VIETNAM
STUDY GUIDE
AND
ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY

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VIETNAM STUDY GROUP KIT

The following suggestions deal with the problems involved in organizing study group programs and training persons to lead study groups. The design recommended should not circumvent the flexibility which is necessary to make the program viable under varying conditions. A major effort has been made to avoid, on the other hand, making the required reading list so long as to discourage potential participants, and on the other hand, making it so short as to be of no value either in providing information or in giving the student a direct contact with the sources. I have also tried, wherever possible, to place on the reading list books which are more easily available, especially those that have been published in paperback editions. All the readings on this list should be available either in good bookstores or in university libraries. It is a good idea to arrange for bookstores to stock ample copies of such paperbacks as Warner and Scigliano.

The minimum training or background that one should have in order to lead a study group should consist of the equivalent of "production" from the study group program outlined below. Those interested in further reading on selected topics should consult the lengthwise annotated Selected Bibliography on Vietnam.

Steven Rosenthal

The study group program may be divided into several sessions, held at intervals of a week, or more, or less. If it is to be divided into only two sessions, then the first should cover Vietnam and the history of the American involvement up through the 1954 Geneva Conference, while the second should cover developments since that time up to the present. It is recommended, however, that there be no less than four sessions, and the following model is based upon a five-session program.


Session II: The 1954 Geneva Conference. Required readings: both the memoirs of Eisenhowe (Mandate for Change) and the memoirs of Anthony Eden (Full Circle) contain chapters devoted to Indochinese developments and should be read. (An article on the Geneva Conference may be made available shortly).


Each of the five sessions should consist of a 30 to 45 minute opening lecture by the study group leader, to be followed by approximately one hour (or longer, if desired) of general discussion related to the contents of the lecture. The lecture should be as factual as possible and should be delivered not in a polemical but restrained style taking into account the political dispositions and the amount of previous education on Vietnam of the participants. The study group leader should maintain some control over the discussion period, so that it does not degenerate into heated squabbling over irrelevant issues, and so that the discussion is not monopolized by one or two persons.

Do not duck questions and avoid making generalizations or spouting political formulas which are based not on evidence that you can supply to the skeptical, but merely on your own convictions. Do not try to assume that there has been no aid from North Vietnam to the guerillas. It is much easier to proceed by showing how little proof the other side has been able to come up with. Also, do not try to point communism as a way for the peasant masses; insist only that it is a better alternative than any which the United States is prepared to sponsor.

Those who wish to do further reading or improve their ability to lead study groups may organize advanced sessions, based upon the guidelines of the Selected Bibliography in seminar style, persons may choose topics on which to do further research and then give reports to the group. This enables the participants to profit from a division of labor.

Appendix

As a supplement to the suggestions contained in the study group kit, I am including a brief outline and summary of the material that should be covered by the study group leader in his five lectures.

Begin with a brief sketch of Vietnamese history prior to World War II. Mention the takeover of Indochina by Japan during the war. Point out that FDR did not want to see the French regain their colony when the war ended, and that Truman reversed this policy. Mention that the French attempt to regain their colony led to war with the Vietminh, the resistance movement which had sprung up against the Japanese during World War II. Indicate that up to 1950, the US maintained the position that the French would have to create a so-called "nationalist alternative" that could compete successfully against the Vietminh for the loyalty of the population. Show that the victory of the Communists in China and the outbreak of the Korean War led to a change in the US position whereby the US downgraded the importance of independence and decided to support French colonialism against the communists. Point out the tremendous step-up in American aid to the French between 1950 and 1954. Show that the French military position deteriorated so fast that by 1954, they wanted to negotiate an end to the war. Show that the US wanted the war to continue and was prepared
to assume the main burden of combat if necessary to prevent a
Communist victory. Point out how British and French opposition to the
continuation of the war prevented the US from implementing this
strategy. Show how the US had to settle for "cutting of losses!"
Point out that it was the threat of American military intervention,
together with pressures from the USSR and China upon the Vietminh
that caused the latter to accept a settlement less favorable than
what their military situation warranted. Point out that none of
the nations participating in the Geneva Conference expected the
elections called for 1956 to be held—that this was more or less
a face-saving device. Show that the American strategy was to re-
verse a successful revolution in the South (point out that in 1954
the Vietminh controlled over half of the South) by installing an
anti-Communist regime which would attempt to install itself by
force. Discuss the means by which Diem tried first to bring the
army under his control, then destroyed rival nationalists and the
sects. Then discuss his abolution of village autonomy and attempt
to bring the countryside under his control. Discuss the fraudu-
 lent referendum of Oct., 1956, and the "Anti-Communist denuncia-
tion campaign." Then discuss the land reform measures, showing
that they destroyed the gains that the peasants had received from
the Vietminh. Show how the combination of military and political
repression, economic reaction, and religious discrimination (you
may discuss how the US arranged the importation of Catholics from
the North to underpin Diem's regime) led to the renewal of guer-
illa warfare in the South. Then discuss the myths that the US
government has pandered in trying to ascribe the war to aggression
from the North. Discuss the regroupment schemes launched by the
Dien government, culminating in the strategic hamlets, in the at-
tempt to separate the rural population from the guerillas. Des-
crribing the deterioration in the military situation down to 1965, by
which time the war had essentially been lost. Discuss the US take-
over of the war and the beginning of regular bombings on North
Vietnam in Feb., 1965. Discuss the massive use of air power ag-
ainst the rural population. Point out that the US offer of "un-
conditional discussions" is a fraud as long as the US refuses to
negotiate with the Vietcong and refuses to accept them in a future
government of South Vietnam. Be prepared to discuss the "menace"
of Communist Chinese expansionism which many people believe to be
lurking behind the Communist thrust in Vietnam.

This is at best a sketchy review of the material that should
be covered, but it may be helpful to those trying to organize
their lectures....
VIETNAM: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography is designed to facilitate a rapid but fairly thorough process of self-education on the subject of Vietnam. Recognizing that reliable source material on Vietnam is scattered and frequently spotty, this bibliography attempts to save you the time that others have expended piecing together countless books, articles, and newspaper clippings, turning up bits and pieces of dubiously reliable evidence. The way in which the bibliography is organized obviously reflects the conceptual scheme that I have adopted in thinking about Vietnam, and the comments on various sources reflect my own value judgments. However, I have chosen what I believe to be the most unimpeachable sources, and the reader is given the opportunity to come to his own conclusions. For a longer, unannotated bibliography, consult the U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam (cited below), or contact me.

Steven J. Rosenthal

I. Vietnamese History

D. R. S. Hall, A History of Southeast Asia, (revised and published in several editions since 1955). This is probably the best English-language general history. The sections on Indochina total about 45 pages.

Le Thanh Khoi, Le Viet-Nam (Paris, 1955). This is probably the best and is the standard history of Vietnam.

Fritz Erich H. Jacoby,asserian Unrest in Southeast Asia, (Columbia University Press, 1949). A more specialized study, this is nonetheless an immensely valuable book. It is, in the author's words, "a more comprehensive analysis of the main causes responsible for theasserian unrest" in Southeast Asia, and rather than the contemporary fashion of emphasizing Communist aggression, infiltration, and subversion, it is "focused on the problems of land tenure, agricultural cultivation, and rural indebtedness." (p. 7) See especially chapters 1 (General Survey), 5 (Indo-China), and 8 (asserian Unrest and National Movements).

II. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam, (available from the Sup. of Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington.) first published in 1962. This is a very thorough and often revealing compilation of information, whose contents often do not fit the line to which they were made to conform.

(Note: Those who prefer to dispense with a lengthy historical excursion should confine themselves to reading the recommended chapters in the book by Jacoby. It provides an adequate picture of pre-World War II Indochinese society.)

II. World War II and the French-Indochinese War (1940-1954)

For brief treatment of this period, consult the works mentioned in Part I. The following works offer more detailed treatment.

Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams, (Prentice, 1968; a new revised edition is also available). Fall's Gaullist habits occasionally interfere with his objectivity, and his exposition is rarely systematic. Nevertheless, he remains one of the foremost authorities on Vietnam, and his work is highly useful. Read selectively or skim.
authorities on Vietnam, and his works are highly useful. Read selectively or skim carefully.


Edgar Snow, *War and Peace in Vietnam, from The Other Side of the River*. This is a concise, straightforward account of the last twenty-five years of Vietnamese history. The chapter can be read in half an hour.

III. The Geneva Conference

An understanding of the diplomatic history preceding the Geneva Conference of 1954 is not merely crucial but central to an understanding of what has taken place since in Vietnam. The Geneva Conference and the Geneva Agreements have been subjected to infinite misinterpretation by both defenders and critics of American policy in Vietnam. However, sufficient reliable evidence is available to correct this situation. There are three sources for this period:

D.D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956, the White House Years*

Sir Anthony Eden, *Full Circle*

The *New York Times*

These three sources, the memoirs of a former American President and a former British Foreign Secretary, later to become Prime Minister, and the daily files of perhaps the leading American newspaper, provide most of the essential information for the period from January to the end of July, 1954. Both Eden and Eisenhower devote a special chapter to Indochina, discussing Western moves before and during the Geneva Conference. Not surprisingly, Eden's is somewhat the better account. See below for a brief summary of the relevant articles from the *New York Times*.

Other sources:

Victor Bator, *Vietnam--A Diplomatic Tragedy--The Origins of the United States Involvement* (Oceana Publications, 1965). This very recent book is the first to deal specifically with the Geneva Conference. The author writes with an inflated notion of his own importance, and his scholarship is occasionally very sloppy, but he has done considerable research and provides much valuable information, drawn from memoirs and newspaper files.

Allan B. Cole, (ed.), *Conflict in Indo-China and International Repercussions: A Documentary History, 1945-1955*, (Cornell, 1956). This very useful compilation of documents and commentary contains a number of especially interesting items. See, for example, Vice-President Nixon's speech of April 15, 1954 (p. 174); Dulles' speech of March 29, 1954 (pp. 172-82); Dulles News Conference of July 23, 1954 (pp.176-77). These and other official pronouncements of American policy are quite revealing if read carefully.
Oliver E. Clubb, Jr., *The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia*, (Brookings Institution, 1962). Clubb, who has recently been an outstanding and vocal critic of American policy in Vietnam, was among those ousted from the State Department during the McCarthy period. His clear thinking was a substantial loss. For important considerations on Vietnam, see especially pp. 41-46, 52-50, and 55-56.

The following is a summary of the most important information that can be gathered from the *New York Times* of this period.

3/22/54: U.S. desire to internationalize the war; train Vietnamese to replace faltering French against Communists. U.S. already paying 73% of costs of war.


5/7/54: (After U.S. fails to get British and French accord for international coalition to take over war), Western allies agree on compromise plan for “protected armistice.” Aim to save at least half of Vietnam.

6/24/54: Wa. S. White: U.S. now thinking in terms of a salvage operation. Fate 5: elections, if held in Vietnam, would result in Communist victory.


NOTE: In reviewing these articles, bear the following timetable in mind. On March 20, 1954, the French informed the U.S. that their military position was desperate and that they were seeking an armistice to end the fighting. On May 8 Dienbienphu fell to the Vietminh. The Geneva Conference convened in late April, began discussion of the Indochina question the day after the fall of Dienbienphu, and completed its work on July 21, 1954.

IV. Since 1954

General works
Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Vietnams* (see above for description).

Robert Scriver, *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress*, (Houghton-Mifflin, 1963; published recently in paperback by same publishers). This book is better than Bernard Fall’s (and shorter). Scriver is a conscientious political scientist and, as part of the Michigan State University team, spent over two years in South Vietnam.

Denis Warner, *The Last Confucian*, (Macmillan, 1963; published in paperback recently as a Delphin special). Warner is a conservative Australian journalist with a great deal of experience in Asian battlefronts. His is a journalist’s account, but it is packed full of important information. It presents a graphic and concrete picture of the war.
V. Since 1954

1954-1956: Consolidation of Diem's Rule

General Works

Scigliano, pp. 13-25, 47-55, 190-215.

Bernard Fall, The Two Vietnams, Fall, pp. 254-288.

Warner, pp. 94-106.

Robert Scheer, "The Vietnam Lobby," in Ramparts, July, 1965, pp. 16-24. Ramparts is a progressive Catholic magazine. Scheer has done a lot of work toward uncovering the details behind the American involvement in Vietnam. This article is unique and required reading. See also Scheer's review of David Halberstam's book at the end of the same issue, (all of which is devoted to Vietnam).

Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina Continues, (Stanford, 1955). This is a short (25-40 pp.) account of the events of 1954 and 1955, describing Diem's attempts to crush opposition groups and bring the armed forces under his control. The author points out that Vietminh strength south of the 17th parallel was perhaps as great as its strength in the north.

Philippe Devillers, "The Struggle for the Unification of Vietnam," China Quarterly, No. 9, Jan.-Mar., 1962, pp. 2-36; reproduced in P.J. Honey, ed., North Vietnam Today, (Praeger, 1962). Devillers (see above) argues that the Diem regime, with American backing, dug its own grave by setting out to destroy all opposition, that the rebellion in the south was a response to the oppression and tyranny of the Diem government and its attempt to turn the clock back in the countryside.

O.L. Sulzberger, New York Times, Mar. 12, 1955. This is a very frank and revealing article written from Saigon. It is very much worth reading.

VI. Circa 1957: The Beginnings of the War

The remainder of this bibliography is arranged by topic. The order of the topics is supposed to reflect the process by which the war developed.

A. Administrative Reform

Scigliano, Chapters 2, 3, and 7. Note especially his description of the process of destruction of village autonomy and the predominance of collaborators with the French and fellow-Catholics in the Diem regime.

Fall, esp. pp. 268-275.

Gerald C. Hickey, Village in Vietnam, (Yale, 1964). This is the sociological part of a study of a Vietnamese village by a team of experts from Michigan State University. (The other main parts of the study were economic and administrative). Hickey's presentation tends to suffer from an excessive empiricism, but it is good and worth going through. For the destruction of autonomy and the return to predominance under the Diem
regime of wealthy landlords, see pp. 178ff. and 274ff.

B. Land Reform: This is unquestionably one of the most important and the most revealing topics of study.


Sciagliano, pp. 104, 121-23, for some incisive criticisms of the land reform programs.

Faulk, pp. 308-12, for a picture of how little the reforms accomplished.

Warner, pp. 114-17, for some very incisive comments on the land reform and its intimate relationship to the origins of the rebellion.

Hickey, (see above) pp. 41-46, 235-246.

James B. Hendry, The Study of a Vietnamese Rural Community, (Michigan State U., Advisory Group, Saigon, 1959). This is the economic counterpart to Hickey's study, and it is perhaps more perceptive than the sociological study. See pp. 26-38.

For some time now, the Government and its supporters have had little to say with regard to the land reforms. The "hitte Paperon February, 1965, stated laconically that "a land reform program was carried out." No further details were offered. Now that the New York Times has sent one of its best reporters, Charles Mohr back to South Vietnam, some further information has come to light. On Sunday, Sept. 5, 1965, the NYT contained an article by Mohr on the new land reform measures recently announced by the Ky government in Saigon. Mohr's report makes it clear that the earlier Diem reforms were either not implemented or operated to the disadvantage of the majority of South Vietnamese peasants.

C. Early Stages of the Rebellion

The attempt to establish an anti-communist regime in South Vietnam led to the renewal of guerilla warfare by 1957. The information on this period rarely found its way into the American press, which was following the official line that a political and economic "miracle" was taking place in South Vietnam. See the following:
Scigliano, pp. 130-42.

"Warner, pp. 142-53.

D. Response by the Saigon Government: The "Regroupment" Schemes

Down to 1959, the US and Diem persisted in claiming that they were ridding South Vietnam of the "last remnants" of the Vietminh, and that everything was going well. But as the situation got increasingly out of hand, they embarked upon new and desperate measures. For a good discussion of the regroupment schemes, see Scigliano, pp. 178-85. See also Fall, pp. 371-79, who refers to the outstanding reporting in the New York Times by Homer Bigart during 1962. 'Clubb, pp. 72-80, also refers to Bigart's reporting. Denis "Warner, pp. 27-35, provides an excellent description, based on his own observations, of the way the Strategic Hamlet Program worked in the Mekong Delta region.

E. North Vietnamese Involvement and Participation in the War

For the Administration's case against North Vietnam, see the White Paper issued at the end of February, 1965. It contains all the evidence that could be mustered at the time when regular air attacks against North Vietnam began. For the other side of the story see the following:

Scigliano, p. 148.

Clubb, pp. 41-6.


In addition to the above, virtually all independent observers have repeatedly indicated that the amount of support coming from North Vietnam in the form of men, arms and supplies has made up only a small percentage of the Vietcong's strength. After the White Paper was published, two outstanding rebuttals appeared. One is I.F. Stone's Weekly of March 8, 1965. The other is the lead editorial of the New Republic of March 8, 1965. Both should be required reading.

F. The New War and Recent Literature

By the spring of 1965, the war between the Vietcong and the forces of the South Vietnamese Government, with limited direct American participation, was over. The institution of regular American air attacks on North Vietnam had not appreciably slowed the Vietcong advance in the South. By early July it was being generally admitted that the South Vietnamese Government forces were unable to withstand the increased pressure of the Vietcong war effort. Hanson Baldwin and Jack Raymond wrote articles appearing in the New York Times (July 3, 11, and 12, 1965), which indicated that the war on the ground had been lost, and that the intervention of American air power and American troops was necessary to take over the military effort from the faltering South Vietnamese armed forces.
Two accounts of how the military and political situation deteriorated during the early 1960's are David Halberstam's *The Making of a Quagmire* (which describes how but doesn't tell why the Quagmire was made), and Malcolm Browne, *The New Face of War*. Halberstam covered Vietnam for the New York Times; Browne for Associated Press, and both received Pulitzer Prizes for their achievements. Halberstam documents strongly the attempts by both American and Vietnamese officials to prevent him from writing about what he saw. His book makes fascinating reading. Its major shortcoming is that it is essentially a proclamation of American innocence, placing the blame for almost everything upon Ngo Dinh Diem and his family. A very illuminating account, written from the other side by Wilfred C. Burchett, a veteran pro-Communist Australian journalist who traveled with the Vietcong, is *Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerrilla War*.

Several other books on Vietnam have either come out recently or are due to be published shortly. They are best included, however, in some future supplement to this bibliography.

For an excellent analysis of the feuding between Buddhist and Catholic factions in Saigon during the past two years, see Martin Niclaus, "Saigon: The Wheel Comes Full Circle," in the first issue of *Viet-Report*, pp. 15-16.

For a blunt and concerned analysis of the consequences of stepped up American air strikes within South Vietnam, see the article by Charles Mohr, "Air Strikes Hit Vietcong and South Vietnam Civilians," in Section 4 of the New York Times, Sept. 5, 1965; and the article by James Reston, *Op. cit.*, "Saigon, The Rising Brutality." See also the article by Reston in the magazine section of the *NYT*, Sept. 12, 1965, p.43, entitled "We May Win the War but Lose the People."

Postscript: Those who are concerned with the menace of Communist China lurking behind the Vietnamese Communists should read Felix Greene's *China: Curtain of Ignorance*. It is one of those books about which it may actually be said that "it should be read by every American."