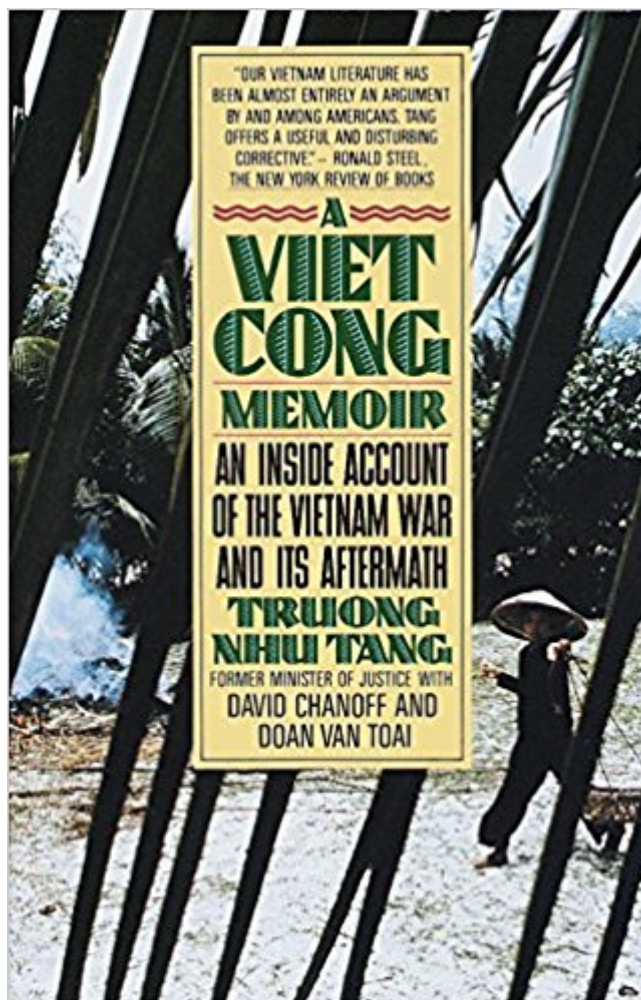


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A Vietcong Memoir: An Inside Account Of The Vietnam War And Its Aftermath



Synopsis

"An absorbing and moving autobiography...An important addition not only to the literature of Vietnam but to the larger human story of hope, violence and disillusion in the political life of our era." —Chicago Tribune

When he was a student in Paris, Truong Nhu Tang met Ho Chi Minh. Later he fought in the Vietnamese jungle and emerged as one of the major figures in the "fight for liberation" —and one of the most determined adversaries of the United States. He became the Vietcong's Minister of Justice, but at the end of the war he fled the country in disillusionment and despair. He now lives in exile in Paris, the highest level official to have defected from Vietnam to the West. This is his candid, revealing and unforgettable autobiography.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tang, a founding member of the Vietcong who now lives in exile in Paris, charges that a national democratic revolution in South Vietnam was made impossible both by North Vietnamese Communist Party ideologues and the U.S. militarization of the conflict at the expense of a political settlement. PW called this political memoir a "thoughtful and tragic account of the Vietnam War." Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Beautifully written." -- William Shawcross, front page, Washington Post Book World

"By showing the nature and hidden strength of our opponents, this account goes a long way toward explaining why America failed in Vietnam despite its greatly superior military power. But A Vietcong Memoir is more than just an exposition of the revolutionaries' side of the war. It is also an absorbing and moving

autobiography...An important addition not only to the literature of Vietnam but to the larger human story of hope, violence and disillusion in the political life of our era."-- Arnold R. Isaacs, Chicago Tribune "Literate, mercifully free of the stridencies and banalities that characterize the Communists' agitprop prose. The prose gives off an aura of authenticity and reasonableness."-- Robert Manning, The New York Times Book Review

Certainly worth reading if for no other reason than to appreciate the viewpoint of those we fought against for so long! Their battle for independence was similar to ours in the struggle to self-govern this country from that of Britain! We, in all our wisdom (?), and ulterior motives, could not or would not allow our government to believe that a few upstart revolutionaries should dissuade us from formulating our version of foreign policy in East Asia! We sacrificed 58,000 American lives to make our point and for what purpose? How many did they sacrifice in order to bring about their independence? We are NOT always right in the eyes of the world; maybe it's time for us to review our own republic and what it stands for! Tate

This book is a revelation about the struggle endured by the Vietnamese people after the US left the fight. I served as a Hospital Corpsman with a squad of Marines in Quang-tri Province in 1970. Before reading this memoir, I felt a lot of anger about our leaders leaving behind more than 4800 POW at the end of our involvement. I was informed by the author that more than 300,000 Vietnamese citizens were slotted in "Re-education camps" run by the northern communists after they conquered the southern provinces and cities. Truly evil and tragic tale.

In the US and the rest of the West, Vietnam means the grunts perspective in movies like Platoon. But that was NOT the dominant human experience of Vietnam. FAR more people's lives and types of experiences are described in this one book than the other 90% of Vietnam literature and such combined. Powerful, heart rending, and vivid, this book really brings the other side of Vietnam home. It distinguishes most VC were not even Communist, the politics and workings of the various party mechanisms, and how even the "white collar" politicians were humping the boonies with the guerilla grunts. The terror of an Arc Light attack and jungle living is presented, as the Communist parties betrayal of their southern allies. A MUST READ for anybody who cares about the totality of what happened in the Vietnam war.

This is both a personal story and a readable account of the politics of a war that changed war

fighting. Not a fast-moving tale, it is still a revealing analysis of American misperceptions of the meaning and resolve of the National Liberation Front. Truong Nhu Tang stresses the willingness of the NLF to consider almost any option, and to join with (almost) any partner in what he portrays as a near-pure nationalist struggle. No surprise that the Americans are portrayed as arrogantly ignorant, so obsessed with tactical considerations that they overlook what motivates their NLF opponents. The description of the strategy of "fighting-and-talking, talking-and-fighting" from the NLF perspective was worth the price of the book. Battles such as the Tet offensive are "psychological events," and negotiations are undertaken merely to strengthen the military position. As the author explains, "It was, after all, a traditional Vietnamese approach to warfare, a technique refined over centuries of confrontation with invaders more powerful than ourselves." Imagine countering or even explaining that kind of sophisticated, long-term approach to warfare to a distracted American public in the age of instant communications. If the U.S. military has an answer to the NLF strategy, it wasn't evident in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Though French, I read this "Vietcong Memoir" in English. The reading of the book was pleasant - I used the pictures from times to times to help seeing the actors of the unfolding story. As I previously searched on the internet about the author - who like me lives in Paris - I knew the account would be very-much politically-oriented, fine with me. Mr. Tang deserves high praises as he struggled to free his country. Being part of the local Saigon elite and an idealistic democrat Mr. Tang got whipped out by the much broader than Vietnam gamble between the USA and the Communist block. The account splits itself in three distinct parts, all crucial to the life of the author: 1. childhood and political-building experience, 2. struggle and manoeuvres, 3. misery, journey and exile. Being a native French and Parisian I much appreciated the early life experience of Mr. Tang with the acme of his stay here in Paris: his meeting with Ho Chi Minh. As a conclusion: this Southerner ideally built his country but never had in sight that everything was already decided North and eventually he got back to where he met his political conscience: Paris in France: the loop is perfect.

It is about time that English language readers understand the Vietnam war from the Vietnamese point of view.

As a veteran of the Vietnam War, the book provided fascinating insights to the opposing forces point of view and developments during the war. In particular, I was struck by the southerners' nationalism but revulsion to Communism while the northerners were both nationalists and Communists. The

mass exit of southerners following the end of the war underscores their revulsion to communism. The US Government never figured this out until it was too late.

I would recommend this book to all, especially to those who served in the jungles of Vietnam. It is a well written and very insightful look at the Viet Cong leadership structure and how they thought and processed their position of war. It even explains how they lived, survived & died in the jungles and swamps of South Vietnam. It definitely opened my eyes as to how & why we lost this war. I am not sympathizing with them or their effort. Had we allowed our U.S. forces to "fight to win" I truly believe we would have won this war easily but our politicians with their policies and bleeding heart liberal citizens denied our soldiers any chance to win. In the end, South Vietnam lost anyway. The very communist North Vietnam took control and reined terror down on the heads of the South Vietnam citizens.

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