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of *The Eternal Light*, on which the Gentleman Mark Van Doren and the Jew Maurice Samuel (the terms are not used in accordance with Mr. Samuel's distinction) discuss the Bible. But many of his 20 books, having made their mark on a time before ours, are no longer read, for Samuel's central subjects, Zionism and anti-Semitism, are no longer burning questions. We are therefore grateful for *Little Did I Know* as a capsule restatement of some of the ideas its author has championed for half a century with seemingly boundless energy and skill.

— MARC SAPERSTEIN

A Passionate Plea for Reason

VIETNAM: BETWEEN TWO TRUCES

By Jean Lacouture; translated by Konrad Kellen and Joel Carmichael
Random House, New York, 1966

295 pp., \$1.95

As correspondent for the Paris *Le Monde* (perhaps the world's most respected daily paper), Jean Lacouture has been providing French readers for two decades with straightforward information and passionate discussion about upheavals in the Third World. The publication in English of his latest book on Vietnam is a most welcome event. *Vietnam: Between Two Truces* is not an immortal book, nor does it pretend to become the classic and definitive account. But it is now and promises to remain for a few years the best book on Vietnam in English for the general reader. The book contains errors and omissions, but it simply outranks anything else now available on the shelves.

If only for the information he provides, Lacouture is well worth pondering. He was never among those foreign observers who were dazzled by the propaganda of the Diem regime. From 1955 onward, while Diem's well-placed public relations machine inflated this archaic despot to look like the "Winston Churchill of Asia" (Lyndon Johnson's phrase), Lacouture was filing a steady series of dispatches to *Le Monde* detailing Diem's unbending absolutism, describing for French readers Diem's reign of terror directed against any and all opposition, and tallying the incredible series of provocations aimed by his regime, with American support, against the patience and endurance of the Vietnamese people. Reading Lacouture's account, one begins to sense the magnitude of all the things the American press did not say in those critical first ten years. Lacouture's list of the ways in which American-Saigon policy literally reanimated the war in the South (page 68), although incomplete, is certainly eye-opening. One might add to this list

of provocations the fact that Diem brought the hated colonial elite back to the villages, that the regime imposed a crushing burden of taxation on the peasantry, that it damaged the vital rice trading network; and one must strongly differ with Lacouture's opinion that Saigon carried out a "sensible" land reform. Still, the account is most impressive. Had American readers been able to shape their views since 1954 on the basis of facts such as these, then the Vietnam policy of three Presidents might never have received sufficient public acquiescence to permit entangling the US in this fruitlessly brutal war. We have paid dearly for our lack of information.

For nearly five years now, the evidence has been available to show that the insurrection in the South is not only Southern in origin, but that it actually began against Hanoi's will. Phillippe Devillers (friend, colleague, and collaborator of Lacouture) marshalled some of this evidence in a scholarly article in *China Quarterly* in 1962. The French journalist Georges Chaffard reported the same fact in a still untranslated work in 1964. Indirect confirmation came unexpectedly last year with the publication of Wilfred Burchett's reportage of travels with the National Liberation Front guerrillas (*Inside the Guerrilla War*, International, 1965). The first issue of *Viet-Report* (July, 1965) broached the subject, and Marvin Gettleman's Vietnam anthology (*Vietnam*, Fawcett paperback, 1965) reprinted Devillers' important article. But until quite recently, the fact that the insurrection in the South is indeed southern was virtually taboo in respectable discourse. We have been told until our ears buzzed that there was no trouble until Hanoi began to interfere, that the war is a case of aggression from the North, and that if Ho would only withdraw his battalions, all would be well in the South. The realization that these official assertions were nonsensical has crept most cautiously into public consciousness. Now, finally, with the publication of Lacouture's book, this long-known fact has been irrefutably thrust into "respectable, responsible" dialogue. From now on, one has a simple answer to those who still recite the State Department's myth of aggression from Hanoi: "read Lacouture!"

Having personally observed the First Indochina War, Lacouture is happily not as confused by the merry-go-round of generals and ministers in Saigon as most of us tend to be. Out of the scrambled picture of power struggles and street riots, Lacouture disentangles a guiding thread that seems to lead inexorably in two opposite directions. On one side are the generals, each jockeying for the honor of appearing as the most irreconcilable enemy of an end to the war, as the most intransigent advocate of war. From Diem down to Khanh, there has been a consistent movement toward the right, toward eternal war, war at all costs. But the other end of the thread that Lacouture unravels leads directly to

peace. His report of a visit to Saigon in late 1964 reveals the haunting presence of peace. Peace hung in the air, peace crept into Saigon salons; it entered whispered conversations and occasionally penetrated into public discussion. Not the spectre of defeat but the image of peace led the US to escalate the air war and introduce masses of infantry. Hundreds of thousands of American "boys" have been sent into Vietnam not because the Saigon army was defeated, but because there was no longer any reason for Vietnamese to fight one another. Nothing that Vietnamese could gain from continuing the war could justify the enormous cost in rice, blood, and spirit. The more than 100,000 soldiers who have deserted from the government's army since the American build-up began have added their testimony. The Buddhists and students who risk their lives by parading with anti-American banners give further evidence that if Vietnamese affairs were left in the hands of Vietnamese, peace would rapidly break out. But so long as the United States can find one South Vietnamese officer above the rank of corporal who is willing to bear the disgrace of continuing the war in his name, just so long will Americans be sent to die in the jungles "to assist the government of Vietnam repel the aggression from the North." No one can predict when the thin thread of common interests that binds the city population to the Saigon juntas will snap. While the people drift irresistibly toward peace, the US clasps in its deadly embrace the most ardent advocates of war. Lacouture issues a timely warning that this fruitless process cannot go on indefinitely.

Much American policy has a familiar ring to Lacouture. Where most reporters hear only ringing declarations of principles, Lacouture perceives distinct echoes of French declarations during the first war. The various infallible military strategies trumpeted from Washington turn out not to be so new or so infallible after all. To be sure, Westmoreland copies Navarre on a larger scale, and another Dien Bien Phu is preventible, but all the enormous American firepower has had no more success in winning the political allegiance of the peasants—the only basis of a stable victory—than the French Expeditionary Corps. If anything, the Americans are more hated than the French, partly because they are different, but mostly because they are more of the same.

Lacouture sees in the American escalation not only a move to prevent the outbreak of peace but also a deliberate effort to "change wars." Like France in the early 1950's, Washington wants to raise an unwinnable war in the Vietnamese mud to the level of a negotiable international crisis where American power meets with more respect. By the more optimistic estimates of American generals, the war in the South alone would take more than half a million troops perhaps a decade or longer to "win." No American administration can lightly afford such

a war on its political record any more than France could. But at Geneva in 1954, France and the US found a quicker solution. The Western powers can dictate no terms to the guerrillas in the jungles, but in some conditions the Communist powers can and (Washington hopes) will again do so, as they did in 1954 when Moscow and Peking pressured the Viet Minh into relinquishing much of what they had won in battle. Seen in this light, Washington's oft-repeated charge that Moscow and/or Peking control the NLF is in reality a prophecy that Washington hopes will fulfill itself. American brinkmanship is a logical continuation of counter-insurgency by other means. We cannot defeat the insurrection until we make the NLF dependent on Moscow and/or Peking, and we cannot force Moscow and/or Peking to make the NLF more pliable to our wishes until we threaten a major international war—so runs the logic on which Washington has embarked.

Altogether, Lacouture has written a most remarkable book. To readers schooled in the American brand of monopoly journalism, it will come as a revelation to encounter a reporter who not only sees and reports, but also feels, thinks, and speaks his mind. The fact that Vietnam still lives is something of a miracle to Lacouture. He is properly astonished not only that a nation could endure everything that Vietnam has had to suffer in the last century, but that its people could remain vigorously determined to prevail. He has a depth of perception and a quality of empathy with Vietnam which are most notably lacking from the press and from the often frigid atmosphere of academic discussions. Without undue sentimentality, his colorful prose style grasps the meanings of suffering and surviving in direct, illuminating way. His book can help to enrich not only our ideas but also our rather dulled emotions.

Most of all, one hopes, *Vietnam: Between Two Truces* will contribute something toward a change of American policy. In the book's final chapter, Lacouture pleads for a reasonable and speedy settlement. "The main thing," he says, "is not to know who is responsible for the war, but to find means of stopping it—for the benefit of the Vietnamese people." And, we might add, for our own benefit too. Hopefully these truths will soon be held as self-evident in the US:

The South is the seat of the conflagration, and it can be extinguished only there. . . . It is not up to the North Vietnamese to terminate a war in which they play an important but subordinate part; it is up to the South. . . . Western policy should try neither to build an artificial anti-communist system in Vietnam nor to return to power one of the groups that have been fighting each other for so many years; it should try instead to re-establish *legitimacy* and permit authority to rest on a popular base. This legitimacy—violated by Diemism, foreign intervention, and a succession of coups—must be re-established, first by permitting a resumption of political

life, and subsequently by permitting the various revolutionary forces inside the Viet Cong to integrate themselves into such a legal framework. . . . Does the United States want to install a new Diem in Saigon, or would it prefer to let the Vietnamese people, at last, choose their own government? If the latter is to be the case, the South's diversity and unique character, which give the Viet Cong its revolutionary drive, will have to find expression outside armed combat. To proscribe and crush these revolutionary forces and drive them North is to start the Diemist adventure all over again. To integrate them and offer them a place corresponding to their social and human importance in tomorrow's state is to respect realities that are neither Chinese nor American but simply Vietnamese.

Jean Lacouture is to be congratulated for presenting these realities so clearly and forcefully in his book. For purposes of disinterested investigation and for the sake of passionate discussion, this is an essential work.

— MARTIN NICOLAUS

General Education:

The Hedgehog, The Fox, And The Owl

THE REFORMING OF GENERAL EDUCATION: THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE EXPERIENCE IN ITS NATIONAL SETTING

By Daniel Bell

Columbia University Press, New York, 1966

312 pp., \$7.50

The Greek poet Archilocus wrote: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Freely interpreting this line, Isaiah Berlin has distinguished two basic types of intellectual and artistic personality. The hedgehog relates every idea to a single vision of the world, while the fox pursues a multitude of ideas that possess no unifying principle. These two types of personality, I believe, underlie the theory and practice of college education. Hedgehogs propose curricula oriented toward a single, overriding goal. In one age, this goal is the service of God; in another, it is the fulfillment of man. To some, it is leading a good life; to others, it is leading The Good Life. Foxes prefer curricula unbounded by one purpose. Knowledge is interesting, or sometimes even important. But beneath the acquisition and application of knowledge, there lies no deeper purpose.

At Harvard, hedgehogs write theories and foxes run the curriculum. The 1945 Redbook, *General Education in a Free Society*, is the