

self often dropped his brother's name. At the convention Kennedy's walkie-talkies and other electronic gear hummed efficiently.

Overwhelmed in the balloting, McCormack fought on in the primary. But Kennedy lavished funds on billboard, newspaper, and television advertising, and he opened twenty headquarters in Boston alone. He relied on scientific polls while McCormack used old thumb-in-the-wind methods to read the political barometer. McCormack attacked his opponent; Kennedy coolly discussed "issues." Kennedy took both the primary and the general election.

Levin concludes that Kennedy won because he had money, because the public wants heroes, and because "he possesses some attributes, some substance, and some presence which makes it not difficult for him and his employees to create and sell an attractive public profile."

THE author, who has written two other political books, obtained hundreds of taped interviews and questionnaires from Massachusetts politicians. He writes smoothly, but he quotes at too great length from his raw data. Meanwhile, important questions are unanswered. More information on John Kennedy's attitude toward Ted's candidacy would be welcome. And Joseph P. Kennedy, who helped boost his youngest son into the race, is mentioned in passing only three times. Levin discusses the shortcomings of McCormack's campaign manager, and quotes him at length, but fails to name him. The candidates seem scarcely more alive than the images and stereotypes projected by their supporters and opponents. Finally, a short appraisal of Kennedy's Senate service is in order, in view of the controversy over his fitness for the office.

In other respects, Levin is most effective. His analysis of a television commercial shows how a candidate appeals to a voter's pride and prejudices. In a detailed study of the first TV debate Levin cites the opportunities and pitfalls faced by candidates who participate in such confrontations.

The "deference vote" is discussed. Levin suggests that American workers are following the pattern of English laborers who for years "have expressed a marked deference toward and tendency to vote for candidates of aristocratic background and to vote against candidates of their own class." Kennedy, an aristocrat utterly devoid of snobbery, "is everyman, but he is also better than everyman and therefore what everyman would like to be. Everyman—if he can simultaneously suppress his envy—can therefore identify with him."

Four Views of War

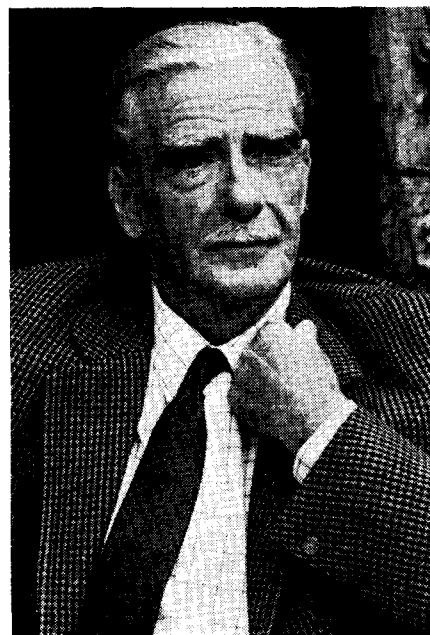
***Toward Peace in Indochina*, by Anthony Eden (Houghton Mifflin. 77 pp. Hardbound, \$3. Paperback, \$1.65), *Triumph or Tragedy: Reflections on Vietnam*, by Richard N. Goodwin (Random House. 142 pp. Hardbound, \$3.95. Paperback, \$1.45), *Vietnam and Beyond*, by Don R. Larson and Arthur Larson (Duke University Rule of Law Research Center. 42 pp. 50¢), and *Dateline: Viet-Nam*, by Jim G. Lucas (Crown. 324 pp. \$4.95), variously view the holocaust in Southeast Asia. A professor of international relations at Howard University, Bernard B. Fall is the author of several books on Vietnam, including the recently published "Viet-Nam Witness" and the forthcoming "Hell in a Very Small Place." Professor Fall won the 1966 George Polk Award for "outstanding interpretive reporting on Vietnam."**

By BERNARD B. FALL

NOT LONG ago my yearly file of Vietnam clippings, including the West European press and an occasional *Pravda* or *Borba* item, could be contained in a single, not-too-bulging manila folder, and my yearly Indochina book accessions—including Hanoi's propaganda pamphlets—filled half a shelf in my library. Indochina as a whole, i.e., Cambodia, Laos, and the two Vietnams, was a nice field of research, like Arabia or West Africa, with some six serious specialists in the whole wide world—nice in-groupish fellows who knew each other and whose writings were easily followed in perhaps four publications. All that has changed, of course, since Vietnam became front-page news. The clipping folders have to be changed every ten days, and books, pamphlets, teach-in readers, Congressional hearing volumes, State Department white papers, and so on run into millions of words, much of them repetitive, superfluous, and downright inaccurate. The four titles reviewed here are to a large extent in the mainstream of that trend. All were originally articles, and written as such: superficial at times, or, conversely (as in the case of the Larson work, which does not aspire to be a book) trying to cram a great deal of information into inadequate space.

In view of the past high station of its author, the most interesting of the quartet is the slim volume by Anthony Eden. The Earl of Avon's career was one of ultimately magnificent failure in the sense of the "overtrained" athlete who prepared himself so long for the championship that he was finally too worn by the bitter battles of the semi-finals to enjoy its rewards. From 1938, when he resigned as Foreign Secretary rather than endorse the erosion of the collective security system against Hitler, to 1956, when, weary and ill, he handed Britain's premiership to Harold Macmillan after the bitter Suez Canal debacle, Eden had stood for positions that were unpopular at the time he advocated them. This was also true in the case of the French Indochina war. During the crucial days of 1954 when Dien Bien Phu agonized and the late John Foster Dulles invented "brinkmanship," Eden, as Churchill's Foreign Secretary, withstood both French and American pressure to escalate the war with "joint action" against the Viet-Minh divisions massed around the valley. He refused, as he said in his volume of memoirs, *Full Circle*, "to endorse a bad policy for the sake of unity."

It is precisely this profound honesty of the man that makes his words worth listening to today as he briefly reviews parts of the historical record and offers a



—Herbert Mitgang.

Anthony Eden: "Neutrality is not a crime; it is a risk."

twelve-point settlement program which in many ways is far closer to the proposals contained in de Gaulle's Phnom Penh speech than to the State Department's position—this in spite of a ringing endorsement by Dean Acheson in a review of the book for the *Washington Post*. In his preface Eden states what seems to be a basic principle held by many thinkers on the subject: that no single great power can hope to rule the peoples of the Indochina peninsula, “even if it has the ambition to do so,” and he specifically mentions the United States and China. To those who hope that *any* kind of agreement based on force alone can stabilize the Indochina situation Eden addresses an admonition that is likely to become famous: “Neutrality is not a crime; it is a risk. Indochina could be an example where neutrality could also be the way through to peace.”

IN fact, once the extremely controlled prose has been shelled from the hard kernels of judgment contained in *Toward Peace in Indochina*, it is difficult to see what Dean Acheson (in his present incarnation) had to cheer about; for Eden, in the very first sentence of the preface, warns against the “fashionable” habit of blaming all of Vietnam's troubles on the French. He refuses to support the unilateral-aggression theory, on which the whole present policy is based, finds the Vietcong “inelastic” but the Saigon government lacking “political inspiration,” advocates “offering Soviet diplomacy its chance” at settling the conflict, thinks that bombing North Vietnam is of “debatable value,” and does not believe that “heavier bombing [can] redress a political decline.”

Eden's twelve points do not, as such, offer much that is new; nevertheless, it is always good to know that well-versed diplomatists such as he agree with much that the “nervous Nellies” have been saying all along. Although he would abolish the unanimity rule, which has plagued most of the postwar international arrangements, Eden, like de Gaulle, would like to see North Vietnam included in a Southeast Asian neutralized belt along the lines set forth in the Locarno Treaties of October 1925. It is an arrangement he is convinced the North Vietnamese would welcome.

The effectiveness of other points is more doubtful. The guaranteed countries are not to buy weapons from any guarantor power, but how this would stop them from purchasing MIGs in Czechoslovakia or F-105s from Spain is not explained. Limits upon weapons in certain categories would probably be more effective. Point 9 speaks of a cooling-off period after the cease-fire “for the economy and security of South and

North Vietnam *to be established*” (italics added), which leaves unclear whether this means trade between the two zones or not. And Point 11, which advocates the respect of the 1949 Geneva Convention on prisoners of war, and applies while the hostilities are going on, somehow does not quite fit in with the rest of the proposals aimed at *settling* the conflict—not merely de-escalating it.

Vietnam and Beyond should be read side by side with Eden's book, because it presents an equally level-headed attempt by two American academicians—Don R. and Arthur Larson, who was President Eisenhower's USIA chief—to explain what is commonly called “the roots of our commitment.” The Larson brothers find that, in lieu of a pragmatic foreign policy which would judge every commitment by the tenets of American national interest in the case (all tough talk aside, that was what decided the Eisenhower Administration not to send bombers to Dien Bien Phu, but to send Marines to Lebanon; not to defend the Tachen Islands, but to hold Quemoy), there is now “an automatic, unthinking, robot judgment: the expenditure of unlimited American lives and treasure is



always justified . . . if the objective is containment of Communism anywhere.” There is an extremely interesting section, no doubt based on Arthur Larson's own recollections as a Cabinet member, concerning what exactly the United States had “committed” herself to in Eisenhower's original letter of October 23, 1954, to Diem. The Larsons find that “the nearest thing to a commitment at this stage was an indicated willingness, subject to some stiff . . . conditions and understandings, to provide economic and technical assistance, including military advisers, material, and training.” And the authors add that those “stiff” conditions, which the succession of Saigon régimes had to fulfill, were never met by them. The Larsons' solution for Vietnam, given the situation in 1965 when they wrote their pamphlet (published in part in *SR* April 24, 1965) would have been to involve SEATO first, and if that failed, the United Nations.

With Richard N. Goodwin's book we see the New Frontier facing the quagmire—and realizing belatedly that it does not enjoy it. Like the other Frontiersmen, Goodwin, making their key point, insists:

“No President committed American combat troops to Vietnam before they actually went. No President believed he had made such commitment. No one ever thought he had.”

In other words, since those 305,000 American troops in Vietnam are not a figment of the imagination, only *one* President is responsible for their being there: Lyndon B. Johnson. And so it goes. One of President Kennedy's ablest speech writers, Goodwin, who first tried to make a go of it in the Great Society as well, now states that Secretary Dean Rusk's explanations of North Vietnamese aggression sound like “an entry in the Soviet Encyclopedia.” The whole Vietnam war, far from being simply a North Vietnamese operation, is a mixture in which “there is also civil war.” Somewhat weakening the argument of the anti-aggression theorists, Goodwin is the very first writer I know to remind an American public that in 1958 Diem created a “Committee for the Liberation of North Vietnam, which parachuted agents into Northern areas.” One other writer, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, made this point—approvingly—in the May 1964 issue of *Réalités*, but the French periodical delicately dropped the article from its U.S. edition.

Goodwin makes additional candid admissions, and, as usual in books by New Frontiersmen, Secretary Rusk comes in for a goodly share of minor pin-pricks. Like every concerned person, Goodwin has his set of solutions to the Vietnam problem. He feels that, basically, the differences between the United States and Hanoi “are not greater than those in many productive [sic] Cold War negotiations.” He also believes that Washington is “willing to see ‘free elections,’ in which the Communists can organize, can campaign, and perhaps can win a voice in government.” And, in his opinion, no South Vietnamese leader can “hope to withstand determined American pressure toward a settlement.”

GOODWIN's confident beliefs last spring, when he wrote *Triumph or Tragedy*, are by now only of historical value. Events have totally outstripped them on every count. The September 11 elections in South Vietnam have been about as free as all the other elections Vietnam has ever had, both in the North and the South. And while it is at least understandable that the Vietcong as such did not vote or run for office (“Would you have let the Nazis run in a French election in 1944?” P. J. Honey, the major British pro-Administration exponent, said to me in a radio debate), it is less understandable that all neutralist candidates were carefully screened out of the proceedings. Although, on paper, Hanoi and Washington's differences are, as Goodwin says,

"paper-thin"—about the thickness of a good iron-clad treaty—those between Saigon and the National Liberation Front are deeper than ever, and little is known about the depth of disagreement between the NLF and Hanoi. If past American performance in Vietnam, with its incredible decade of abject capitulations to the Diem régime, is a yardstick, I would not even place any bets on the ability of "determined American pressure" to make a settlement stick in Saigon.

Still, of the four volumes under consideration here, Goodwin's, with its insights into the "corridors of power," is by far the most valuable, even if it is not the last word on the Kennedy Administration's incredibly poor performance in not detecting how really bad the Vietnam mess was. I am still not too sure that further revelations on that score will not become a handy weapon in future political contests between Kennedy heirs and their rivals.

Like the GIs who make up the combat outfits in Vietnam, Jim Lucas's book is nineteen years old. Not that Jim is nineteen years old: when I met him last summer in Cantho in the Mekong Delta after dinner at the mess he looked like a kind-faced grandfather (he actually wore slippers) and I knew that he had a string of reporting prizes dating back to World War II, with medals for bravery to match. *Dateline: Viet-Nam* simply is a collection of his daily dispatches to the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, with all the good and bad things this implies; after reading it I made quite sure that my *New York Times* subscription was fully paid up for the rest of the year. This is reporting as the movies have engraved it in everybody's memory (there was a film with Clark Gable and Lana Turner reporting from Shanghai in 1937 that fits the bill): the hard-hitting, gutsy reporter out front with the skirmish patrols, giving the public the awful smells and noises of war. Television without the electronics. "Then the shooting starts. It lets up, then starts again. Rifles bark. Machine guns chatter. Grenades explode. Noise in the village ceases. Even the dogs are silent," reads one complete paragraph; and there is a counterpart in almost every story. After a few days of this, and the book covers most of the days between January 1964 and April 1966, one fact becomes crystal-clear: War is hell. And it is boring.

If the book had been in the hands of a competent editor, it would at least have been shorn of its repetitions and the citations of the hometown and state of every American appearing in the book. What this does to a description of a helicopter ride, with each crew member listed, can only be guessed at.

Not only is there little about the mean-

ing of the war, but there are factual errors. It is absolutely incredible that a journalist operating for more than a year in the Mekong Delta—Lucas is probably the least Saigon-bound of all press "regulars"—would not know anything about the Hoa-Hao Buddhists, among whom he lives. "From our viewpoint," he writes, "the Hoa-Hao have one distinction: They are quite anti-Communist. The Reds once ambushed and wiped out a party of Hoa-Hao leaders.

"The Hoa-Hao detested Diem because he once called a peace parley and locked up Hoa-Hao delegates when they refused his terms. . . ."

In actual fact, the Viet-Minh in 1947 murdered the Prophet Huynh Phu So, who led the whole sect, and Diem, not to be outdone, in 1956 indeed broke the safe-conduct given dissident Hoa-Hao leader Ba-Cut to come in for negotiations and guillotined him in a public square—thus starting a non-Communist rebellion of Hoa-Haos which, in the Mekong Delta, perhaps wreaked as much damage as the Vietcong. If Lucas did not know this as a conscientious, on-the-spot reporter, then the American advisers did not know it either. Of such crass ignorance the whole Vietnam mess is made.

But there are valid passages in *Dateline: Viet-Nam*, and moving ones as well. Lucas is at his best when he waxes indignant over first-aid packages dated "1942" and poor equipment (of which there is plenty, official statements notwithstanding); at finding a specialized combat photographer serving as a driver, a cryptographer clerking in the PX, and so on. Lucas has no reservation about anything that is being done in the

name of the war's prosecution, but even he could not stomach the fact that in 1964 "more than half the 23,000 Americans [then] in South Vietnam are concentrated in Saigon with no visible employment"; he tells about a quartermaster colonel assigned to Vietnam for whom a job was "made," and who soon "had a staff of seven to help him with his no-work." Also brutally honest in describing the censorship system existing in Vietnam, Lucas would have made an interesting witness with Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester, for he gives the actual exchange of words between information officers about whether the Army radio station in Vietnam can risk offending the Saigon rulers of the moment by telling the troops what is going on *inside* the country.

No doubt many people will read Lucas's book for the honest, day-to-day reporting it represents, as a sort of Bayeux Tapestry of the Vietnam war. Others will read it as an account in which only the Americans are front-and-center, with the Vietnamese hardly ever coming through as people who are in fact badly hurt while we merely wish to make a score in a world-wide contest. It is the sensitive Jim Lucas who, at the conclusion of his book, cites the old Vietnamese proverb: "Throw gold at the feet of a poor man and he will spit on it. Give him a cup of water with dignity and he will be your friend."

But it is the war reporter who believes that the huge build-up in Vietnam is offering the "water with dignity" while presumably Hanoi and the VC are throwing gold at the feet of the peasants. Vietnam, unfortunately, is a bit more complicated than that.



"Do I have time for a quick one?"

Checkmate to Chaos

The Decline of the West, by David Cate (Macmillan, 616 pp. \$7.95), concerns the vicissitudes of an infant African nation that resembles in its struggles Algeria and the Congo. Charles R. Larson teaches English and African Studies at the American University in Washington, D.C.

By CHARLES R. LARSON

THE TIME is the end of the seventh week of the first year of independence. The place is Coppernica, a former French colony in Central Africa, rich in mineral wealth. The people are twelve million Africans, half a million whites, and a handful of international financiers about to manipulate a coup to overthrow the young, inexperienced government. These are the ingredients of David Cate's third novel, *The Decline of the West*.

Cate's title is from Oswald Spengler's historical treatise, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*). Imperialism, Spengler wrote, "is to be taken as a typical symbol of the end . . . something demonic and huge which

grips, forces into service and consumes the late mankind of the world-city stage, whether it wills it or not, whether it knows it or not." Coppernica's government knows it but is able to do little about it. The mines account for 72 per cent of the nation's yearly revenue, and the profits are controlled only marginally by the Africans. French and Anglo-American business interests are so strongly dominated by a few ruthless businessmen that the coup which results resembles an international chess contest with Africans as the set pieces and Western pressure groups as the players. At the end of the competition all the gambits have been played, most of the competitors have lost, and the country is in its worst political chaos.

Cate's characters are vividly drawn, fully delineated personalities. They fall into several distinct groups. First, the industrialists: There is the Englishman Soames Tufton, who hasn't been able to adjust to Coppernica's independent status. "The bridge between black and white has got to be green, the color of dollar bills," he tells Chester Silk, his brother-in-law. Silk is the American ambassador to Coppernica, and he and Tufton own most of the stock in Amcol,

the country's second largest copper company. Tufton and Silk are pitted against Frenchman Aristide Plon, who runs the Union de Coppernica, the country's biggest mining concern. Plon has the armed forces behind him, "the French officers who had stayed on after independence—at his beck and call." And Plon and Tufton have André Laval, the sadistic commandant of the special mercenary forces, to carry out the coup which will replace Coppernica's young government with pro-European sympathizers.

As human beings the Africans come off considerably better; the reader sympathizes with them from the beginning. There is Raymond Tukhomada, the charismatic prime minister who as a youth was educated by a French priest until the clergyman thought he was asking too many questions. Then there is Tukhomada's minister of the interior, Amah Odouma, educated in France, the intellectual whose younger sister André Laval tortured to death in the days of fighting which preceded independence. And there is Fernand Ybele, the rapacious leader of the opposition party and puppet of the industrialists.

Alongside these characters are several others upon whom much of Cate's story depends: Powell Bailey, the Negro diplomat and assistant to Ambassador Silk; Jason, Bailey's son, hopelessly in love with Zoe, the ambassador's daughter; and James Caffrey, Tufton's disciple, the thwarted intellectual, pulled into international politics and a career of action. These and others fit into Cate's political parable of bribery and corruption, revolution and death—man's fate.

The Decline of the West comes at a time when many emergent African countries have been forced to re-evaluate their political systems. Coppernica might be any of a dozen of these nations. In its pre-independent stage it resembles Algeria; after independence it bears an uncanny similarity to the Congo: "In large areas of the country the Government's writ had already ceased to run. Ybele's attitude encouraged one tribal chief after another to proclaim break-away, separatist governments in the provinces." After the coup, "Coppernican politics resembled more than ever a Chicago gang war, and the identity of the Al Capone was less than ever in doubt."

In a larger sense, *The Decline of the West* is a big, ambitious novel stretched over three continents, embracing an international cultural confrontation that rises above the petty neuroses of inner life we have seen chronicled so meticulously in much of contemporary fiction. And in this context the author resembles André Malraux, of whom Cate wrote in his book *Communism and the French Intellectuals*: "When, in 1935, sixty-four French intellectuals defended Musso-



"Here's the pitch, Jenkins. You start out with nothing but one of our credit cards."