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**A COUNTRY
STAYS ALIVE
WHEN ITS
CULTURE IS
ALIVE.**

**HOPE NEVER DIES
IN THE
INDOMITABLE
VIETNAMESE MIND**

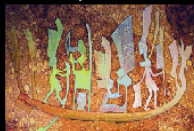
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- It serves as a **LINK** between **SACEI** members and those who are interested in the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American culture.

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To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese-American

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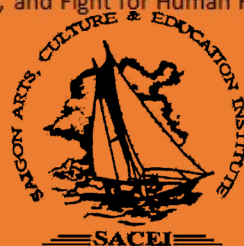
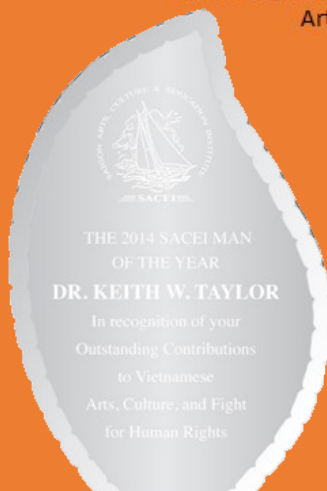
2014 SACEI MAN OF THE YEAR



THE 2014 SACEI MAN OF THE YEAR

DR. KEITH W. TAYLOR

In recognition of your Outstanding Contributions to Vietnamese Arts, Culture, and Fight for Human Rights



Dr. Keith W. Taylor, Professor, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York is commended for his scholarly mastery and knowledge of Vietnamese history. He has published many articles and five books, of which the two most significant ones are: *The Birth of Vietnam* and *A History of the Vietnamese* (www.sacei07.org/Newsletter61.pdf).

How I Began to Teach About the Vietnam War

Michigan Quarterly Review. Ann Arbor: Fall 2004

Keith W Taylor, Cornell University

<http://www.viet-myths.net/Taylor.htm>

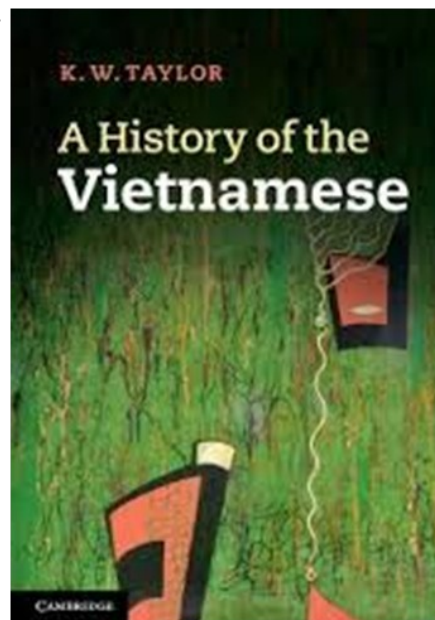
In January of 1972, about six months after I returned from Vietnam and was discharged from the U.S. Army, I began my graduate studies at the University of Michigan, specializing in Vietnamese history. The immensity of the war at that time was too much for me to press into an academic framework, and so I focused on ancient times, which was a comforting escape from the confusion of my personal experience of the war in Vietnam. In later years, as I taught Vietnamese history, I inevitably had to spend two or three lectures on the U.S. Vietnam War, but I always dreaded doing so, because talking in public about the war usually produced in me a sensation of nausea. It was 25 years before I began to understand that this nausea came from the dissonance between the interpretive grid I had acquired for the war and what I felt in my heart. This essay is about how I began to teach about the war and how my ideas about the war changed to become my own.

I will discuss three axioms in the dominant interpretation of the U.S.-Vietnam War that were established by the antiwar movement during the late 1960s and subsequently taken up by teachers at most schools and universities as the basis for explaining the war. These are that there was never a legitimate non-communist government in Saigon, that the U.S. had no legitimate reason to be involved in Vietnamese affairs, and that the U.S. could not have won the war under any circumstances. It took me many years to step free of these axioms and to see them as ideological debris of the antiwar movement rather than as sustainable views supported by evidence and logic. What enabled me to do this was that I finally came to terms with my own experience.

I received my B.A. in May 1968, and within two weeks of graduation I received a notice from my draft board to report to the nearest induction center for a physical examination. After the so-called Tet Offensive of that spring, the draft quotas were especially high, and many of us who expected our student deferments to last longer than the possibility of being drafted suddenly faced the war personally. As I recall, there were five options that came to mind. One option was to find a way to fail the physical examination, and there were many ways to do that. I dismissed that immediately because it violated my sense of honor. Another option was to apply for exemption as a "conscientious objector," which required one to argue that one's religious beliefs did not allow military service. I dismissed this because my religious beliefs were not of that kind.

Another option was to go to jail, and I could see no point in doing that, for I did not believe that the war was at a moral level sufficiently low to require civil resistance. The war, as I understood it then, was not in itself an evil; if there was evil, I thought it was in how ineptly it was being conducted and in the consequences of this ineptitude. At the age of seven, I had seen my brother-in-law return from Korea in a coffin, and I had acquired a sense of civic duty to my country that was not deterred by the vicissitudes of poor leadership. When I looked into myself, I knew that I would remain faithful to a code of personal honor attached to what I understood as the ideals of my country's form of government rising above the confusions of political and military leadership. This became explicitly clear to me when I was interviewed by an army officer in the procedure to obtain a security clearance. He asked me what I thought of the war, and I recall telling him that I thought it made no sense to try to defend South Vietnam so long as the border areas of Laos and Cambodia were conceded to the enemy. I had no quarrel with resisting the spread of communist governments, but I could see no strategy being applied that had prospects of success. Nevertheless, I remember telling the interviewer that my patriotism was stronger than my unhappiness about poor leadership. I did not see why I should go to jail because I disagreed with how the war was being fought, particularly since I had no argument with the general purpose of the war itself.

A fourth option was to go to Canada, which was at that time still being encouraged by the Canadian government. This was the option taken by my best friend in 1967, and I gave it serious consideration because of him, even visiting the Canadian embassy and speaking with someone there who encouraged me to emigrate. But, for reasons I have already mentioned, I did



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not find this option attractive. Even if I might have imagined some selfish advantage in doing it, I nevertheless knew that such a choice, my own convictions aside, would bring much embarrassment and pain to my parents, and I was not prepared to do that.

The fifth option was to serve my country and to accept my civic duty as I had been taught to do, and this is what I did. But, probably from the conceit of having obtained a certain measure of education and from the sense of pride and the illusion of autonomy that arose from that conceit, I had a strong desire to retain as much control over my life as I could, and I did not like the feeling of powerlessness that came from the prospect of simply being drafted and sent wherever to do whatever. So when a recruiter explained that instead of being drafted I could enlist and in doing so could choose my job assignment in the army, I decided to seize whatever vestige of control I might be able to exert over my life in this situation and I applied to enter army intelligence.

I spent the next two years in training: basic combat training, intelligence training, and Vietnamese language training. Until I was assigned to study the Vietnamese language, I had entertained hopes of avoiding the war altogether. After all, I had friends and acquaintances who were assigned to Alaska, Korea, Germany, and Panama. But once I was sent to study the Vietnamese language, my only hope was that the war would be finished before my year of study was completed. It was not, and I was finally sent to Vietnam in 1970 with the rank of buck sergeant.

The Birth of Vietnam



Keith Weller Taylor

What I encountered in Vietnam was an army in process of demoralization. After public opinion turned against the war in 1968, the antiwar movement penetrated the army in Vietnam. All the stereotypical problems of drugs, racial conflict, atrocities, fragging, and insubordination were in evidence and were affecting the morale of the army, and these were, at least as I understood it, related to the fact that, as a consequence of poor leadership, the country no longer supported the war, yet we were still being expected to fight it. Army leaders, both uniformed and civilian, realized the necessity to "redeploy" the army out of Vietnam as rapidly as possible to prevent this spirit of disaffection from spreading to other commands around the world. Meanwhile, we were being asked to take our chance at being "the last man to die in Vietnam."

Although I carried out my assignments with professionalism and sincerity, I was definitely affected by this spirit of disaffection. It seemed to me that the war was being lost and we were simply an expendable rear guard. I did not like that. I became suspicious of my superiors, sensing that the debacle in which we were participating at least gave them a chance to advance their careers, while for the rest of us it was little more than a question of life or death. I was medevacked back to the U.S. in 1971 and emerged from the army dazed and disoriented. At the University of Michigan I was surrounded by students and professors who espoused the three axioms mentioned above as if they were self-evident truths. I was angry about having sacrificed my youth to the incompetence of old men, and, to the extent that I

thought about the war at all, I simply subscribed to the dogmas of the antiwar slogans then fashionable in Ann Arbor.

For many years, my war experience remained like a huge undigested lump in the back of my mind. I did not know what to do with it. I began a career of teaching and writing about Vietnamese history, which for me meant before the twentieth century, and I imagined that in some way I was turning my unpleasant military experience into something positive by trying to teach others about this place that was a country and not just a war.

In the early 1990s, while living in Vietnam, I encountered many Vietnamese who, when confronted with an American who had been a soldier in their country and who could speak their language, expressed anger and anguish that I could easily understand. In the north, it was from having suffered years of bombing. In the south, it was from having been betrayed. Either way, the American legacy in Vietnam was a sore memory to them and to me. But one thing I learned from spending a couple of years living and working in Vietnam is that the country suffers from a tyrannical, corrupt, and impoverishing form of government, and I began to appreciate what many Vietnamese refugees have told me: if Americans had kept their promises, southern Vietnamese might now be enjoying prosperity and democracy similar to what has developed in Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand. It became very clear to me that I am not among the self-loathing Americans who notice people in other countries looking to us for leadership and see nothing but neocolonialism and imperialism; I accept the premise that the United States has a legitimate, even inescapable, role to play in the world today.

To accept the axiom that the governments in Saigon from 1954 to 1975 were illegitimate or not viable is the same as to say that since 1945 the only legitimate or viable Vietnamese government was the one proclaimed by Ho Chi Minh, which is simply a foun-

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dational tenet of the communist version of national history. It is remarkable how easily this ideological exuberance of Vietnamese communists was and continues to be uncritically swallowed by academic specialists in the United States. Not even Krushchev acted in accord with this wonderful communist conceit. It is often forgotten that in 1957 the Soviet Union proposed that both of the Vietnamese governments then in existence be admitted to the United Nations, not to mention that China much preferred the existence of two Vietnams. It is clear that, aside from the Vietnamese parties themselves, the participants at the Geneva Conference of 1954 all preferred a two-state solution as a way to calm down the potential for global confrontation. The affirmation of a theoretically unified Vietnam in the final declaration of the conference, which was signed by none of the conferees, significantly left the question of the legitimate government of such a unified Vietnam to the vague vicissitudes of an election to be held after two years, which was a diplomatic way of painting over national enthusiasm with cold war realism.

The conventional view of the Ngo Dinh Diem government has been that he was incompetent and that he was an American lackey. This view is increasingly difficult to sustain. For one thing, Ngo Dinh Diem effectively defeated rural insurrections twice, in 1956 and again in 1958. It was in response to these achievements that the leaders of the communist party in Hanoi made the decision to initiate a new war in 1959, not because they considered Ngo Dinh Diem vulnerable but, on the contrary, because they decided that they could not afford to wait any longer without losing the chance to prevent stabilization of a non-communist government in the south. The U.S. decided to support his overthrow exactly because he was no lackey and was resisting U.S. influence in his government. He was made a scapegoat for American frustrations and betrayed by the U.S. government; his fate prefigured that of all Vietnamese who did not want a communist system. Only recently is there beginning to be a serious reevaluation of Ngo Dinh Diem and a realization that he understood what was necessary to enable his young country to survive much better than did his eager but misguided American advisers. After he was murdered, it was nearly four years before a new government was stabilized, a government of necessity much more dependent on the United States than his had been. Yet the "second republic" persevered through the vicissitudes of war and was in a position to endure when, constrained by the turmoil of American politics, American foreign policy in the early 1970s betrayed the future of a non-communist Vietnam into the hands of its enemies.

Certainly, the governments in Saigon were no less legitimate or viable (with U.S. support) than the governments in South Korea or in Taiwan, or in Hanoi (with the support of its patrons) for that matter. But it was their misfortune to be the victims of a fickle patron. To erase the memory of this shameful tale, many Americans have found it comforting to indulge in romantic reveries about Ho Chi Minh and the simple-minded historiographical cliché about heroic Vietnamese people defeating aggressors in which his reputation has nested.

I prefer the cliché about the importance of defending and nurturing baby democracies in a world awash with tyranny. The liberties that we enjoy in this country did not just happen without human effort, and there is no guarantee of their continued existence. The excellent features of our political system that we tend to take for granted are the result of sacrifices made generation by generation, sacrifices often unappreciated by those who benefit from them. And this is why I cannot accept the axiom that the United States had no legitimate reason to be involved in Vietnamese affairs. I believe that global power in the hands of the United States should be taken as a responsibility, not something about which we need to be apologetic. If the United States fails to use this power for the general good of the people in this world, then it will lose not only its power but also the good that it has accumulated; the liberties that have thrived in the shade of American power will then be endangered. I am not a self-hating American who, shrinking from responsibility, would rather indulge in guilt for mistakes made than in daring to work against the global entropy of suffering and chaos. I now have no doubt but that the United States was fully justified in exerting its power to prevent the destruction of hopes for a democratic future for at least some of the Vietnamese people. Unfortunately, American leaders in the 1960s made some bad political and military decisions, which led to the American people turning against the commitment made in Vietnam. In my opinion, the tragedy of Vietnam is not that the United States intervened when it should not have, but rather that the intervention was bungled so badly and that the Vietnamese who believed in us were ultimately betrayed.

The third axiom is that American efforts in Vietnam were inevitably doomed to fail because of a deficiency in will and unity of purpose among Americans and among the inhabitants of South Vietnam in comparison with North Vietnam and its allies in China and the Soviet Union. It is true that the governments opposed to a non-communist Vietnam were able to mobilize their populations without regard to dissent, while one of the fundamental long-term aims of the United States was to develop the right to dissent, a right that inevitably diminishes unity of will and purpose for national policy. Furthermore, North Vietnam benefited from the advantage of the communist party organization in South Vietnam subject to its instructions; southerners

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had no comparable advantage against the north. Finally, from the American perspective, Vietnam was a relatively distant and unknown country, without any sense of connection aside from the logic of the global cold war confrontation. All of these aspects of the situation were challenges to any effort to nurture a non-communist government in Saigon. However, these considerations do not amount to an argument that American policy in Vietnam was inevitably doomed. American policy in Vietnam enjoyed public support until 1968, and the military and economic resources available to the United States, by any reckoning, were certainly equal to the task of defending the South Vietnamese government. Even if we acknowledge that the communists were more securely under a command structure able to produce a public unity of will and action than were the Americans and their Vietnamese allies, it is hard to imagine how that would have trumped the military capabilities of the United States if intelligently deployed. One need only consider the French conquest of Vietnam in the late nineteenth century to see the fallacy of the argument about inevitability. What led to defeat for the United States and South Vietnam was not a deficiency of will and determination but rather a series of bad decisions under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations that prolonged the war into a stalemate that exhausted the patience of the American people.

During the years 1961-67, the United States forfeited its overwhelming military capabilities through poor strategic thought and deficient political courage. Of course, it is easy to explain the errors made as if they flowed naturally from the press of events as understood by the presidents, Kennedy and Johnson, and by their chief advisers.

Nevertheless, dissenting views were expressed at each step, and the choices made were not made under duress but rather from flawed premises and lack of attention. The most salient of the crucially erroneous decisions can easily be listed: Kennedy's decision in 1961 to negotiate the so-called neutralization of Laos, conceding to the enemy border sanctuaries and interior lines of communication and accepting a strategic liability for the rest of the war; Kennedy's decision to escalate the level of American military personnel in Vietnam while trying to prevent press reports of Americans in combat and without any clear strategic thought aside from "advising," which set a deadly precedent for getting involved without clarity of goals and without public honesty; Kennedy's decision to encourage a military coup against Ngo Dinh Diem, thereby eliminating the only plausible anti-communist Vietnamese leader and provoking years of political confusion that forced the United States to choose between failure and becoming even more deeply involved in Vietnamese affairs; Johnson's decisions to deploy air and ground forces in a strategy of attrition, allowing General Westmoreland to squelch the anti-insurgency methods favored by the Marine Corps (which, incidentally, were very similar to the methods used successfully by the French in the 1880s and 1890s); Johnson's decision to aim for persuading the enemy to give up rather than doing what was necessary to obtain victory; Johnson's decision to avoid mobilizing the American people and economy for war, refusing to call up the reserves, relying entirely upon conscription, and borrowing into the financial crisis of early 1968, thereby engaging the United States only partially in the war; Johnson's decision to allow war policy to be inhibited by a misreading of the likelihood of Chinese intervention, thereby dismissing potentially important options; Johnson's complacency in allowing the war to continue month after month without seriously evaluating goals and achievements, leading to a failure of political will in the United States. All of these errors came to a head in early 1968 with the disappearance of public support for continuing the war as it was then being waged.

Subsequently, the Nixon administration, operating within the constraints of American withdrawal from the war, nevertheless managed to assist in stabilizing a South Vietnamese government and building up a South Vietnamese army that in 1972 was able, with American support, to defeat a full-scale invasion from the north. But these achievements were put at risk by the 1973 Paris Agreement, and they were finally doomed by the Watergate scandal that led to Nixon's downfall. South Vietnam was abandoned to face its enemy without the help of a friend. I believe it is possible to argue that even after 1968 there was a chance to defend a non-communist government in Saigon, but this possibility was too closely tied to the leadership of Nixon, and without him there was no courage left to see the old commitment through to success.

I believe that Kennedy made bad decisions about Vietnam because he was not paying sufficient attention and Johnson did so because it was not his priority. Kennedy mostly delegated the task of making decisions about Vietnam to his subordinates, who were often at cross-purposes with each other or simply out of their depths. Johnson was devoted to his domestic legislative programs and made decisions about Vietnam with the same style he had perfected for dealing with Congress: cajoling and cutting the difference. Neither man took the time to evaluate their policies in Vietnam with the seriousness they deserved, given the expenditure of blood and money they entailed. In the absence of clear-headed and engaged leadership, bad decisions accumulated. There was nothing necessary or inevitable about these decisions, unless we want to argue that mental fog should be considered an essential element of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Some may still prefer to argue that this kind of mental fog is simply an indication that Vietnam was not important enough to engage the full attention of American leaders and that in itself reveals that the enterprise was doomed. The reply to this is that Vietnam was important enough for presi-

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dents to send thousands of young Americans to die on distant battlefields with the overwhelming support of public opinion and the Congress; that it was done incompetently is surely a judgment upon the quality of leadership rather than upon the policy itself.

I began to teach a university course on the U.S.-Vietnam war in the late 1990s due to a lingering sense of civic responsibility (the younger generation should know about that war) and a more selfish idea that I needed to do it for my own peace of mind. Forcing myself to lecture about the war was a liberating experience as I began to find my own voice amidst all the books that have accumulated on the war. Many of the books follow a standard narrative exemplifying the axioms I discussed above, which I find unsatisfying. Many important topics are ignored, particularly the aspirations, plans, and actions of Vietnamese who fought for the hope of democracy in their land.

At a conference about that time, I met one such Vietnamese, a man who had served in various Saigon governments from the late 1950s to the early 1970s and who was subsequently imprisoned several years before immigrating to the United States. I had many questions I wanted to ask him, but he looked at me doubtfully and asked permission to pose a question to me first. His question was: "Do you think in that war we had a noble cause?" I was stunned by this unexpected question, but from the bottom of my heart came an answer that even surprised me: "Yes, I do." With that, the man's demeanor toward me dramatically changed to trust and openness. He explained that in his experience most American academics do not respect him because they believe that he chose to be on the wrong side of the war. Yet his only crime was to hope for a democracy in his country and to trust in the United States.

For more than two decades, I resisted thinking of myself as a veteran of the Vietnam War. I wanted to get on with my life and not be defined by that sad story. I did not like the memorial in Washington, D.C. with the names of all the dead carved on a wall. It was a memorial to the dead, but I was a survivor and that wall had nothing to do with me. Then, one evening at dusk, in a simple ceremony far from Washington, D.C., I was huddled in a tent against the cold wind as several young people simultaneously read lists of names of the dead by candlelight. Standing among the people crowded in that tent, watching the candlelight nickering on faces and canvas, listening to the voices mixing name after name in a constant flow of sound, without a tear in my eye, something moved in me and I felt a release and I knew I was where I belonged and that I was giving honor where it was due.

It was both an intellectual change of perspective and an emotionally satisfying experience to jettison the false guilt about the war that I had been carrying around for a quarter of a century. Doing so has enabled me to relearn the values I was taught in my youth, to appreciate the sacrifices made by those Vietnamese who have become my fellow countrymen, and to teach about the war with fresh conviction. It is fashionable now among some of my academic colleagues to label the United States as a fascist and imperialist power. I am no longer in any danger of being intimidated by such baseless assertions. I invite you to look around the world for an acceptable alternative to the democratic practices championed, however imperfectly, by the United States today. I see no such alternative. The fact that the United States exercises so much global power is no indication of something amiss unless one has chosen to ally with the forces in the world that parade tyranny behind a facade of victimization. I have come to realize that it is time to speak up. The youth of this country deserve better than to be taught cynicism and hatred of what is still the best hope for humankind.

VOA Will Not Cooperate with VOV

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ORFY4ENiQBI>

A Vietnamese-American delegation led by Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, Vo Thanh Nhan, Doan Huu Dinh and two other people went to the State Department to complain about the VOA (Voice of America) and the Voice of Vietnam (VOV, communist) planning to exchange cultural programs with Hanoi having the veto power to edit U.S. programs to be transmitted to the Vietnamese. This would have detrimental effects on the Viet-American population, which was kept out of the discussion.

During the discussion, State department officials assure the delegation that future discussions with VOV have been discontinued.

Paris 1968-1975. Vietnam 2014: Bui Xuan Quang

Editorial note: This is a blog by Dr. Bui Xuan Quang, a Vietnamese educated in Paris who recounted the events of the 1960's in Paris. French youths buoyed by socialist ideas and influences demonstrated in the streets to fight for the "freedom of the world" against American imperialism in Vietnam. This was French's version of the U.S. anti-war movement. Their heroes were Che Guevarra, Vo Nguyen Giap. Bui Xuan Quang who once participated in these demonstrations, felt he was also a victim of this "intellectual terrorism."

This was not an error of one person, Quang writes, but that of world youths which armed with quixotic dreams were attracted to communist promises of a "better world." They did not care about the 1954-1956 bloody "Literary movement" in North Vietnam or the 1968 Hue massacre during which thousands of civilians were murdered by the communists. They never repented and continued to support the communist government of Vietnam.

Protected by their support, Hanoi invaded South Vietnam and established a totalitarian and corrupt regime all over Vietnam until today. Among Hanoi's prisoners of conscience are:

Dang Dinh Dang imprisoned in 2011 for protesting against the mining of bauxite in the highlands developed stomach cancer from ingestion of poisoned water during his incarceration. He died in 2014.

Huynh Anh Tri imprisoned in 1999 and condemned to 14 years in prison for terrorism (no proof) died of HIV he contracted while being kept in the same cell as HIV infected prisoners. He died in 2014.

The cruelty of Hanoi is without bound. Fear is the only weapon it uses to crush its people. Because the internet does not allow Hanoi to hide its crimes against its people any longer, they leave them exposed. The multiplicity of the information renders these crimes banal.

Paris 1968 – 1975 Vietnam 2014

Bùi Xuân Quang
Pour Jean-François Revel et Olivier Todd

Simon Leys s'en est allé. Tant qu'il était encore vivant, Simon Leys nous donnait du bonheur, beaucoup. Son regard lucide, son humour. *Le bonheur des petits poissons* (2008), *L'ange et le cachalot* (1998), *Le studio de l'inutilité* (2012). Mais son grand départ nous fait revenir plus en arrière, *Les habits neufs du président Mao* (1971), vers le souvenir d'une époque d'égarement des intellectuels de Saint Germain des Prés qui a fait beaucoup de mal presque à la terre entière. Un vivant peut se repentir et accomplir des tournures d'esprit s'il en est capable mais un mort est bien mort. Au Cambodge, en Chine, au Vietnam comme partout dans le monde.

1971, 3 ans après le fameux mois de Mai, le Quartier Latin était encore quadrillé par des Maoïstes. Qui parmi nous aurait osé s'y promener alors avec *Le Figaro* sous son bras? Le journal *Le Monde* affirmait que Simon Leys était à la solde de la CIA, des militants de la Gauche brûlaient des exemplaires des *Habits neufs du Président Mao*. Imaginez, chers amis, j'étais là, moi aussi, victime de l'intox et du terrorisme intellectuel.

Nous étions heureux d'avoir la morale avec nous, nous luttions pour le bonheur des peuples du monde sans risques et sans frais, il suffisait d'encenser nos héros, Che Guevarra par ci, Vo Nguyen Giap par là. C'était bon, c'était confortable. Nous étions loin de tout, et bien entendu, « loin du Vietnam ».

Ce n'était pas des égarements de jeunesse de chacun d'entre nous. C'était la jeunesse du monde. L'appel du large, de l'aventure, le tiers monde attirait la compassion, le communisme était « la terre des grandes promesses ».

Et pourtant, dès les années 50, des intellectuels vietnamiens ont compris le dévoiement du système communiste. Ils ont payé très cher leur participation à une revue littéraire qui voulait juste défendre l'homme contre le système (la revue *Nhân Văn Giai Phẩm*). Et le massacre du Tết Mậu Thân (1968)?

Chers amis et compatriotes vietnamiens qui étiez déjà à Paris à cette époque, qui parmi nous avons élevé la voix pour défendre des intellectuels victimes de leur courage, pour dénoncer les massacres de Huê (des civils et mili-

taires, des missionnaires français, des médecins allemands...) ?

Les égarements du journal *Le Monde* dans le passé font froid dans le dos. Et c'est *Le Monde* qui nous les dévoile. « L'été en séries » du Monde daté le 24 juillet, avec un long article signé Raphaëlle Bacqué, nous apprend que quelles qu'aient été les réalités, les responsables du *Monde* et leur envoyé spécial à Phnom Penh, Patrice de Beer, continuaient à saluer les libérateurs Khmers Rouges jusqu'à l'extrême limite de la décence. Pourquoi? Parce que l'impérialisme américain était un fléau de l'humanité et qu'il fallait l'abattre quel qu'en soit le prix (et leur collègue des Etats Unis d'Amérique Chomsky disait « génocide éclairé » à propos du massacre perpétré par les Khmers Rouges – cité par Raphaëlle Bacqué).

Vietnam 1974.

Croyez-vous que la lumière est revenue avec le nouveau siècle? Encenser Simon Leys est une chose, se repentir pour le génocide Khmer rouge est une chose, s'engager auprès des victimes du sacrifice de son pouvoir d'achat en est une tout autre. La Chine et le Vietnam sont les quelques pays dont la main d'œuvre est protégée quelles que soient les exactions des dirigeants politiques. M. Laurent Fabius, Ministre des Affaires étrangères (et du Commerce extérieur) du pays des Droits de l'Homme était allé jusqu'à Charles de Gaulle pour accueillir des touristes chinois (les Chinois auraient apprécié ce geste ridiculement courtois et dépenseraient un peu plus leurs devises s'ils étaient Africains – erreur de psychologie !).

On veut nous faire croire que « le Vietnam s'ouvre », que les « Vietnamiens sont très gentils ». En fait, il y a de l'argent à gagner, à partager. L'intellectuel du Café Flore à St Germain élevait sa voix en 1968 pour défendre, par utopie, le massacre de Huê, maintenant, le même se tait pour être plus près des réalités.

Merci, chers lecteurs de *Vietnam Infos* de vous arrêter pour lire ces quelques lignes d'information que nos médias préfèrent ignorer (communiqué en vietnamien de l'*Association des anciens prisonniers de conscience* à la fin de notre édito):

Đinh Đăng Định, enseignant, né en 1963, arrêté en octobre 2011 pour avoir protesté contre l'exploitation de la bauxite dans les Hauts Plateaux du Vietnam a été condamné à 6 ans de prison ferme. Atteint d'un cancer de l'estomac, il a été libéré le temps d'une opération puis incarcéré à nouveau. Ensuite, mourant, il a été relâché et meurt le 3 avril 2014. Avant de décéder, Đinh Đăng Định a signalé à ses proches qu'il a été empoisonné avec de l'eau. Chimiste, il avait reconnu l'odeur de produits chimiques dans ses selles, mais totalement isolé il a dû boire de l'eau empoisonnée pour ne pas mourir de soif.

Huỳnh Anh Trí, né en 1971, arrêté en décembre 1999, condamné à 14 ans de prison (pour terrorisme, sans preuves !) libéré en décembre 2013, mourut du sida quelques mois après sa sortie de prison, le 5 juillet 2014. Pendant les 14 années de prison, Huỳnh Anh Trí a dû côtoyer des prisonniers infectés de maladies graves (par exemple utiliser les mêmes rasoirs...), on lui apprend qu'il a contacté le virus du sida, il meurt quelques jours après.

La cruauté des autorités envers les citoyens révoltés sont sans limites. La peur est la première arme que la dictature utilise pour frapper le peuple ennemi. Puisque le règne de l'Internet empêche de cacher les crimes de l'Etat, il

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*Huỳnh Anh Trí, à droite, avec son frère Huỳnh Anh Tuấn
Devant le domicile de Mme Bùi Thị Minh Hằng, une des rares
personnes qui acceptaient de les héberger à leur sortie de prison
(Mme Minh Hằng a été arrêtée elle-même quelques temps après)*

vaut mieux que l'Etat étale ses crimes au grand jour. La multiplicité de l'information banalise le crime.

Beaucoup parmi nous se sont interrogés pourquoi les parents de ceux qui sont emprisonnés arbitrairement peuvent circuler librement à l'étranger (comme pour les citoyens de n'importe quel pays démocratique) et peuvent même faire des déclarations sur les conditions d'incarcération de leurs enfants comme dans le cas du père de M. Trần Huỳnh Duy Thức (arrêté et condamné à 16 ans de prison pour avoir proposé une voie démocratique pour le Vietnam) ou de la mère de Mlle Đỗ Thị Minh Hạnh, incarcérée dans des conditions effroyables (condamnée pour avoir fondé un syndicat de travailleurs indépendant du régime). Les autorités vietnamiennes veulent faire comprendre au monde entier que ces personnes ont été arrêtées, condamnées car ils ont enfreint les lois vietnamiennes, un point c'est tout.

Diluer l'injustice, diluer la colère, voilà une technique redoutable bien adaptée au temps de l'information.

BXQ

The Pentagon and the Vietnam War

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/10/us/pentagons-web-timeline-brings-back-vietnam-and-protesters-.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=HpHeadline&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>

... the Pentagon is planning a 50th anniversary commemoration of the Vietnam War.

The glossy view of history has now prompted more than 500 scholars, veterans and activists — including the civil rights leader Julian Bond; Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the top-secret Pentagon Papers; Lawrence J. Korb, a former assistant secretary of defense under President Ronald Reagan; and Peter Yarrow of the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary — to join Mr. Hayden in demanding the ability to correct the Pentagon's version of history and a place for the old antiwar activists in the anniversary events.

Vietnam historians are also troubled. Fredrik Logevall, a Cornell University professor said that the website lacked context and that the timeline "omits too many important developments, while including a significant number of dubious importance." Edwin Moise, a Vietnam historian at Clemson University, said he found numerous minor inaccuracies on the site.

Mr. Hayden's petition grew out of conference calls with others in his antiwar network, including David Cortright, a veteran who protested the war in uniform and is now a scholar at Notre Dame, and John McAuliff, a former conscientious objector who runs a nonprofit organization devoted to reconciliation between the United States and Vietnam.

EDITORIAL NOTE

1. If the Pentagon allows the antiwar activists to change the Pentagon's version of the Vietnam War, it should allow the South Vietnamese, who are citizens in this country, to make their views known.
2. The antiwar activists should justify their past opposition to the war now that Hanoi has been shown through various accounts to have invaded South Vietnam and waged a ruthless war of destruction in this country. After swallowing South Vietnam, Hanoi established an imperialist, colonialist, and corrupt regime in Vietnam.
3. The antiwar activists should acknowledge their role in supporting communist Hanoi during their fight against the US, thereby betraying the US. By the same token, they have also betrayed the South Vietnamese.
4. It is surprising that the antiwar activists had stayed mum when Hanoi invaded South Vietnam with their 16 divisions in flagrant violation of the 1973 Paris Accords.



Dr. Tom Nguyen: Non Invasive Cardiac Surgeon

Dr. Tom Nguyen, a Cardiac Surgeon at the University of Texas Health Center in Houston, has been selected by the Houston Business Journal as a member of the "40 under 40 Class of 2014," a selected group of 40 achievers under the age of 40 in 2014.

He received his BA at Rice University, his MD degree at Johns Hopkins, his general surgical residency at Stanford University, his Cardiothoracic surgery residency at Columbia Presbyterian, NY, and another cardiac Fellowship at Emory University.

Dr. Nguyen specializes in complex adult cardiac, mitral repair, and minimally invasive surgery. He has extensive experience in TAVRs (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement) with over 300 implants, a new technology allowing heart valve replacements through small incisions without stopping the heart.

Political Order and Political Decay: Francis Fukuyama

From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy

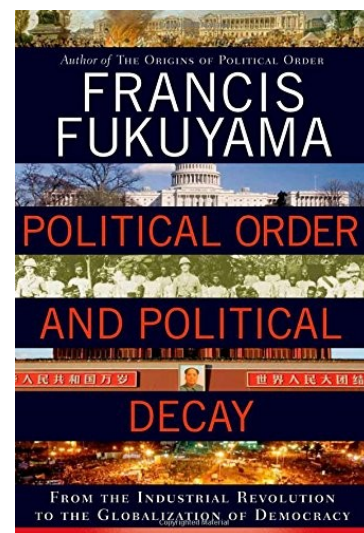
A review by Sheri Berman

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/14/books/review/francis-fukuyamas-political-order-and-political-decay.html?hpw&rref=books&action=click&pctype=Homepage&version=HpHedThumbWell&module=well-region®ion=bottom-well&WT.nav=bottom-well>

Over the past few decades, American political development has gone into reverse, Fukuyama says, as its state has become weaker, less efficient and more corrupt. One cause is growing economic inequality and concentration of wealth, which has allowed elites to purchase immense political power and manipulate the system to further their own interests. Another cause is the permeability of American political institutions to interest groups, allowing an array of factions that "are collectively unrepresentative of the public as a whole" to exercise disproportionate influence on government. The result is a vicious cycle in which the American state deals poorly with major challenges, which reinforces the public's distrust of the state, which leads to the state's being starved of resources and authority, which leads to even poorer performance.

Where this cycle leads even the vastly knowledgeable Fukuyama can't predict, but suffice to say it is nowhere good. And he fears that America's problems may increasingly come to characterize other liberal democracies as well, including those of Europe, where "the growth of the European Union and the shift of policy making away from national capitals to Brussels" has made "the European system as a whole . . . resemble that of the United States to an increasing degree."

Fukuyama's readers are thus left with a depressing paradox. Liberal democracy remains the best system for dealing with the challenges of modernity, and there is little reason to believe that Chinese, Russian or Islamist alternatives can provide the diverse range of economic, social and political goods that all humans crave. But unless liberal democracies can somehow manage to reform themselves and combat institutional decay, history will end not with a bang but with a resounding whimper.



Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Political-Order-Decay-Industrial-Globalization/dp/0374227357/>