



Vietnam
Study Guide
and
Annotated
Bibliography

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DISTRIBUTED BY:
Students for a Democratic Society
924 Howard St.
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

This guide was among the
papers produced by the SDS
Boston Summer Research
Project.

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 circumscribe 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 "graduation" from the study group program outlined below. Those interested in further reading on selected topics should consult the lengthy annotated Selected Bibliography on Vietnam.

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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 I: Vietnam and the history of the American involvement up to the end of 1953. Required readings: Denis Warner, The Last Confucian, (available as a Penguin special paperback), chaps. 1-4, pp. 17-83.

Session II: The 1954 Geneva Conference. Required readings: both the memoirs of Eisenhower (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).

Session III: The attempt to impose the Diem regime on South Vietnam: 1954-57. Required readings: Warner, chaps. 5-7, pp. 83-141; Robert Scigliano, South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress, (available in Houghton-Mifflin paperback), pp. 13-55, 101-29. Note: On the Diem Land Reform, see Warner pp. 114-17, and Scigliano, pp. 104, 121-23.

Session IV: Renewal of guerilla warfare, formation of the National Liberation Front, progress of the War: 1957-65. Required readings Scigliano, pp. 156-89; Warner, chaps. 8-9, pp. 142-75; Philippe Devillers, "The Struggle for the Unification of Vietnam," either in The China Quarterly, No. 9, Jan.-Mar., 1962, or in P.J. Honey, ed., North Vietnam Today, (Praeger, 1962); Malcolm Browne, The New Face of War, (Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), chap. 12, (The National Liberation Front), pp. 227-45.

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Session V: The present situation, the role of the North Vietnamese and the American escalation of the War--and general considerations and broader perspectives. Required readings: (on North Vietnamese participation) Scigliano, p. 148; Warner, p. 159; L.F. Stone's Weekly, Oct. 28, 1963, and March 8, 1965. On American escalation: New York Times articles by Hanson Baldwin and Jack Raymond, July 3, 11, & 12, 1965; and articles by Charles Mdr and James Reston, Sunday, Sept. 5, 1965, (section 4).

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 sceptical, 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 paint communism as a picnic 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 far 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 a continuation of the war prevented the US from implementing this strategy. Show how the US had to settle for a "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 reverse 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 abolition of village autonomy and attempt to bring the countryside under his control. Discuss the fraudulent referendum of Oct., 1956, and the "Anti-communist denunciation 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 guerilla warfare in the South. Then discuss the myths that the US government has peddled in trying to ascribe the war to aggression from the North. Discuss the regroupment schemes launched by the Diem government, culminating in the strategic hamlets, in the attempt to separate the rural population from the guerillas. Describe the deterioration in the military situation down to 1965, by which time the war had essentially been lost. Discuss the US takeover of the war and the beginning of regular bombings on North Vietnam in Feb., 1965. Discuss the massive use of air power against the rural population. Point out that the US offer of "unconditional 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 plowing through countless books, articles, and newspaper clippings, turning up bits and scraps 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.

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I. Vietnamese History

D.G.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.

Eric Erich H. Jacoby, Agrarian 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, "an investigation of the main causes responsible for the agrarian unrest" in Southeast Asia, and rather than following 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 (Agrarian Unrest and National Movements).

U.S. Army Area Handbook on 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 a more detailed treatment.

Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams, (Praeger, 1963; 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 books are highly useful. Read selectively for the skin-deep

authorities on Vietnam, and his works are highly useful. Read selectively or skim carefully.

Ellen J. Kammer, The Struggle for Indochina, (Stanford, 1954). This is a very good book on the French-Indochinese War.

Philippe Devillers, Historique du Viet-Nam de 1940 a 1952, (Paris, 1952). Devillers is a thoroughly reliable conservative Catholic historian of Vietnam.

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 16, 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, 52-80, and passim.

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 78% of costs of war.

3/30/54: Report of Dulles speech of previous day. Reston: fundamental U.S. policy decision taken to oppose peaceful settlement and keep war going.

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: Wm. S. White: U.S. now thinking in terms of a salvage operation. Pate 5: elections, if held in Vietnam, would result in Communist victory.

7/6/54: Reston: Republicans and Democrats not really split over Vietnam. Party politics not preventing active U.S. intervention in Indochina. Rather, this because of substantial differences between U.S. and France & Britain.

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 negotiated end to 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 Scigliano, 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). Scigliano 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 Penguin 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.

IV. Since 1954

V. 1954-1956: Consolidation of Diem's Rule
General Warner
Scigliano, pp. 13-25, 47-55, 190-215.
Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams
Fall, pp. 254-288.

Warner, pp. 94-106.

Robert Scheer, "The Vietnam Lobby," in Ramparts, July, 1965
1965, pp. 16-24. Ramparts is a progressive Catholic magazine.
Scheer has done a lot of work toward uncovering the details be-
hind the American involvement in Vietnam. This article is uni-
que 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 (35-40 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 des-
cription 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 empiri-
cism, but it is good and worth going through. For the destruc-
tion 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.

Wolf Ladejinsky, "Agrarian Reform in the Republic of Vietnam," in Wesley R. Fishel, ed., Problems of Freedom--South Vietnam Since Independence, (Michigan State U., 1961), pp. 153-175. This is a pro-Diem collection of articles on South Vietnam. Ladejinsky is an unimpeachable source. He held the title of "Land Reform Expert and Technical Consultant at the Presidency of the Republic of Vietnam," and was responsible for the drawing up of the land reform programs.

Price Gittinger, "Agrarian Reform," in Richard W. Lindholm, ed. Viet-Nam: The First Five Years, An International Symposium, (Michigan State U., 1959), pp. 200-08. Gittinger is an unimpeachable source, having served as "specialist in Agrarian Reform with the USOM" in Saigon from 1955 to 1959. See also the comments on Gittinger's presentation by David Wurfel and Richard Lindholm, pp. 209-13.

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

Fall, 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 White Paper of 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:

Fall, pp. 316-82.

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. 178-83. 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.

Louis R. Rukeyser, Baltimore Sun, Oct. 14, 1963, reproduced in I.F. Stone's Bi-Weekly, Oct. 28, 1963.

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 G. Burchett, a veteran pro-Communist Australian journalist who traveled with the Vietcong, is Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerilla 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. 13-16.

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."