

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 Hué. 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 rôle 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.

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