

Resistance is generally overrated, having little effect on the war's outcome. German mechanization of elite Panzer units, so evident in the early *Blitzkrieg* period, did not spread to other parts of the army nor keep pace with the vastly increased mobility of the Allied armies in the latter stages of the war, leaving the Germans with an inferior "horse-drawn body behind a motorized head." The French, who receive a number of Purdue's barbs, were not unhappy with the early Vichy government, probably had more collaborators than members of the Resistance, were more willing to fight the allies than the Germans during the North African invasion, and for the most part did not welcome the Normandy landings. Finally, Purdue believes that the Soviet Union was an enemy of the Western Allies as dangerous and villainous as Nazi Germany, noting Russian interest in a second Nazi-Soviet Pact as late as the summer of 1943, and Stalin's brutality in the Katyn Forest massacre and in permitting the destruction of Warsaw and the death of 250,000 Poles.

Despite a slight British bias, evidenced in preferring Montgomery's strategy over Eisenhower's and in blaming Roosevelt chiefly for Russia's wartime gains, this fine little book will provoke lively discussions among students of the war, ranging from those who have at least a good "Western Civilization" understanding of the conflict to those who teach it. Necessarily short on biographical and anecdotal detail, it deserves close consideration for adoption as collateral reading in undergraduate courses or as a primary text at the graduate level. The footnotes are sparse but adequate, and a predominantly British bibliography is balanced between traditional and revisionist accounts of the great issues.

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**Peter Lowe, ed. *The Vietnam War*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Pp. xii, 253. Cloth, \$59.95; ISBN 0-312-21693-9.**

This volume of essays by European, Asian, and American scholars, relying mostly on secondary sources, is an uneven introduction to the level that different nations were involved in the Vietnam War. The consensus that emerges from this global perspective is that the Vietnamese fought the war to preserve their nationalist revolution, while other participants viewed it in light of their larger cold war strategies. These essays all champion Vietnamese nationalism, but criticize foreign and particularly American intervention. Readers looking for a conservative point of view on the war will be disappointed.

The book contains an editor's introduction and nine essays. The first one, on the war's early years, suggests that the United States followed the French into Vietnam through a combination of diplomatic blunders, missed opportunities, and military optimism. Excellent essays on the Vietnamese come next. Nguyen Vu Tung argues

that after the Geneva Convention, northern policy evolved in stages: rebuilding the North, supporting the southern revolution against Diem, and bringing military and diplomatic pressure against the Americans. In his study of the South, Ngo Vinh Long examines the key role that southern insurgents played in capitalizing on the political and military failures of the Saigon government. Two essays on the United States follow and demonstrate that American decisions in Vietnam were affected by developments in the cold war and, after 1965, by the growing antiwar movement.

Essays on the international scope of the war, which comprise the second-half of the book, begin with the Soviet Union and China. Fearful of a war with the United States, both countries avoided combat and limited their role to supplying military and financial aid to North Vietnam. Their support emerged from their experiences in Korea and their cold war desire to support a communist ally; it assumed added propaganda significance for each nation after the Sino-Soviet split. Australia joined with the Americans and sent troops to Southeast Asia in order to block Communist expansion, make use of its military, and prove themselves a staunch western ally. A final essay on European nations focuses mostly on Great Britain.

The essays on Vietnam and the United States provide students with an excellent analysis of why the war took the course that it did. The essays on the other countries, however, add little to a student's understanding of the war beyond defining the magnitude of communist support of the North. Indeed, as important as it might be, the book does not make it clear why an international perspective on the Vietnam War is even relevant. China, the Soviet Union, and other European nations stayed out of the conflict, apparently viewing it as a sideshow to more pressing matters, and Australia's 50,000 soldiers had little effect on the war's outcome. Instead of the international focus, essays on the French or, especially, the Vietnamese who supported a separate state in the South would have been more valuable. Also, because each essay covers its separate topic through 1975, the book, taken as a whole, seems incompatible with a semester-long chronological study of the Vietnam War. It might be better suited to a course on modern diplomatic history for showing how big nations twist small conflicts to their own purposes.

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**Robert Brent Toplin, ed. *Oliver Stone's U.S.A.: Film, History, and Controversy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000. Pp. 304. Cloth \$34.95; ISBN 0-7006-1035-9.**

Oliver Stone, more consistently than any other director, has presented moviegoers, film critics, and historians—amateur and professional—with radical and challenging perspectives on pivotal events and themes in post-World War II American