

DRV FILE / BLOG
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HA.H.GIAP

Ha Huy GIAP became a member of the Central Committee of the VWP in 1960, He had already served for four years as Vice Minister of Education under a non-Party minister. In 1963 he was shifted to the Ministry of Culture again under a non-communist minister. But this time his minister was Hoang Minh Giam about whom much more information is available than there is about Ha Huy Giap.

Giam, born in 1903, in Nghe An Province, was a journalist and school teacher in Hanoi when in the 1930's he joined the Hanoi branch of the French Socialist Party. When that small Vietnamese section split between those who thought accomodation with the French was possible, and those who did not, Giam was a leader of the latter group which affiliated to the Viet Minh. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DRV from 1947 to 1954, while Pham Van Dong and Hoang Van Hoan were in fact the DRV's key men in the administration of foreign policy. Giam is said to have enjoyed a close personal friendship with Ho Chi Minh, with whom he frequently travelled abroad.

Therefore it is probable that unlike some instances where communists have been assigned as vice ministers to non-communist ministers because the non-communists were not trusted in this case, Giap's assignment may have been prompted by a desire to prop up an ageing friend who needed assistance more than surveillance. How old Giap himself is not known. The fact, however, that he is deputy chief of the Party historical commission suggests that he is no newcomer, and that he must have been an I.C.P. member. Besides that, in fact all one knows of him is that he is a frequent writer of "theoretical" articles and the President of the Vietnamese-Korean Friendship Society.

And one other thing. A People's Revolutionary Party pamphlet published in South Viet-Nam in 1965 analysing the dynamics of the August Revolution in Saigon in 1945 mentions one man only by name-- Ha Huy Giap--as a leader of the Party in Saigon in those few halcyon days. The implication is that Giap like Giam is a veteran of the revolution who deserves an honorary position. It follows, then that another Vice Minister of Culture, not Giap, is the Party's wheel horse at the Ministry of Culture, but as no other Central Committee member or alternate is so assigned Giap remains the link between the Party and the Ministry.

Not much has been heard of Giap recently, but on June 6, 1973 when the DRV government sent a delegation to Quang Tri to participate in the PRGRSV's reception of ambassadors Giam was one of its members. It seems that the two old men are revolutionary monuments, with neither the veteran communist nor the aged one time socialist persons of much power in the DRV.