

NGUYEN VAN LINH (1913- ) (real name Nguyen Van Cuc).

Leading member of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) and current General Secretary of the Party. Born in Hanoi in 1913, Nguyen Van Linh was brought up in South Vietnam, where he joined the revolutionary movement as an adolescent and was arrested for political activities in 1930. Released from prison in 1936, he took part in Communist Party operations in Cochin China, reportedly as a protégé of Le Duan. He was rearrested in 1941 and spent the war years in Poulo Condore prison.

After World War II Nguyen Van Linh served under Le Duan in the Party apparatus in the South and (under the pseudonym Muoi Cuc) was director of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) from 1961 until his replacement by General Nguyen Chi Thanh in 1964. He remained as deputy to Thanh and later to Thanh's successor Pham Hung until the end of the war.

In 1978 Nguyen Van Linh was raised to Politburo rank and headed the Party committee for Ho Chi Minh City (the new name for Saigon). In 1978 he was dismissed, reportedly because of his failure to carry out the Party's plans for socialist transformation in the South. At the Fifth National Congress of the Party, held in March 1982, he lost his Politburo seat, but shortly thereafter he returned as Party chief in Ho Chi Minh City and was quietly reinstated in the Politburo in 1985. At the Sixth National Party Congress in December 1986, Linh was named General Secretary to replace the aging Truong Chinh. As General Secretary he has pushed reforms to stimulate the stagnant Vietnamese economy. (See Central Office for South Vietnam; Vietnamese Communist Party)