished the Finance Ministry on his appointment as Minister of Agriculture and Director of the Agricultural Board in the Prime Minister’s Office. He lost this Ministry in November, 1967—a change that may have reflected government dissatisfaction with the progress of its campaign to step up food production. His successor was Nguyen Van Loc. Hoang Anh retained his post as Director of the Agricultural Board in the Prime Minister’s Office until April, 1971, when he was appointed Chairman of the newly-formed Central Agricultural Commission. At the same time he was appointed a Deputy Prime Minister, presumably in place of Pham Hung.

Hoang Anh was formerly a close associate of Vo Nguyen Giap but seems to have drifted away from him in recent years.
Phan Anh occupies an unusual position in the ruling oligarchy. Supposedly a non-party figure, he has served in practically every Communist-dominated administration, being a useful “front” to support the idea of the régime’s “representative character”.

Before entering politics he had begun to make his mark as a barrister. Born about 1910 in the Nghe An Province of Central Vietnam, the son of a Chinese language scholar, he was educated at Hanoi, becoming President of the Students’ Association. In 1938 he went to France to study law, and after his return in 1940 settled in Hanoi where he practised law and journalism.

His first taste of office came on his appointment as Minister of Youth and Sports in the Tran Trong Kim government, the Vietnam administration established in 1945. He did much to foster the spirit of national consciousness among the rising generation and sponsored the formation of a para-military youth corps called Jeunesse d’Avant-Garde. He resigned before the Kim government collapsed as a result of Japan’s defeat in August, 1945.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Anh not only emerged unmolested from the Viet Minh seizure of power in August, 1945, but soon found himself in high favour. A “non-party” man with a bent for social reform, he joined the Ho Chi Minh administration and became Minister of Defence in March, 1946, although in fact all questions regarding defence were ultimately decided by his Communist Under-Secretary of State, Vo Nguyen Giap, and a triumvirate of Viet Minh stalwarts.

In July, 1946, Phan Anh took part in the important Fontainebleau Conference, acting as rapporteur to the North Vietnam delegation. The following November he was replaced as Defence Minister, and became Minister of National Economy.

On the outbreak of the Indochina War in December, 1946, he accompanied the Viet Minh leadership into the jungle of North Vietnam. In 1949, he was appointed a member of the Supreme Defence Council, which included such powerful figures as Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong. In July, 1954, he was one of the principal members of the North Vietnam delegation to the Geneva Conference which ended the war in Indochina.
In 1956, Anh was appointed president of the Vietnam Lawyers' Association. In the same year, he became a member of the Central Committee of the "Fatherland Front", an amalgam of various parties and organisations under Lao Dong leadership. In 1957, he was made Minister of Commerce, and when in the following year the Ministry was split he became Minister of Foreign Trade, a post he has held ever since. He visited the USSR and China in 1955; East Germany, Poland and China in 1958, and Poland in 1959. In 1958 Phan Anh accompanied Ho Chi Minh on his State visit to India and Burma.

Phan Anh is regarded as one of the most capable and moderate members of the North Vietnam administration. He often acts as the official spokesman on economic matters, in which field he has shown a sense of reality. In July, 1968, he became Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Solidarity with the American People.

In 1963, he visited Moscow to negotiate and sign a trade-and-payments agreement. He was part of the Fatherland Front delegation which held talks with a National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam delegation in Hanoi in March, 1969. In June, 1969, he visited the Soviet Union and Poland to discuss the implementation of trade agreements for 1969. In December, 1969, and January, 1970, he led a trade delegation to Syria and Algeria, and in November, 1971, he headed a delegation of North Vietnamese lawyers to the International Jurists' Association's second conference on Indochina, held in Algiers.
Le Quang BA

Member of Lao Dong Party Central Committee
Head of Nationalities Commission
Chairman of Minorities Affairs Board of Party Central Committee

Ba is an important government official, who keeps behind the scenes as a “back-room” manager. He has the responsibility of organising and executing the North Vietnamese Government’s policy towards the ethnic minorities in the country.

Nothing is known about Ba’s early life, or of his rise in the government, and he first appeared in 1960, when he was elected to both of his present positions. Since then, he has been largely responsible for implementing the North Vietnamese Government’s policy of allowing the ethnic minority tribes the trappings of autonomy, while ensuring that in reality they are subservient to the party’s control. He has supervised the two Autonomous Zones in North Vietnam, and has undoubtedly experienced considerable opposition from the tribes themselves, who prefer a nomadic life to the North Vietnamese collectivisation programme.

Ba is a regular attender of government functions, and represents Cao Bang Province in the North Vietnamese National Assembly. He writes innumerable articles on the welfare of the ethnic minorities for the North Vietnamese Press and undertakes regular tours of inspection of the highland provinces where most of the tribes dwell.

The success of Ba’s work, however, is not so evident, as his most recent articles still call on the tribes to end their nomadic existence, and live with the ethnic Vietnamese who have been resettled in traditionally minority areas. He reported in detail to the National Assembly in May, 1968, on the progress of the minority areas, and undertook another tour of the provinces in the company of party First Secretary, Le Duan, in November, 1968.
Bach is an experienced Communist of the “old guard” and has held a series of senior appointments as guerrilla leader, lawyer, and politician. He is not, however, a member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party.

Born about 1910 in South Vietnam, he studied law in France, and on his return to Vietnam took up teaching in Can Tho. Afterwards he became a lawyer first in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and later at Ben Tre, now in South Vietnam. He made his political début in September, 1945, succeeding Tran Van Giau as President of the Viet Minh Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam, the short-lived administration which had seized power in Saigon a month earlier.

After the outbreak of the Indochina War in 1946, he was appointed President of the Resistance and Administrative Committee for South Vietnam, and thus became one of the key figures in this vital theatre of operations. In July, 1954, he went to North Vietnam, becoming Deputy Minister of the Interior. This post, like his appointment to Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office three years later, was a mark of recognition of his services to the party while in South Vietnam. In 1955, he took a prominent part in the official campaign to restore cultural and economic relations between North and South Vietnam, a move obviously designed to facilitate Northern penetration of the South.

He also found time for his legal interests and was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the [North] Vietnam Lawyers’ Association and later its Vice-Chairman. In 1958, he was made a member of the National Research Board, and in 1959 President of the newly-organised Supreme People’s Court, the highest court of North Vietnam.

According to the North Vietnamese Constitution, the President of the Supreme Court is responsible to the National Assembly. But since the Assembly and the Supreme Court are both controlled by the party, there is no real separation of judicial and executive power. As head of the judiciary, Bach has shown himself as a judge to whom law is primarily an instrument of State coercion.

In 1966, he reported to the National Assembly on his “suppressive and
preventive measures”, stating that “counter-revolutionary activities” were being sternly punished by the People’s Courts.

Though not among the leaders of the North Vietnamese régime, Bach is a substantive figure. As a native Southerner in high office, he also serves as a propaganda asset in North Vietnam’s bid to establish its hegemony over South Vietnam. In 1959, he took a prominent part in attacks on the alleged “policy of terrorism of the US-Diemist régime”. In 1967, he was reported to be operating in Vietcong-held territory in South Vietnam, together with high-ranking North Vietnamese party figures.

In June, 1968, Bach was appointed Vice-Chairman of a North Vietnamese Committee to investigate alleged US war crimes in Vietnam. He travelled in this capacity to Paris to attend a conference on “US war crimes” in June, 1968. He headed a delegation to Cuba in December, 1968, for a similar conference and in October, 1970, he headed the North Vietnamese delegation to the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam. In June, 1971, he led a delegation to the second session of the “International Commission for the Investigation of US War Crimes in Indochina”, held in Oslo. In February, 1969, he led a government delegation to East Germany for scientific discussions in Berlin. Bach was re-elected to the post of President of the Supreme People’s Court in March, 1971, and in December, 1971, he was elected to the Presidium of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee.
Ly Ban is one of the “back-room” managers responsible for the survival of North Vietnam's economy. His task has mainly been that of a roving ambassador in search of economic and technical assistance from other Communist countries.

Little is known of his early life. He first attracted notice in 1956 as Director of the Import-Export Division of the Ministry of Commerce. When in 1958 this Ministry was split into two, he was appointed a Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade. But his appearance at the forefront of home affairs came in 1960 with his election as alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee.

In 1961, Ban took part in negotiations with a visiting trade delegation from Mali, and later led an official delegation to North Korea. In 1962, he signed an agreement with Laos covering North Vietnamese aid in the form of transport and communications as well as the exchange of students and specialists. In the same year, he signed trade agreements with Albania and Czechoslovakia, and in 1963, an agreement with Bulgaria. In 1966, he led a mission to Cuba which resulted in the signing of a trade and co-operation agreement.

In 1965, he accompanied Le Thanh Nghi as member of a delegation which toured Asian and East European Communist countries in search of economic and technical assistance. When Nghi undertook similar tours in 1966 and 1967, Ban was again a member of his delegation. On the last occasion, he was received in Peking by Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and other leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.

He accompanied Le Thanh Nghi on his tour in 1968, and was reported to have taken part in discussions on economic agreements in Peking in September, 1968, and September, 1969. In October, 1969, he led an economic delegation to Cuba and signed an aid agreement there. In November, 1969, and May, 1970, Ban signed trade and payments agreements in Peking, and in September, 1970, he accompanied Nguyen Con to China and was present at the signing of further aid agreements. In August, 1971, he led a delegation of “experts” to China, and he also accompanied Pham Van Dong to China in November, 1971.
Little is known of Nguyen Thanh Binh's early career except that he was at one time the Assistant Director of Army General Logistics Department. In 1960, he was elected an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. In 1961, he became acting Minister of Home Trade, during Do Muoi's illness, and was made Minister of Trade in 1963, a post to which he was re-elected in 1964. He gave up this Ministry in November, 1966, when he became Chairman of the Financial and Commercial Board and Chairman of the State Price Committee. He was replaced by Do Muoi in November, 1967, as Chairman of the State Price Committee.

In December, 1969, in a government re-shuffle possibly due to the deteriorating economic situation, Nguyen Thanh Binh became Chairman of the newly-formed Government Auditing Committee, and, since May, 1971, he has been referred to as Chairman of the State Inspection Committee. He led a party delegation to Chile and Cuba in December, 1971-January, 1972.
Bo is an expert on Western Europe and has pursued a careful policy of friendly relations with those countries which have no official diplomatic contact with Hanoi.

Bo was born on July 9, 1918, in Long Xuyen Province, South Vietnam, and he began a primarily academic career by teaching French in schools both in Saigon and in Hanoi. He is a distinguished student of French literature, and an expert on the works of Balzac. He joined the Communist revolutionary movement in Vietnam in the 1930s, and became a journalist in South Vietnam. In 1955 he joined the North Vietnamese Liaison Mission to the International Control Commission in Saigon, set up after the Geneva Agreements on Indochina in 1954. He remained in this post until 1958 when the Mission was asked to leave South Vietnam.

In 1961 he was sent to France as a trade representative of the North Vietnamese Government, and when the two countries decided to raise the level of their diplomatic relations in 1966, Mai Van Bo was appointed Delegate-General. He retained this post until December, 1970, when he was replaced by Vo Van Sung, the former Counsellor at the North Vietnamese Delegation-General in Paris. Since his return to Hanoi he has been head of Department 2 for Europe in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has gained the reputation of a cultured but inflexible diplomat, and is said to be more of a hard-line nationalist than a rigid Communist. His twin brother, Mai Van So, a former senior Vietcong staff officer, captured in December, 1969, told a Press conference in Saigon in June, 1971, that Bo had been “used and manipulated by the Communists”, having originally belonged (in 1945) to one of the non-Communist parties which “were either a part of the Viet Minh front or quickly became dominated by the Communists”. The Communists, according to So, found Bo useful because he was a well-known figure in the South.
Nguyen Luong BANG

Vice-President of North Vietnam
Member of Lao Dong Party Central Committee
Head of Lao Dong Party Central Committee Control Board

One of the “old guard” Communist revolutionaries, Nguyen Luong Bang has been more active behind the scenes than in the direct execution of policy. His position as Head of the party Central Committee Control Board gives him considerable power to deal with violations of party and State laws. This power, and respect for his long service to Communism, may have contributed to his election in September, 1969 to the Vice-Presidency of North Vietnam after the death of Ho Chi Minh.

Born in 1904, Bang joined Ho Chi Minh’s League of Revolutionary Youth in 1925, and in 1929 was entrusted by its Standing Committee with the task of penetrating the seamen’s unions in Hong Kong. He was a founder member of the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI) in 1930, but was arrested in the following year and extradited to Cochin-China where he was imprisoned. He escaped and was re-arrested, but escaped again in 1943, and fled to China where he joined Ho Chi Minh and other PCI leaders. He was made responsible for the party finances.

In 1945, Bang was elected Secretary-General of the Viet Minh, and with Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong, became one of the most influential leaders of the Viet Minh. He concerned himself specifically with the organisation of armament production. In 1950 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Workers’) Party, the successor of the PCI. His ability in monetary matters was again called on in 1951 with his appointment as Chairman of the National Bank of Vietnam.

Bang was appointed Ambassador to the USSR in the spring of 1952, and retained the post until December, 1956. He was then recalled to North Vietnam and appointed Director-General of the Government Inspection Committee. He was re-elected to the party Central Committee in 1960 and 1964, and in those years was also mentioned in his party control post involving the investigation of cases “in which party members violate the statutes and the discipline of the party, and do not conform to revolutionary virtues and the laws of the State” (paragraph 7 of Lao Dong Party Statutes).

Although he has appeared only rarely in public life during the past ten years, Bang has consistently occupied influential posts. He was placed 15th in the committee appointed to organise Ho Chi Minh’s funeral. His election to the Vice-Presidency on September 23, 1969, does not really give him greater power than he already has, as party and government decisions will be taken by the “collective leadership” which Ho Chi Minh was said to have left behind.
Ta Quang BUU

Minister of Higher Education and Professional Middle Schools
Vice-Chairman of the National Scientific and Technical Commission

Educated in the West, Buu is one of the important non-Communist members of the Hanoi government, although he has little influence over the formation of policy.

Ta Quang Buu was born in Nghe An Province, North Vietnam, in 1909, and studied mathematics in Paris, where he gained a Licentiate of Mathematical Studies. He also studied at Oxford for some time.

On his return to Vietnam, Buu founded a Scout movement in Central Vietnam, while at the same time managing an electrical plant in Huế. In 1945 he brought his Scout movement on to the side of the rising nationalists, and moved into North Vietnam, where he became a Professor at Hanoi University, and Director of the Polytechnical College of Hanoi. In 1946, he was elected a deputy to the National Assembly and became an Under-Secretary of State in Ho Chi Minh's first government. In 1947 he became Minister of Defence, only to relinquish the post to Vo Nguyen Giap and become a Vice-Minister, which he remained until 1960. He attended the Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954, and signed the cease-fire agreement on behalf of Giap.

Buu did not abandon his scientific studies, and was appointed to the National Scientific Research Board on its formation in 1958, as Secretary-General and Vice-Chairman. He was also a Vice-President of the Vietnam Peace Committee, which is affiliated to the World Council of Peace, a Communist "front" organisation. In 1960 he addressed the Lao Dong Party Congress, on Scientific Research, and in 1962 led a delegation to a seminar on scientific and technical education in Moscow, organised by the World Federation of Scientific Workers. In 1963 he was elected Vice-Chairman of the Association for the Popularisation of Science and Techniques, and continued to teach at Hanoi University, contributing frequent articles to the North Vietnamese Press. In 1965 he was appointed Minister for Higher Education and Professional Middle Schools, in which role he has written articles on general aspects of education, while continuing to supervise the Polytechnical College.

He has led delegations to many countries, including a tour of East Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland in 1962, and a visit to East Germany again in 1963 to sign a scientific agreement.

The National Scientific Research Board was reorganised in 1965 into two separate bodies—the Social Sciences Commission and the National Scientific and Technical Commission. Buu became Vice-Chairman of the latter.
Mme. Bui Thi Cam is one of a number of North Vietnamese women whose function is to attend conferences abroad as proof of the equality and liberalism practised by the government. She is thought to have no actual power or influence in political life.

Her background is largely unknown, except that she was born in South Vietnam, and became a lawyer. At the end of 1954, she arrived in Hanoi from South Vietnam after the ending of the war with the French. Her usefulness was soon realised by the Hanoi government and she broadcast to her "intellectual" friends in the South, comparing life in the North with the alleged decadence of the South. At first it seemed as if she might follow her profession, as she became a member of the North Vietnamese Committee of Jurists in 1955, but she does not appear to have been active as a lawyer. In 1955 she travelled to an Assembly in Helsinki of the World Council of Peace (WCP), an international Communist front organisation, and in 1956 she attended a council meeting of a similar front organisation, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in Peking.

Since then, she has been a regular traveller, especially after her appointment as Vice-President of the Vietnam Women's Union, and she led a union delegation to France in 1957. She has also attended conferences of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) in many countries. A WCP bulletin issued after a WIDF conference in Sweden in 1959 spoke of her "remarkable contributions to the discussion". Other visits include Cairo (1957 and 1961), Ceylon (1958), East Germany (1962), Cuba (1963), and Austria (1965). Since 1965, when she was appointed Vice-President of the Vietnam Red Cross Society, she has concentrated more on the "Peace" movement within Vietnam.

In March, 1969, she was appointed Secretary of the newly-formed Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People—an organisation to further North Vietnamese propaganda against the United States. In this capacity she has made appeals to American women to join the struggle against United States policy in Vietnam. She is married and has children. In August, 1969, she spoke at a ceremony in Hanoi at which three US prisoners were handed over to a delegation of US pacifists; she said that they could not claim protection under the Geneva Convention.
Cu Huy CAN

Vice-Minister of Culture
Central Committee member of the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Association
Member of the Standing Committee of the Vietnam-Japan Friendship Association

A well-known writer and poet, Can has little political influence within North Vietnam, but has the function of spreading the cultural influence of his country abroad by leading song and dance ensembles on foreign tours.

Cu Huy Can was born in 1919 in Ha Tinh Province, North Vietnam, and was educated in the city of Huế, where he qualified as an agricultural engineer. In the early 1940s he was involved in the organisation of several youth movements in North Vietnam to support the struggle of the Communist Viet Minh organisation. At this stage, he appeared to have had some importance politically, as in 1945 he was appointed Minister without Portfolio in Ho Chi Minh’s first provisional government. He was not a Communist however, and it is unlikely that he was given any real power. In 1944 he was among the founders of the Democratic Party in North Vietnam, and remained on its Central Committee until 1960, when he was not re-elected.

In 1946, he became Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture, and in 1949 he was appointed Minister for Commerce and Industry. However, Can did not survive long even as a figure-head, and in 1956 he was relieved of all his other posts, and became a Deputy Minister of Culture, replacing To Huu. Since then, he has been a regular traveller to a variety of conferences and meetings, including Afro-Asian writers, conferences (Japan 1961, Cairo 1962); with cultural delegations (Iraq 1962, Peking 1968); and with folk song and dance ensembles (USSR 1966, Japan 1968, France and Algeria 1969). He is said to be a competent writer and poet but none of his work has been published in the West. He is a typical Communist “front” figure.
Nguyen Tho CHAN
Alternate Member of the Lao Dong Party
Central Committee

One of the younger figures on the North Vietnamese scene, Chan has been engaged in Communist activities for most of his life, and until recently was a professional administrator rather than a diplomat.

Nguyen Tho Chan was born in 1922, and joined the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI), led by Ho Chi Minh, at the age of 17. He was imprisoned by the French for subversive activities from 1943 to 1945, and again from 1951 to 1954. When he was not in jail, Chan was First Secretary of the PCI Ha Dong Provincial Committee and then First Secretary of the Hanoi City Party Committee. From 1955 to 1959 he was head of the Manpower Department in the Ministry of Labour, before reverting to his position as First Secretary of the Hanoi Party Committee. In 1960 he was elected an alternate member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Workers') Party, the successor of the PCI. He moved to be First Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee for the coal mining area of Quang Ninh in the Eastern provinces of North Vietnam. He held this post until 1967, when he was appointed North Vietnamese Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

His duties in Moscow were frequently performed by Chargés d’Affaires since he appeared to spend much of his time in Hanoi, returning to Moscow for important functions there. He led the North Vietnamese delegation to the Finnish Communist Party Congress in Helsinki in March, 1969, arriving from Hanoi, but returning to Moscow after the Congress. In June, 1969, he became the first North Vietnamese Ambassador to Sweden, but also remained Ambassador to the USSR until January, 1972, when he was replaced by Vo Thuc Dong.
Duong Quoc CHINH

Minister of the Interior
Central Committee Member of the Lao Dong Party

Little is known of Chinh’s early life. He was Minister of Water Conservancy and Power between 1960-1963, and Minister of Agriculture between 1963-1965. He is also a National Assembly Deputy for Hai Hung Province. In September, 1964, he led a North Vietnamese agricultural delegation to China. He replaced Ung Van Khiem as Minister of the Interior in June, 1971.
Truong CHINH

Chairman, Standing Committee of the
National Assembly
Member of Lao Dong Party Politburo
Member of the Presidium of the Vietnam Fatherland Front
Central Committee
Member of the National Defence Council

Truong Chinh is a militant Communist of long standing. Except for a brief interlude he has been throughout one of the leading figures of the North Vietnam régime and its chief ideologist. He is also thought to be leader of the pro-Chinese element in the party hierarchy. His adopted party name of Truong Chinh means "Long March".

Like many of his contemporaries he graduated to Communism by way of the nationalist movement. He was born in 1908, the son of a teacher, in a township of the Nam Dinh Province of Tongking (now North Vietnam). His real name was Dang Xuan Khu. His family were active in the nationalist cause, with which he early became associated. Expelled from school for political agitation, he went to Hanoi in 1928, where he completed his secondary education, later studying at the Hanoi College of Commerce.

His political career began when he joined the local branch of Ho Chi Minh's "Revolutionary Youth League", and became a contributor to several Communist publications. In 1930 he helped in founding the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI), and rapidly established his reputation as a propagandist. In 1931, he was arrested by the French authorities and convicted of subversion. On his release in 1936, he returned to Hanoi and soon took a vigorous part in both the overt and clandestine activities of the PCI.

Chinh fled to China in 1939 when the party staged an insurrection and was banned.

During the Second World War Chinh grew to full stature as a man of action and ideas. Ideological training in China and the interplay of conflicting forces did much to influence his thinking. In 1940, he was made head of the PCI Propaganda Department. In May, 1941, he advanced to Secretary-General of the PCI, then operating in Kwangsi (Southern China).

Following the creation in the same year of the "League of the Independence of Vietnam" (Viet Minh), an amalgam of several nationalist parties under Communist control, he devoted his energies to the new movement, projecting its image as the Resistance dedicated to the overthrow of French and Japanese rule. In 1945, he played a leading rôle in the series of events culminating in the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Soon after
he was one of a small group, including key Communists, to draft the Constitution of the new "Republic". In 1946, he was elected member of the first National Assembly of the DRV.

The Indochina War, 1946-54, provided Chinh with a fresh outlet for his talents. He appeared the logical choice as director of Viet Minh propaganda and at a later stage was said to be in charge of all intelligence and counter-intelligence operations. In 1951, he was largely responsible for a reorganisation within the Viet Minh, from which the Communists emerged under the name of Lao Dong, or "Workers'" Party. Truong Chinh became Secretary-General and the directing influence of the new party. By 1953 he was second only to Ho Chi Minh in the Communist hierarchy. His rise was reflected in Communist propaganda references to him as "the first builder and commander of the Vietnam revolution".

Moreover, he became a member of various high-level agencies including the Politburo of the Lao Dong; the Supreme National Defence Council; the Council for National Education; and the National Committee of the Lien Viet—the "united front" comprising all political parties in the DRV led by the Lao Dong Party. Concurrently he was a founder-member of the Vietnam-USSR Friendship Society. In 1954, he was a member of the DRV delegation to the Geneva Conference which ended the war in Indochina. In February, 1956, he attended the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party at which Khrushchev demolished the Stalin cult.

About this time Truong Chinh himself fell into disgrace. In 1954, he had been named Vice-Chairman of the Land Reform Committee. In that capacity he took the lead in implementing an "agrarian reform", the first stage in the collectivisation of agriculture on the Communist pattern. It was a grim and ruthless enterprise marked by large-scale dispossession and innumerable executions of "landlords", including peasants reclassified as such. In October, 1956, Truong Chinh was dismissed as Secretary-General of the Lao Dong Party after an official statement admitting "serious mistakes". He confessed to "left-wing deviationism", i.e. more orthodox than the party line, but remained a member of the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party.

His eclipse was short. In 1958 he reappeared as one of the four Vice-Premiers in the DRV Government. The same year he was appointed Chairman of the National Scientific Research Commission. In 1960, he relinquished both these posts and became Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, a post to which he was re-elected in 1964. In April, 1961, he was elected a member of the Presidium of the Fatherland Front. In August, 1964, he led a National Assembly delegation to Indonesia.

There was evidence during 1968 that his influence was increasing. In a major report broadcast in September, 1968, and hailed as a "new contribution in the Vietnamese revolution's treasure of theories", he formulated a change of policy, emphasising the importance of "Socialist" construction in the North as well as conducting the war in the South. In November, 1968, he delivered another major speech criticising capitalist tendencies in the agricultural co-operatives in North Vietnam. His voice had been heard more frequently than that of the First
Secretary, Le Duan, and there was widespread speculation that Chinh had eclipsed him. But from March to July, 1969, Truong Chinh was missing from the Hanoi scene, and it was rumoured that he was receiving medical treatment in East Germany. Since then, however, he has appeared at many functions in Hanoi. He made the major speech at the Lenin centenary meeting in April, 1970. He delivered the opening speech at the Sixth Session of the National Assembly in June, 1970, and again in March, 1972. In September, 1971, he presided over a meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly at which the problem of the severe flooding was discussed. He delivered the major speech at the Fatherland Front Third Congress in December, 1971, at which he attacked US policy and called for greater efforts to achieve victory.

Essentially a behind-the-scenes planner, austere and an extremist, Truong Chinh has the inflexible mind of the fanatic to whom only the world of party doctrine has any meaning. Of all the top-ranking leaders in North Vietnam he is possibly the best-versed in Communist ideology and certainly the most hated. He has gone on record as saying: “In the work of leadership it is necessary to make firm use of the army and the security forces”. He is also author of The August Revolution and The Resistance Will Win, written in 1946-47, which have been described as providing “a perfect blueprint for a Communist coup d'état”.

An official list published in June, 1971, showed that Truong Chinh had become a member of the National Defence Council.
Nguyen CON

Deputy Prime Minister
Member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and Secretariat
Chairman of the State Planning Commission
Member, National Defence Council

Con has risen swiftly in the hierarchy in recent years, and is believed to be one of a younger set of politicians who are being groomed to take over the reins of government.

Nothing is known of Con's early life, and he was first heard of on his election to the North Vietnamese National Assembly in early 1957. At the same time he was named as Chairman of the Assembly sub-committee on Land Reform. His rise in political status really began in 1959 when he was appointed Vice-Minister for Construction. In 1960 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party and in the same year he became Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission. He became Chairman of this Commission in 1965. In 1967 he was appointed a Deputy Prime Minister, bringing the number of men holding that position to six (now seven). In 1968, he was mentioned for the first time as a member of the Secretariat of the party Central Committee.

Con has reported on North Vietnam's annual State Plans with regularity since 1962, and as Chairman of the State Planning Commission is responsible for drawing up the plans in detail. So far as is known, he has rarely travelled outside North Vietnam. In September-October, 1970, he led a government economic delegation to China and the Soviet Union to negotiate military and economic aid for 1971, and in December, 1971, he gave a speech on the State Plan at the Third Congress of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

He is a frequent contributor to the North Vietnamese party theoretical journal, Hoc Tap, and is regarded as one of North Vietnam's most knowledgeable spokesmen on economic affairs.

A list published in June, 1971, showed that he had become a member of the National Defence Council.
Tran DO

Alternate Member of Lao Dong Party
Central Committee
Deputy Commander of the
People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF)

Major-General Do is believed to have been killed by South Vietnamese Government Security Forces during a Communist attack on Saigon on February 13, 1968. The body was disfigured, but it was said to be “80 per cent certain” that it was Tran Do. He was one of North Vietnam’s principal field commanders in South Vietnam, and a leading figure in the party and army leadership. Although his work covered both political and military operations, he came to be known as the “political” member of a triumvirate of which the others were the late General Nguyen Chi Thanh and General Tran Van Tra.

A Northerner, little is known about his early life. But it is believed his career followed the familiar pattern of Vietnamese revolutionaries of his generation. His position in the ruling Lao Dong (Workers’) Party and army led to his election as a member of the Lao Dong Central Committee, and his promotion to Major-General in the army. Moreover, he was one of the five Deputy Commanders of the People’s Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF)—the Vietcong—in which he held the rank of Brigadier-General.

Do is reported to have served as Political Commissar of the Right Bank Military Region (Nam Dinh), which includes one of the regular army commands. Presumably, he concerned himself with the political education of North Vietnamese forces earmarked for service in South Vietnam as well as the regular and para-military Vietcong units. He used the pseudonyms of “Chin Vinh”, “Tran Quoc Vinh”, and “Cuu Long” during his operations in the South. He wrote an essay on guerrilla warfare which appeared in the army newspaper, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, of November 13, 1966.

In 1967, Do was reported to be one of the most important men in the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), through which Hanoi controls all military and political activities carried out in the name of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV), and its military arm, the PLAF. The other man was General Nguyen Chi Thanh, then Hanoi’s top military commander and senior political commissar in South Vietnam, to whom Do acted as political deputy.

Material captured by South Vietnamese and US forces during operations in Tay Ninh Province in March, 1967, confirmed Do’s rôle in the triumvirate—a position he held until the death of Nguyen Chi Thanh in a bombing raid in July of the same year.
Thich Tri DO

President, Vietnam Unified Buddhists' Association
Member, National Assembly Standing Committee
Presidium member of the Vietnam Fatherland
Front Central Committee
National Assembly deputy for Hanoi

As leader of the Buddhists in North Vietnam, Do achieved his present position of prominence only because of his outspoken support for the Communist régime in Hanoi, and his ability to maintain a firm control over the Buddhist population. He is therefore useful to the North Vietnamese Government as evidence of its supposedly liberal policy towards religion.

Born in South Vietnam in 1905, Do has been an active nationalist all his life. It is not known when he became a Buddhist priest, but during the war against the French in Indochina, he organised local resistance among the Buddhists in South Vietnam. By 1957 he was the acknowledged leader of the Buddhists in the North, and also a member of the Vietnam Peace Committee. Previously he had been director of the Central Vietnam Buddhist Training School, and in early 1958 formed a committee to found a Unified Buddhist Association. Do planned to include in this Buddhists from the whole of Vietnam. At a congress in Hanoi in March, 1958, Do was elected President of the Vietnam Unified Buddhist Association.

In 1960 Do became a Deputy in the North Vietnamese National Assembly, and was also appointed to the Central Committee of the Vietnam Father and Front, to emphasise the nationalist aspect of the Communist-controlled organisation. He has been prominent in leading Buddhist denunciations of American policy in Vietnam, and support of the Communists. In 1961 he visited Burma with a National Assembly delegation, and attended an Asian Buddhist Conference in Peking in 1963. In 1965 he attended the Indochinese People's Conference in Phnom Penh.

In the name of his religion, Do urges opposition to the Republic of (South) Vietnam, alleging that Buddhism is suppressed. However, the Communist ideology does not permit the free practice of religion, and Buddhists in North Vietnam is only tolerated so far as it aids the image of the Communist régime.
Pham Van Dong is one of the original members of the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). Since 1945 he has distinguished himself primarily as an administrator, organiser and politician. He has been Prime Minister of North Vietnam since 1950.

Born on March 18, 1908, at Mo Due, in the Quang Ngai Province of Annam (now called Central Vietnam), his father was a mandarin and Private Secretary to the Emperor Duy Tan*. Dong was educated in Hue and later in Hanoi where he became involved in nationalist policies, and in 1925 took part in a students' strike.

In the same year he went to Canton, meeting Ho Chi Minh. There he joined Ho's "Revolutionary Youth League" and wrote for the illegal weekly, *Than Nien* (Youth). Next he entered the Whampoa Political-Military Academy which specialised in training Communist cadres. In 1926, he was one of the first cadres whom Ho sent back to North Vietnam to organise Communist cells. Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) statements report that he was arrested in 1929 and given six years' hard labour on the island of Poulo Condore, then a penal settlement.

In 1936, he re-appeared in Hanoi, becoming editor of the magazine, *La Volonté Indochinoise*. He became at the same time one of the leaders of the "Democratic Front!", the legal apparatus of the PCI which was formed in North Vietnam to take part in political life while the party itself operated as a clandestine organisation. When the PCI staged an uprising in 1939 and was suppressed, Dong and other leaders took refuge in Kwangsi, Southern China.

During the Second World War he excelled at assimilating complicated situations, political as well as military. In 1941, he attended the Tsin Tsi conference in Kwangsi which led to the creation of the "League for the Independence of Vietnam", or Viet Minh, a "united front" coalition of several nationalist parties which, however, was under Communist domination. When Ho Chi Minh was imprisoned by the Chinese in 1942-43, he acted as the effective leader of the Viet Minh. In August, 1945, he became Minister of Finance in Ho Chi Minh's Provisional Government which proclaimed the DRV.

*Duy Tan was deposed by the French administration in 1916 because of his support for the nationalist movements.*
In July, 1946, he led the DRV delegation to the Fontainebleau Conference which sought to settle outstanding issues between France and the new régime. He proved a tough and uncompromising bargainer, demanding concessions unacceptable to the French. On his return home he was appointed DRV Special Delegate in South Vietnam and Under-Secretary of State for National Economy in the Ho Chi Minh Government of November, 1946.

During the Indochina War from 1946-54 he concentrated on the home front and emerged as an international figure. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities he joined Ho Chi Minh and the party leadership in their main operational base in the jungles of North Vietnam. In 1949, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and president of the Supreme Defence Council. In the ensuing years he took an increasingly important part in the shaping of DRV policies. In April, 1954, he was made Chairman of the "Land Reform Committee", which initiated the collectivisation of agriculture on the Communist model.

In July, 1954, Dong headed the DRV delegation to the Geneva Conference which ended the Indochina War. In April, 1955, he led another delegation to the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries, and in the following September took over from Ho Chi Minh the posts of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He continued in this dual capacity until February, 1961, when he relinquished his foreign affairs post to Ung Van Khiem. In June, 1961, Dong led a government delegation on a goodwill tour of China, North Korea, Mongolia, USSR, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

In recent years, Pham Van Dong's prominence among the North Vietnamese leaders has become more pronounced. He is a member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo and its Central Committee and in 1960 was elected a Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council. He is the chief North Vietnamese spokesman on the war in the South, having long been an active promoter of the reunification of the two countries. His "Four Points", made in the National Assembly in April, 1965, were the basis of North Vietnam's policy on proposals for negotiation. During several interviews with journalists from East and West in recent years, he showed himself uncompromising in asserting the unity of Vietnam and has insisted that only after the unconditional cessation of bombing "and all other acts of war against the DRV" would the North Vietnamese consider negotiating with the United States.

A French journalist, Marc Riboud, who visited North Vietnam in late 1968, said Dong was sometimes called Ho's "favourite nephew". He attended every major rally in Hanoi during this period, and also addressed conferences of public health, archaeologists, and intellectuals. In many interviews with foreign journalists in the first few months of 1969, Dong consistently took an inflexible stance with regard to the war, and this is in keeping with the view that he is now responsible for the major policy decisions within the North Vietnamese Government.

His background and intellect are those of a fervent Marxist and revolutionary. Politically he is pro-Soviet rather than pro-Chinese. In September, 1969, he led
a party and government delegation to China, East Germany and the USSR, signing economic aid agreements in each country.

In April, 1970, he led the North Vietnamese delegation to the Indochinese summit conference called by Prince Sihanouk and believed to have been held in South China. In June, 1970, he delivered the political report at the Sixth Session of the National Assembly, speaking at great length on "the anti-US struggle" and the building of Socialism in North Vietnam. In November, 1971, he led a government and party delegation to China.

In his political report to the National Assembly in March, 1972, he reiterated that the seven-point peace proposal put forward by Mrs. Binh, the chief Viet Cong negotiator at the Paris talks, constituted the only basis for a settlement of the war.
Vo Thuc DONG

Member of the Lao Dong
Party Central Committee
North Vietnamese Ambassador
to the Soviet Union

Little is known of Dong's early life. He was born in 1916 and has been a party member since 1930. He spent 14 years in prison when Vietnam was under French rule. He was Secretary of the Nghe An Provincial Party Committee, and has been a Central Committee member of the Lao Dong Party since 1960. He became North Vietnamese Ambassador to the Soviet Union in January, 1972, replacing Nguyen Tho Chan.
Le DUAN

First Secretary of the Lao Dong Central Committee
Member of the Lao Dong Party Secretariat
Member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo
Member, National Defence Council

Le Duan is one of the most influential personalities in North Vietnam. His status of First Secretary made him second only to Ho Chi Minh in the party hierarchy.

His rôle has never been that of the popular leader. Essentially he has acted as the master-mind behind the scenes. Born in 1908 in the Quang Tri Province of Central Vietnam, he later went to Hanoi and obtained employment as a secretary with the local railways. At the same time he acquired a taste for politics and moved rapidly leftwards.

By 1931 he was already in sharp conflict with the established order, and was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for subversive activities. After serving only five years he was released. In 1936 he returned to politics and his work for the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). When official action was taken in 1940 against the PCI he was again arrested and given a ten-year sentence. After the Viet Minh seizure of power in August, 1945, he regained his freedom.

In the period thereafter he held a variety of posts in the Viet Minh administration in South Vietnam. With the outbreak of the Indochina War in December, 1946, he made a name for himself in the Viet Minh resistance, and in 1952 was stated to be a Commissioner at its military headquarters in South Vietnam. In 1956 he was promoted Secretary of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee for the Southern Region, the agency responsible for political subversion and military aggression in South Vietnam.

His subsequent rise in the Lao Dong Party's inner circle was remarkable. After the régime's land reform programme had brought about a calamitous situation in the autumn of 1956, Ho Chi Minh temporarily assumed the post of Secretary-General of the Lao Dong Party. But the actual day-to-day leadership devolved on Le Duan. In April, 1959, he was named Secretary-General of the Lao Dong Party. In September of the following year he was officially named First Secretary, thus bringing the North Vietnamese title into line with those of similar office holders in the Communist countries.

Le Duan is thought to be pro-Soviet rather than pro-Chinese, although he has condemned revisionism. Essentially he is a "hard-liner", who is not prepared to accept strategy dictated by either Peking or Moscow. He is believed to be a driving force behind the "militant" policy against South Vietnam and has stated that fighting methods must "be suitable to the Vietnamese battlefields and the
Vietnamese themselves" (May, 1966). His refusal to accept the Chinese strategy of people's war in its entirety may have offended Peking, but he has continued to stress the "creative" nature of the Vietnamese revolution and has warned that "we cannot automatically apply the revolutionary experiences of other countries to our country".

Until Ho Chi Minh's death in September, 1969, he accompanied him on trips to Moscow and Peking which were connected, for the most part, with requests for economic aid. Le Duan attended the 22nd Soviet Party Congress in October, 1961, and led delegations to Moscow in January, 1964, and April, 1965, in what were thought to be attempts to mediate in the Sino-Soviet dispute and to obtain more Soviet support for the war. In 1966, Le Duan led the North Vietnamese delegation to the 23rd Congress of the Soviet party in Moscow and in 1967 was leader of the delegation to the celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution.

In home affairs he has shown himself a realist in such matters as agriculture and industrial development, warning that the Communist millennium was still a long way off.

He is a member of the Lao Dong Politburo, Central Committee and Secretariat. During 1968 he was largely occupied on local economic work, and appeared to have lost much of his major party influence to Truong Chinh. Opposing the arguments of Truong Chinh and Vo Nguyen Giap, he is believed to have favoured large-scale warfare in the South, as opposed to small-scale "protracted war". It seems likely that he was required to modify some of his views after the failure of the Têt offensive in the spring of 1968. However, he continues to exercise the functions of First Secretary, and there is little chance of a permanent eclipse, as long as North Vietnam is intent on keeping up a façade of unanimity.

The death of Ho Chi Minh left Le Duan as the most senior party official and, presumably in this capacity, he was appointed head of the committee to organise the State funeral, with Ton Duc Thang, Truong Chinh and Pham Van Dong (in that order) as deputy heads. His works were quoted, together with those of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Ho Chi Minh in an editorial calling for international Communist unity, in the party organ, Nhan Dan, on September 15.

He delivered a major policy speech on February 2, 1970, at a meeting to mark the 40th anniversary of the Lao Dong Party, and on February 14 wrote a major article in Nhan Dan, giving a broad survey of the economic, political and military situation in North and South Vietnam, and outlining the major policies that the government would pursue in future years. He called particularly for better economic management and national unity.

In April, 1970, Le Duan led a delegation to Moscow to attend the centenary of Lenin's birth, and subsequently visited Peking and Poland. An official list published in June, 1971, showed that he had become a member of the National Defence Council, his first governmental (as distinct from party) appointment.
Tran Huu DUC

Minister of the Premier's Office
Member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party
Chairman, State Reception Committee
Member, National Defence Council

An extreme and vociferous Communist nationalist, Tran Huu Duc is an economic expert, and is employed in the North Vietnamese Government as a general supervisor and administrator.

Little is known of Duc's background, although he is believed to be from Central Vietnam. He was one of the more extreme of the many Communist activists during the period of resistance to the French in Indochina, and from 1929 to 1945 he spent a total of ten years in prison. In 1946 he became Chairman of the resistance committee for Annam, as Central Vietnam was then called, and was elected to the North Vietnamese National Assembly, where he is one of the two "representatives" of the city of Huế (in South Vietnam). (These nominal Southern constituencies continued until March, 1971, when a National Assembly session decided to discontinue them.) He was not active in public life until 1954, when he was appointed Deputy Director of the State Planning Board, and he appears to have been at that time an agricultural expert and a government spokesman on agricultural affairs. In 1958, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, and appointed Vice-Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, a post he held for three years.

Duc achieved full ministerial status in 1960 on his appointment as Minister of State Farms in a newly-organised ministry. He announced plans to increase the agricultural output of the country ten times within five years, but appears to have had little success and was replaced as Minister of State Farms in 1963; he became head of the agricultural board in the Premier's Office. He held this post until 1965, when he was appointed Minister attached to the Premier's Office. This position is believed to involve the arrangements for an organisation of foreign personnel in North Vietnam as well as many other administrative functions.


A list published in June, 1971, showed that he had become a member of the National Defence Council.
Van Tien DUNG

Chief-of-Staff, North Vietnam People's Army
Member of National Defence Council
Member of Lao Dong Party
Politburo

Geneal Dung belongs to the élite of politico-military organisers who, despite professional limitations, established North Vietnam's fighting services and later converted them into a modern military machine.

He is an administrative organiser rather than an operational planner. Born in 1917 of a peasant family in the Hadong Province of North Vietnam, he soon developed an aptitude for politics. In the 1930s he joined the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI), with which he has been associated ever since. In 1938, he is believed to have been Secretary of the Hanoi branch of the "Workers' League", an affiliate of the PCI. When the PCI was declared illegal in 1939 after staging an abortive insurrection, he was arrested and sent to prison.

In 1944, he escaped from detention, was re-arrested, escaped again and fled to China. It is not known how or when he succeeded in joining the Viet Minh in which he became a guerrilla leader. But in March, 1945, he took command of a key sector in the Red River delta.

Since the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in September, 1945, Dung has held several senior appointments. The outbreak of the Indochina War in December, 1946, gave scope to the qualities in which he had long schooled himself—a mastery of details and a grasp of essentials. In 1946 Dung was appointed head of the Political Bureau of the Vietnam People's Army. The following year, he was promoted to Brigadier-General and in 1951 took command of the 320th Division—one of the crack formations in the Viet Minh Army.

In addition, he became Political Commissar for Northern Tongking, the vital region of jungle and mountains in North Vietnam where the DRV was established during the period of hostilities. He became responsible for the political indoctrination of the troops, and held a watchdog brief on their morale and military proficiency. In 1953, he was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army, a post he combined for some time with that of Head of the Political Administration of the High Command. In July, 1954, he was named leader of the DRV delegation to the Trung-Gia armistice talks which ended the fighting in Indochina.

In 1955–56, he served as North Vietnam's representative with the International Control Commission in Saigon, after which he returned to Hanoi. A close associate of Vo Nguyen Giap, he played an important part in remodelling the
DRV armed forces—the regular “People’s Army” and the People’s Militia organisations—for both offensive and defensive purposes. In defiance of the Geneva Agreement of July, 1954, the current strength of the People’s Army amounts to 350,000 men—or the equivalent of 20 divisions.

In 1959, he was promoted to Lieutenant-General. He is a member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, member of the Politburo since September 1972, and a member of the National Defence Council, a body combining policy planning with supervisory powers over the armed forces.

As Chief of Staff of the Army, Dung works in close contact with party First Secretary Le Duan, and his friend and mentor, Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief.

Dung is a prolific writer on military affairs. Like Giap, he is an exponent of the type of guerrilla warfare known as “people’s war”, in which politics are regarded as the mainspring in the strategy of revolutionary struggle. In 1967, Dung published a series of articles in the army newspaper, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, elaborating on this theory, and stressing the need for relying on “one’s own strength”. Dung is considered one of the “hard-liners” in the leadership, and advocates “main force” engagement in the war against South Vietnam.
Hoang Minh GIAM

Minister of Culture
Deputy Secretary-General of the Socialist Party
Chairman of the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People
Presidium Member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee

Giam, an "old-timer" in the North Vietnam leadership, was a close friend of Ho Chi Minh, for whom he once acted as an intermediary.

Born in 1903 in the Nghe An Province of Central Vietnam into a prominent family, he was educated in Hanoi and later became a teacher in Phnom Penh (Cambodia). His political development was typical of that of his generation: anti-colonialism coupled with a yearning for social reform.

Giam took up journalism in the 1920s and, after working in Saigon, he moved to Hanoi in 1930 where he taught at the "Thanh Long" school. Vo Nguyen Giap was one of its tutorial staff. Giap's friendship and political dynamism are said to have had a profound influence on his outlook, which by then was strongly coloured by nationalism. Around 1937 Giam joined the French Socialist Party (SFIO).

In 1939, Giam left for Southern China and after the formation of the Viet Minh in 1941 came rapidly to the fore as a political figure. He belonged to that section within the Viet Minh which stood for independence without severing Vietnam's cultural links with France. In 1945, he became a member of the Committee for the Liberation of the People of Vietnam which a few weeks later became the first Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

Although not officially a Communist or holder of an official position, Giam became an important "go-between" for Ho Chi Minh in the negotiations with the French after September, 1945. He established his reputation as a spokesman for the DRV and collaborator with the Viet Minh. In July, 1946, he was included in the DRV delegation to the Fontainebleau Conference. While in France, he supported the creation of a new Vietnamese Socialist Party in Vietnam. On his return to Hanoi the following November he was made Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

With the outbreak of the Indochina War in December, 1946, Giam joined Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh leadership in the jungles of North Vietnam. In 1947, he was appointed Foreign Minister of the DRV—a post he held until August, 1954, when he resigned on health grounds, being succeeded by the Communist Premier Pham Van Dong, who had represented the DRV at the Geneva Conference in July, 1954.
Giam ranks as a “moderate” in the Communist hierarchy, and before 1947 had many contacts in the French Socialist Party. In January, 1950, he recognised the Mao Tse-tung régime as the legitimate government of China. Four days later China extended diplomatic recognition to the DRV and became the first Communist government to take this step.

In 1955, Giam was deputy leader of the DRV delegation to the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference. In 1957, he led a delegation to Cambodia for the Buddha’s 2,500th birthday celebrations. Later in the year he accompanied Ho Chi Minh on his tour of Communist States, and in 1958 accompanied Ho on State visits to India and Burma. In 1960, he led delegations to Iraq and Indonesia, and in 1961 to Cuba. He attended the World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference in Phnom Penh in November, 1961. He also attended the Indochinese People’s Conference in Phnom Penh in 1965. In July, 1968, he became Chairman of the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People. In this capacity, he led the North Vietnamese delegation to the Hemispheric Conference on Vietnam in Montreal in November, 1968, and to an International Conference on Vietnam, sponsored by the World Peace Council, in Stockholm in December, 1968. He played a prominent part during the visit to Hanoi by a delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam in March, 1969.

In June, 1968, he became Chairman of the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People. In this capacity, he led the North Vietnamese delegation to the Hemispheric Conference on Vietnam in Montreal in November, 1968, and to an International Conference on Vietnam, sponsored by the World Peace Council, in Stockholm in December, 1968. He played a prominent part during the visit to Hanoi by a delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam in March, 1969.

In March, 1970, he attended the Fifth Stockholm Conference on Vietnam, and in April, 1970, led a delegation from the Ministry of Culture to Moscow to visit the International Exhibition on Lenin. The same month he was a member of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Indochinese summit conference called by Prince Sihanouk and believed to have been held in South China. In December, 1971, he led a delegation of the North Vietnamese Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee to Berlin.

Giam’s career provides another example of the usefulness of a non-Communist figurehead as an administrator in a Communist-dominated régime. His Ministry of Culture has been a vehicle for policies devised by the Lao Dong Party. The Socialist Party he represents has been for more than two decades subordinate to Lao Dong direction. He is a long-standing member of the Presidium of the Fatherland Front and President of the Vietnam-Indonesian Friendship Society. In 1964, he was elected Vice-Chairman of the (North) Vietnamese Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, and in the same year was re-elected to his government posts.
Vo Nguyen GIAP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Defence
Commander-in-Chief, North Vietnamese Armed Forces
Member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo
Member, National Defence Council

Giap is the foremost military leader of North Vietnam and the architect of its armed forces. He rose to prominence during the Second World War and later enhanced his reputation with spectacular victories in the Indochina War from 1946-54.

His rôle in Vietnamese politics has been militant throughout. Born in 1912 in the Quang Binh Province of Annam (now Central Vietnam), of a peasant family, he showed qualities of leadership while still in his teens. In 1926, he joined the "Revolutionary Party of New Annam" (Tan Viet Cach Menh Dang), a secret group advocating political and social reform. In 1930 he was arrested for political agitation, and in 1933 enrolled in the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). He then became a teacher, at the same time continuing his studies at Hanoi University and graduating in 1937 in law and in political economy.

By that time his work for the PCI had already brought him into prominence. In 1936 he became one of the leading figures in the "Democratic Front", the legal branch of the PCI which was set up in Tongking (now North Vietnam) to participate in political life while the party itself remained a clandestine organisation. When the PCI fomented an insurrection in 1939 and was proscribed, Giap, with other leaders, took refuge in Kwangsi, Southern China.

It was there that in 1941 he attended the Tsin Tsi conference which led to the creation of the "League for the Independence of Vietnam", or Viet Minh. He was given the task of building up the military apparatus of the Viet Minh, an enterprise in which he showed unusual organisational skill. Returning secretly to the mountainous region of Upper Tongking he spent the next four years raising and training a guerrilla army backed by an intelligence network and political propaganda. In August, 1945, he played a prominent part in the Viet Minh seizure of power and its proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

In the period following he devoted himself to the consolidation of the Viet Minh régime. His first appointment was as Minister of the Interior in Ho Chi Minh's Provisional Government of August, 1945. In that capacity he superintended the liquidation of the nationalist parties, and the taking over of key posts in the DRV by Communists or their supporters. Soon afterwards he
extended his sphere of activity by taking on the post of Under-Secretary of State for Defence.

In the spring of 1946 Giap was promoted to General and Commander-in-Chief. He remodelled the army on the Communist pattern, introducing political commissars and indoctrination methods. He engaged Japanese instructors and further sought to procure operational supplies through "unorthodox" channels. In November, 1946, Giap was made Minister of Defence, a position he had held for some time in all but name. In July, 1947, he was relieved of the Defence Ministry for a year, but was made Commander-in-Chief of the National Army.

Politically, he distinguished himself as a firm supporter of a tough policy towards France, going so far as to suggest war. During the many talks and negotiations to resolve outstanding differences which took place in the first half of 1946, Giap used his influence to prevent concessions to the French. Thereafter he actively prepared for the coming conflict, and was instrumental in mounting the Viet Minh attack on Hanoi on December 19, 1946, which was the starting signal for the Indochina War.

For the next eight years he gave further proof of his talents as an organiser and field commander. He made maximum use of guerrilla warfare, later switching to large-scale offensive action. In the autumn of 1950, he launched his first major offensive, compelling the French forces to evacuate the entire region of Upper Tongking and many frontier positions. In January, 1951, he suffered a serious setback at Vinh Yen which ended his attempt to capture Hanoi. Later in the same year he sustained three more defeats, losing the vital battle of the Red River delta.

Subsequently, with Chinese assistance, he achieved some notable successes, culminating with the storming of Dien Bien Phu in May, 1954.

After the establishment of North Vietnam as an independent State in July, 1954, Giap became Deputy Prime Minister, retaining the posts of Defence Minister and Commander-in-Chief which he has held ever since. He is in addition a member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo; a Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council; and was, until January, 1963, Chairman of the National Scientific Research Commission.

In April, 1965, he visited Moscow with Le Duan and Nguyen Duy Trinh and in 1967 attended the celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution.

As supreme commander he directs a regular army of 350,000 men, supplemented by a 200,000-strong People's Militia comprising regional and local units. In addition, North Vietnam boasts a navy and an air force equipped and supplied by the Communist countries.

A series of articles by Giap, describing the tactics employed by the Vietnamese against the French, were published in September, 1961, under the title People's War, People's Army. The publisher's note, however, describes their appearance as "most timely" and they are generally considered to be an exposition of Communist methods of gaining power in small, developing countries.

Since 1965, Giap has frequently spoken and written on the war in South Vietnam. In September, 1967, he published a long article entitled Big Victory,
Great Task analysing the war up to date and predicting its future course. Giap argued that it had shown that superior forces and equipment were no match for the strategy and tactics of people’s war. He emphasised the importance of coordinating guerrilla and regular warfare, political and military struggle and warned that while victory for the North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces was inevitable “the fight will be even more violent in the days ahead”. In a speech at a rally on December 22, 1968, to mark the 24th anniversary of the Vietnam People’s Army, Giap referred once again to the need for a protracted war, but also emphasised the need to maintain a “spirit of revolutionary offensive”.

In February, 1969, Giap was interviewed by an Italian journalist, Miss Oriana Fallaci. She reported that he lived in a colonial-style house built by the French, with French furniture. He had four or five children, a car given by the Russians, and a wardrobe full of uniforms. She said he had taken on a slightly bourgeois air, and quoted her North Vietnamese companion as saying that Giap was “not the only one to run the war”, and that there were “a whole bunch of younger generals who were more ‘on the ball’.” Giap admitted in the interview with Miss Fallaci that North Vietnam had lost 500,000 men and said that the war would “last as long as necessary—10, 15, 20, 50 years”. These points were missing from an “official” version of the interview.

Giap’s personality is that of an intelligent, ambitious, dynamic, and dedicated party man. Ideologically he is thought to stand nearer to Moscow than to Peking. Since 1950 he has been a member of the Executive Committees of both the USSR-Vietnam and the China-Vietnam Friendship Associations.

An official list published in June, 1971, showed that Giap had ceased to be Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council (a post he had held since 1960). He remained an ordinary member.

In December, 1969, the (North) Vietnam News Agency (VNA) published a lengthy article by General Giap on the late President Ho Chi Minh. The article, written in the first person, described Giap’s co-operation with Ho before and during the Second World War. The same month, an article by Giap on the party’s military line was published in all the major newspapers and magazines in Hanoi. In this article, he pointed out that in the course of a protracted “people’s war” there would be a transition from “progressive evolution” to “developments by leaps and bounds”.

Giap gave the military reports at the National Assembly sessions of June, 1970, and March, 1972, but the former was, as usual, not released and the latter only briefly summarised in North Vietnamese media.

From December, 1971, onwards, not long before the outbreak of the North Vietnamese offensive, North Vietnamese Media published in instalments a long article by Giap entitled: “Arm the Revolutionary Masses and Build up the People’s Army”, in which he discussed the history of the Vietnam War, guerrilla tactics and uprisings.
Tran Van GIAU

Director of School of Political Science,
Hanoi University
Member of the [North] Vietnam Peace Committee

Giau is an "old-guard" Communist with a record of extremism and ruthlessness. Formerly one of the most influential Viet Minh leaders, his status declined in the party hierarchy. His main value lies in his rôle as watchdog for the intellectuals in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and his ability to suppress "deviationist" tendencies among them.

Born at Ta-nam (South Vietnam) in 1911, the son of a Federal Councillor, he was educated in Saigon, Toulouse and Paris. While in France he became involved in Communist politics, engaged in student demonstrations and subversive activities, and in 1930 was expelled from the country.

After spending some time in South Vietnam he returned illegally to France, and then travelled to Moscow, studying at the Stalin Institute. In 1933, he returned to South Vietnam and helped to reorganise the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). Arrested, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment but freed a year later. He was later re-arrested and sentenced to five years' detention. In 1941 he escaped and once more returned to South Vietnam.

Subsequently, he played an important part in the formation of the "Vanguard of Youth" (Thanh Nien Tien Phong) a semi-military nationalist youth movement which came to the fore during the short-lived Tran Trong Kim government of March-August, 1945. Its leader, Dr. Pham Ngoc Thach, was a secret supporter of the PCI.

In August, 1945, Giau brought about the merger between the numerically inferior Viet Minh movement of South Vietnam and various nationalist groups into a "National Front". He became President of the Provisional Executive Committee of South Vietnam which the "Front" set up, and was responsible for military matters.

In the ensuing weeks Saigon witnessed daily outbreaks of violence and murder, aggravated by rivalries between the Communists and their nationalist allies. He has boasted that he killed "700 reactionaries" in one day in Saigon during the stormy interlude of September, 1945. Prevailing chaos compelled British troops to restore order pending the re-establishment of the French administration. In September, Giau relinquished the post of President of the Executive Committee but still retained a dominating influence. He organised a general strike in Saigon plus a "blockade" of the city in an attempt to prevent the transfer of authority to the French. But bitter differences between him and the Nationalists made his position untenable and he was recalled to North Vietnam.

His standing in the party remained nevertheless as strong as ever. He acted as Ho Chi Minh's trusted lieutenant and intermediary. He was popular with the extremist element in the Viet Minh. Soon after the outbreak of the Indochina War in December, 1946, he was sent to Bangkok to organise the supply of war
material to the Viet Minh forces. In 1947, he represented North Vietnam at the Delhi Pan-Asian Conference, a milestone in the ending of colonial rule in Asia.

In 1949, Giau was appointed Director-General of Information. His special task seems to have been to supervise the bringing of non-Communist intellectuals into line with the Communist concept of Statehood. In 1951 he was relieved of this post. In 1955, he was appointed professor at Hanoi University, becoming Director of its faculty of Political Science. In 1957, he also joined the editorial staff of the newspaper, Thong Nhat. In 1958, as Secretary-General of the Vietnam-USSR Friendship Association, he led a delegation to the Soviet Union. Giau became a member of the [North] Vietnam Peace Committee in 1958.
Lieut.-Gen. Hao is the Chief Political Commissar of the North Vietnamese Army. His career has been distinguished by a spectacular rise to the pinnacle of politico-military influence. Both his origin and professional background are unknown, except that in June, 1954, he was a member of a delegation to the French High Command. He is the epitome of the party ideologist and has been carefully groomed for his responsibilities.

As Chairman of the General Political Department (GPD) in the High Command of the Army, he heads an institution of enormous power. Primarily, its role is to ensure the political reliability of officers and men alike and stimulate fanatical devotion to the State and party. The GPD is responsible for indoctrination and purges in the army in the guise of “self-improvement” and “rectification” campaigns. Through its political officers it also engages in propaganda and supervises morale and discipline.

Political officers (commissars) are attached to GHQ and all subsidiary commands, training centres, combat units, and operational areas. They must be in a position to gauge the standard of proficiency of military personnel; they are responsible as much for political tuition as for military training. Moreover, they keep in close touch with the Secretary of the Communist Party branch within their formation or unit, supporting him in all his activities. The GPD operates on the principle that “the direction of the army must be carried out in strict conformity with the directives of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee”.

Song Hao attracted attention by his speeches on the political re-education (rectification) movement within the army some years ago. In 1959, he was promoted Major-General and appointed Deputy Chairman of the General Political Department. In 1960, he was elected to the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. In 1961, he became Chairman of the GPD and Deputy Minister of National Defence. By this time he had been promoted Lieutenant-General. He was re-appointed a member of the National Defence Council in 1964.

While primarily an army man, Song Hao has also on occasions made his presence felt on the general social scene. In November, 1968, he delivered an important speech to a congress of “Determined-to-win” Youths, in which he berated some youths for their lack of revolutionary zeal, and their fondness for “bourgeois” culture and dress. He accompanied President Ho on several occasions in late 1968 and early 1969.
Once an important figure in the party leadership, Hien has since been relegated. Politically, he has been described as a "moderate", which might account for his eclipse.

Born in Phuoc Ninh (Central Vietnam) in 1904, he first earned his living as a postal worker. In 1928, he joined Ho Chi Minh's "Revolutionary Youth League", and three years later was arrested on charges of sedition. Released in 1933, he started a bookshop in Tourane. He was again arrested the same year and imprisoned for a further two years. In 1935 he became a member of the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). When the PCI was outlawed in 1939 he remained in Central Vietnam and took charge of liaison with its leadership abroad. In 1940 he was again arrested, and for the next five years acquired further experience in political detention.

In March, 1945, Le Van Hien joined a number of pro-Japanese groups. Soon afterwards he re-joined the Viet Minh, resuming liaison work in Central Vietnam. After the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in the following August, he became Minister of Labour in Ho Chi Minh's Provisional Government. In March, 1946, he was appointed Minister of Finance, in which capacity he served in all subsequent governments up to 1958. In 1946 he was also elected to the National Assembly.

During the years of the Indochina War he showed his mettle in sustaining a precarious exchequer. In 1953, it fell to him to announce the devaluation of the Indochinese piastre. In addition, he was Vice-President of the National Defence Council, the executive and policy-planning agency which included the highest leaders in the Viet Minh party and government.

The first signs of Hien's decline appeared in 1958 when he was removed from the Ministry of Finance without explanation and appointed Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board. In 1960, he was made a Minister without Portfolio, and while retaining his position on the Board was apparently deprived of his membership of the Lao Dong Central Committee. In 1961, he accompanied Premier Pham Van Dong on a tour of six Communist countries. In 1962, he was made Ambassador to Laos. Little is known about his current activities and he was absent from his post for some years, visiting Laos only briefly in 1968 and again in May, 1969. He ceased to be Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board some time ago.
Nguyen Cong Hoa probably has little political importance; he is a typical Communist "front" figure, whose frequent journeys abroad are undertaken to emphasise the supposed democratic nature of North Vietnam's Government. As a trade union official he helps to create the impression that the workers of North Vietnam have as many rights as workers in non-Communist countries.

Nguyen Cong Hoa seems first to have been noticed publicly in 1953, when as a member of the Standing Committee of the Vietnam General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) he attended the Third World Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Vienna. GFTU is affiliated to WFTU, which is a Communist international front organisation. In 1956 he led a delegation to a WFTU conference in Bulgaria. His activities inside Vietnam have never been publicised, but it is known that the purpose of the GFTU is to ensure that the labour problems in North Vietnam do not get out of hand, and that workers adhere strictly to party policy and commands. One of his main functions seems to be attending international conferences, which he has done with regularity. In 1961 he visited Cuba for the May Day celebrations; he subsequently visited East Germany (1961), Czechoslovakia (1963), the USSR (1963 and 1967), and Cyprus (1966).

Hoa was elected to the Standing Committee of the North Vietnamese National Assembly in 1961, and became Vice-President of the GFTU in 1962. In the same year he was elected to the General Council of WFTU, and was re-elected in October, 1969. He became Vice-President of the Vietnam-Korea Friendship Association in 1968.

He led a delegation to France in November, 1969, to attend the 37th Congress of the General Confederation of Labour; to Mongolia in October, 1970, for a WFTU meeting; to Hungary in April, 1971, for the 22nd Congress of the Hungarian Central Council of Trades Unions; and to Czechoslovakia in June, 1971. In December, 1971, he went to Berlin for the 21st Congress of WFTU.
Hoang Van HOAN

Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee
Member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo
Presidium Member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee

Hoan is one of the “Old Guard” in the Indochinese Communist movement and has been an important figure in the South-East Asian Communist apparatus. Formerly using a series of aliases, he was not well-known in North Vietnam until his appointment as Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) diplomatic representative in China in 1950. He has played an important role in the organisational work of the Lao Dong Party and is regarded in the party as an authority on international affairs.

His career originated in the Vietnamese Nationalist movement of the 1920s. Born in 1905 in Nghe An Province, he took part at the age of 19 in the agitation for the release of nationalists imprisoned because of their demands for social reform. In 1926, he left for China and in Canton joined Ho Chi Minh’s “Revolutionary Youth League”. In 1930, he helped in founding the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). From then until 1940 Hoan acted as PCI liaison officer with Vietnamese nationals in Thailand and China.

Hoan gained further recognition in 1941, being one of the organisers of the “League for the Independence of Vietnam”, or Viet Minh, a coalition of several Nationalist parties under Communist leadership, and becoming a member of its Central Executive Committee. For the next four years he is thought to have been closely associated with Vo Nguyen Giap in building up the Viet Minh’s political and military machine in North Vietnam. In March, 1946, Hoan was appointed Head of the Political Bureau of the Supreme Council of National Defence. In 1945 he was named a Deputy to, and a member of, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly.

During the Indochina War, Hoan made his mark as a senior party executive at home and propagandist abroad. From late 1946 until 1948 he was Viet Minh representative in the vital Northern sector of Central Vietnam. After the recognition of Ho Chi Minh’s DRV in 1950 by the Communist countries, Hoan headed a DRV mission of friendship to the Soviet Union and other Communist States.

In February, 1951, a reorganisation took place within the Viet Minh from which the Communists emerged with their control of the Nationalist parties strengthened and under the name of Lao Dong, or “Workers’ Party”. Hoan’s part in this operation is not clear but he became a member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee.

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In December, 1950, he was appointed DRV Minister to Peking, and in October, 1952, was raised to the rank of Ambassador. He was concurrently envoy to Outer Mongolia, being promoted Ambassador to Outer Mongolia in 1955 and to North Korea in 1956. He held all three posts until 1957. During this period he was a member of the DRV delegation to the 1954 Geneva Conference which ended the war in Indochina. The same year he also visited Burma and annually attended congresses in Mongolia, North Korea, China and Eastern Europe. These travels included accompanying Ho in 1957 on his state visit to Communist countries, and in 1959 to the 21st Soviet Party Congress in Moscow. In May, 1961, he became Special Adviser to the DRV delegation to the Geneva Conference on Laos. His travels since have included attendance in late 1962 at Party Congresses in Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and the East German Party Congress in January, 1963; Cuba and Romania for anniversary celebrations (August, 1964); Romania for the funeral of Gheorghiu-Dej (March, 1965); and East Germany for the 20th Anniversary of the Second World War.

Toward the end of 1956 Hoan was made a member of an Inspection Commission set up to supervise the streamlining of government departments after the calamitous “Land Reform” of Truong Chinh. In 1958, he was appointed Vice-President of the DRV National Assembly, and in 1960 elected Vice-Chairman and Secretary-General of the Assembly’s Standing Committee. Since 1957 at least Hoang Van Hoan has been a member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo, the highest executive body in North Vietnam. In February, 1961, he was elected First Secretary of the Hanoi Committee of the Lao Dong Party.

In June, 1962, Hoan resigned from the post of Secretary-General but remained a Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee. He appeared very little in public from 1966 until January, 1969, when he received a visiting Danish Communist Party delegation. In March he welcomed a delegation from the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. At the May Day rally Hoan was listed sixth (his normal position in the Politburo being tenth), but it is possible that he was deputising for Truong Chinh in his capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, and ranked accordingly. After the reappearance of Truong Chinh, Hoan reverted to a lower position.

In November, 1969, he led a government delegation to Albania, Hungary and Romania. In February and April, 1970, he presided over meetings of the National Assembly Standing Committee. He led a National Assembly delegation to Eastern Europe in June, 1970, and another in August, 1971. In December, 1971, he was elected to the Presidium of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee. In May, 1972, he led the North Vietnamese delegation to the funeral of President Sambuu of Mongolia.
Tran Quoc HOAN

Minister of Public Security
Member Lao Dong Party Politburo
Member National Defence Council

Hoan is one of the key members of the Lao Dong Party leadership in a position reminiscent of Serov and Himmler. He is yet another of those top personalities whose antecedents are unknown. In the last decade he has been the centre around which party security has revolved.

His connexion with the Communist Party became manifest during the Indochina War in which he gained the confidence of his superiors. From 1949–51, he was Political Commissar in the provinces of Hanoi and Hadong (North Vietnam), then a vital sector of the fluid front-line.

In 1953, he took over the Ministry of Public Security which he has held ever since. In 1954–55, he combined this post with membership of the Central Committee for Agrarian Reform—a body entrusted with planning the collectivisation of agriculture on the standard Communist model. In 1960, he became concurrently Head of the newly-formed Board of Home Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office, and in addition a member of the National Defence Council. In the same year he was elected an Alternate Member of the Lao Dong Party Politburo and re-elected to the Central Committee.

In 1965, he was replaced as Chairman of the Board of Home Affairs by Nguyen Van Tao, but retained his post as Minister of Public Security. In September, 1972, he became a full member of the Politburo.

As Minister of Security he is the operational head of the People's Armed Security Force (PASF), North Vietnam's equivalent to the KGB in the USSR. It is responsible for maintaining law and order inland, along the frontiers, in coastal areas, and on the 17th Parallel (the dividing line between North and South Vietnam). Its terms of reference include the protection of the Fatherland, party, State and people—in that order. The PASF deals with all forms of overt and clandestine "counter-revolutionary" activities. It is an army in all but name having its own cavalry, signals, motorised and naval units. Ultimate control of the PASF is vested in the Lao Dong Party's Central Military Party Committee.
Pham Hung ranks among the foremost party figures of the régime, and according to some defectors in the South, he succeeded the late General Nguyen Chi Thanh on the latter's death in 1967 as head of COSVN which controls the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and all Communist activities in the South. His absence from the Hanoi scene since 1967 seemed to confirm this. His previous speciality was agriculture, now in the final stages of collectivisation. He is no seeker of the limelight; rather he is a programme planner and bureaucrat. He has a distinguished party career behind him and is well connected with the men at the helm.

Little is known of his background except that he was born in 1912 in the Vinh Long Province of South Vietnam. But clues can be picked up from the main stages of his political progress. He joined Ho Chi Minh's "Revolutionary Youth League" in the 1920s and in 1930 enrolled in the newly established Indochinese Communist Party (PCI). In 1931, he was, apparently, sentenced to death for sedition but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on the island of Poulo Condore.

After the coming to power of the Viet Minh in August, 1945, he was released. During the Indochina War he put many of his revolutionary ideas into practice in South Vietnam. Up to 1951 he held various posts in the Viet Minh party machine, including those of Director of Political Affairs, Director of Security Service, and member of the Resistance Administrative Committee. On the formation of the Lao Dong Party in 1951 he was elected to its Central Committee with special responsibility for the party's activities in the South. From 1952 to 1954 he combined three key appointments in the South. They were Secretary of the party organisation in the eastern parts of South Vietnam; Chairman of the Resistance and Administrative Committee; and member of the military command in that region.

With the termination of the Indochina War in July, 1954, he became Head of the Ceasefire Committee in South Vietnam, and in the following year Head of the Liaison Mission of the Viet Minh High Command in Saigon.

After his return to North Vietnam his rise in the party hierarchy was rapid. In 1955, he was elected to be a Minister in the Prime Minister's Office; in 1957, he advanced to membership of the Lao Dong Party Politburo; and in 1958 he was appointed a Deputy Prime Minister. In 1960, probably with Pham Van Dong's backing, he was confirmed in his party and government posts, being further elected to the Lao Dong Party Secretariat and Chairman of the
Agricultural Board of the Premier's Office. In the summer of 1961 he was Acting Prime Minister for two months during the absence abroad of Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, with whom he is on terms of close friendship and collaboration. In 1957 Hung visited Prague and Moscow, and he accompanied Ho Chi Minh to India and Burma in 1958 and to Indonesia in the following year. In 1963, he was transferred from the Agricultural Board and made Chairman of the Finance and Commercial Board in the Prime Minister's Office. In April, 1965, he was appointed Chairman of a new State Committee on Prices, but in November, 1966, relinquished this post and that of Chairman of the Finance and Commercial Board.

Hung's emergence since 1957 as an increasingly important figure has coincided with an intensification in the regime's propaganda of themes of national reunification and anti-Americanism. Hung has also a reputation as an administrator. Having made agriculture his speciality, his instructions were to increase farm output in the face of natural calamities and political mismanagement.

He did not appear on the list of Deputy Prime Ministers in June, 1971, and there has been speculation that he may be dead.
Dr. Nguyen Van HUONG  
*Minister of Health*

Huong is described as a "nationalist intellectual", and is one of the few members of the North Vietnamese Government who is not a Communist.

Nguyen Van Huong was born in Long Xuyen Province, South Vietnam, in 1906, and studied medicine in the South, becoming a practitioner at a fairly early age. During the war against the French, he organised medical work in the southern provinces. After the Geneva Agreements on Indochina in 1954, Huong went North to Hanoi, and was elected to the North Vietnamese National Assembly where he represented his Southern province, Long Xuyen. (Nominal Southern constituencies continued to exist until March, 1971.)

From 1954 to 1959, Huong directed the Vietnam Institute of Bacteriology in Hanoi, and was concurrently Vice-Chairman of the Vietnam Association of Oriental Medicine. In 1956 he was among the founder members of the Vietnam Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, which is affiliated to the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO). In 1961 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and became Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly. Both these posts are usually reserved for functionaries who are to be given the illusion of political influence but who are in reality kept out of politics completely. In April, 1969, he was relieved of his National Assembly post to become Minister of Health, succeeding Pham Ngoc Thach who is believed to have died on active service in the South.

Huong has led many medical delegations abroad, as well as attending conferences in foreign countries, among them conferences of the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW), a Communist front organisation, in India (1955) and China (1958), and an AAPSO meeting in the UAR (1968). He is credited with achieving the hallmark of a successful doctor in North Vietnam—the reconciliation of Eastern and Western Medicine. In June, 1970, he led a delegation to a public health conference in Bulgaria, and, while there, signed a public health co-operation agreement with the Bulgarian Minister.
To HUU

Member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and its Secretariat
Head of the Propaganda and Education Board

To Huu is the youngest of the more powerful members of the Lao Dong Party leadership. He made his name as a poet and populariser of Soviet and Chinese literary works. He is also a top propagandist with implacably orthodox and Stalinist views.

His climb to the apex of party power has been rapid and not unspectacular. Born in 1920 in the Thua Thien Province of Central Vietnam (then called Annam), his real names was Nguyen Kim Thanh. Educated in Hue, the former imperial capital, he was early influenced by the political stirrings of the period and joined the Democratic Youth Movement. From there he gravitated to the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI) where his talents were soon recognised.

To HUU, according to Communist sources, was imprisoned for his revolutionary zeal. After the Viet Minh seizure of power in Central Vietnam in August, 1945, he was made a member of its Executive Committee for that region. Moreover, he was named Secretary of the Association of Marxist Studies in Annam—the cover label of the Communist Party which it adopted at the time for tactical reasons.

During the Indochina War, To HUU gained steadily in stature. In 1949, he was appointed Director of the Viet Minh Information Bureau for Central Vietnam. In 1951, he became Director-General of Information, taking over from Tran Van Giau. Concurrent with this promotion was his rise in the party hierarchy. Thus, he became an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and, in addition, a powerful influence in Cua Quoc (National Salvation), the newspaper of the Fatherland Front.

From 1953 onwards, HUU played a part in the various Literary Associations and Cultural Organisations in North Vietnam. In 1954 he was appointed Vice-Minister of Information, being redesignated a year later as Vice-Minister of Culture. Probably the only poet of any worth in the DRV, he was awarded the Vietnam Literary Prize in 1954-55 for his revolutionary poetic cycle, Viet-Bac. In January, 1956, he was officially identified as a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. In February of that year, he was relieved of his post in the Ministry of Culture and appointed a Secretary of State and Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers. Over the next two years he played a leading part in the condemnation of the Nhan Van-Giai Pham "reactionary" literary group who had dared criticise the régime's policy of political control of arts and letters and the administration's handling of "democratic freedoms".

In 1956 Huu visited China, and in 1959 he went to Poland, Hungary and Mongolia.

In 1960 he was appointed Chairman of the Cultural and Educational Board attached to the Prime Minister's Office, and was confirmed as a member of the
Secretariat of the party's Central Committee. In the spring of 1961 he was a member of the central body, under the chairmanship of Truong Chinh, which organised the party's rectification or political re-education movement. In 1963, he gave up his post in the Prime Minister's Office and became Head of the Propaganda and Education Board of the party Central Committee. In January, 1964, he was a member of a party delegation to Moscow, and in January, 1972, he led a delegation to the Italian Communist Party Congress. He went to Moscow again in March, 1972, and had talks with Soviet officials about co-operation in ideology and culture. Writing in the Party's theoretical journal, Hoc Tap of June, 1971, on economic management problems, he said the situation demanded a body of "Socialist intellectuals" loyal to the Party.

To Huu is one of the closest collaborators of Truong Chinh, leader of the most rigid element in the party. It is probable that he owes his promotion to Truong Chinh's backing and his future fortunes almost certainly depend upon Truong Chinh.
Huyen is a Western-educated scholar of considerable standing. He is believed to be little more than a figurehead for the Hanoi régime, who use him as an advertisement for the supposedly liberal policies towards intellectuals in North Vietnam.

Born in Hanoi in 1908, Huyen went to Paris at a comparatively early age, and studied in that city until he was 26, when he achieved a Doctorate of Literature. He returned to Hanoi and taught for some time at the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. In 1945 he was appointed Minister of Education. He began to contribute frequently to the North Vietnamese Press on the subject of education, and has continued to do so since that time. In 1958 he became a member of the newly-formed National Scientific Research Board, and joined the committee of the Vietnam-China Friendship Association. He was described as a Vice-President of that association in October, 1968.

Huyen has travelled extensively with educational delegations and attended many international conferences. He was present at the Dalat and Fontainebleau Conferences in 1946, and attended the Second World Students' Congress in Prague in 1950. Other visits include Peking and Moscow in 1955; East Germany, Peking and Moscow in 1961; a tour of Guinea, Mali, China and Czechoslovakia in 1964; another visit to the Soviet Union in 1968; Algeria in 1969; East Berlin in 1970; Mongolia in 1971 and East Berlin, Moscow and Bulgaria in 1972.

Huyen is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Vietnam Historical Science Association, and in March, 1969, participated in talks in Hanoi with the delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. The important directives concerning education in North Vietnam are always taken by the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Workers') Party, and Huyen's reported activities as Minister of Education rarely extend beyond articles in the Press and occasional visits to schools.