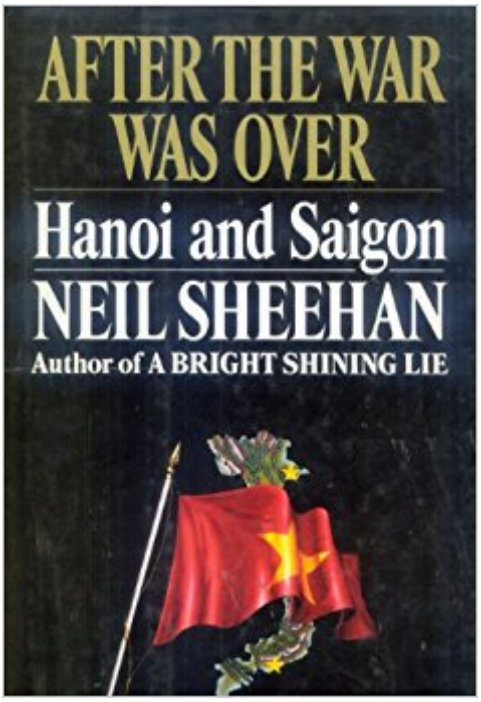
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After The War Was Over: Hanoi And Saigon



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Synopsis

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of A Bright Shining Lie revisits the scene of his magisterial account of the war in Vietnam and reveals the country that is just beginning to emerge from the war’s ashes. "Enlightening . . . mesmerizing . . . luminously clear."--The New York Times.From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

In the summer of 1989, when Sheehan returned to Vietnam for the first time since covering the war for the New York Times , he found that despite the doi moi or "new way" programs, the economy was in bad shape. He learned, for instance, that the cost of stet one n in inoculate inoculating Vietnamese children against the deadly, fast-spreading Japanese encephalitis would exceed the entire national budget. Sheehan visited Hanoi and Saigon ("The South is Vietnam’s California, and Saigon is its Los Angeles") and was disturbed by the corruption, shabbiness and poverty he saw. He contacted old acquaintances, visited sites familiar from the war--such as Ben Suc, the "most notoriously punished" village--and thought often of the late John Paul Vann, the central figure in his award-winning A Bright Shining Lie. Sheehan writes movingly of the ARVN veterans with missing limbs who wander the streets of Saigon. He closes this brief, thoughtful report with an account of his visit to an abandoned cemetery that was once intended to be the Vietnamese equivalent of Arlington National Cemetery. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Researching and writing the remarkable--and best-selling-- A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann

and America in Vietnam (LJ 9/15/88) took Sheehan 16 difficult years. Upon completion, he at last felt able to go back, in the summer of 1989, to the country he had last seen as a reporter covering the war. He describes conditions in north and south Vietnam, meets old friends, and interviews survivors from both sides. He relates his story, and theirs, within the context of the nation’s history, the wartime and postwar experiences of its people, and his own life. Filled with insightful and informed observations, this brief book offers help toward understanding the past and breaking down the emotional and cultural barriers of the present. Sure to be popular in both public and academic libraries. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 3/1/92.- Kenneth W. Berger, Duke Univ. Lib., Durham, N.C.Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

One of the better books, well written and interesting. There are so many other books out there on this subject, but most seem to be very biased and written by butt-hurt ’Murican patriots who are sore about losing the war. This book is not like that. One of my favorites, I might even keep it on my shelf, instead of giving it away like most other books.

God price and fast shipping.

Neil Sheehan adds a short addendum to his Pulitzer Prize "A Bright Shining Lie," one of the most interesting books out of the many written about this debacle. The primary locations of this book are Hanoi and the north and Saigon and south. Sheehan also takes a look into other places he spent time at as a journalist in the 1960s and 70s, and how they’ve transformed or changed, and/or haven’t, up to 1990. He notes some relevant points from his previous book, including the prophetic Ap Bac battle that took place in the early 1960s.He returns to many of the places of conflict and speaks with the people. His time in Vietnam and the relationships he had there had an enormous influence on him. His return seems to be a mix of catharthism and a quest for objective observation and curiosity. It should be up to a nation’s own people to decide how to do things, but in one regard he could have been more critical and questioning of the policies of the post-1975 Vietnamese government. 100,000 people were sent to "re-education" prisons. Southern supporters and participants of the NVA (Viet-Cong) were forced out to be dominated by northerners: The communists were very repressive.The title does make one wonder. "After the War Was Over," was written 14 years after the fall of Saigon. Another Vietnam "War" book? Not really, and that is good. It discusses the lives and conditions of those who participated in the drawn-out conflict from not just both, but the many sides that actually existed, and where these people are at today in their

lives.Some of the post-war communistic economic policies and later reforms were described, which are interesting. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, De Luan and the communists in Vietnam tried to collectivise agriculture. A proven disaster 50 years before in the Soviet Union, and then again in Maoist China. Collectivization was an outright failure in Vietnam as well. In addition to collectivization policies, the Northern Cadres forced the northern concept of central planning on the entrepreneurial South Vietnamese, which again, just simply doesn't work, being so contrary to human nature. It doesn't spur efficient production nor proper means of distribution of resources and goods. Did the Vietnamese communists learn anything? Yes, they did--after the fact. Now they claim to be the "first ones" to have departed (in 1986) from the moribund Soviet model. A patriotic communist Nguyen Van Linh, was reformist minded and his positions on policy within the government have labled him as the Vietnamese "Gorbachev." He had ideas that were considered by the post-75ers to be "right wing" or radical, but in the end he had their ear, showing some of the ways the South Vietnamese did things, which were objectively speaking, successful.In this piece two cities are described, Hanoi and Saigon. Street addresses are mentioned and you can learn where significant happenings took place in both cities if you are going there. Many modern buildings, houses, and hotels are noted also. If someone is coming to Hanoi or Saigon, this book can be useful to learn about where things happened. I discovered that I work in the same building where the Pentagon press briefings called the "five o'clock follies" took place.Some of Sheehan's coverage of Vietnamese history noted how the Vietnamese drove out the Mongols in the 13th Century, and have been invaded by the Chinese no less than 17 times prior to the 20th century. This book can be knocked off in a day.

This was not a completely balanced account of post war Vietnam. It is obvious the author was seduced by the Communist authorities when he visited Vietnam in 1989. I say that because when he talks of the effects of war on the south, he mentions the white terror of Diem without mentioning the red terror of the Viet Cong. The red terror targeted not military targets but teachers and bureaucrats. Sheehan does not mention that but Diem's terror campaign, which was mild compared to the red terror. Also when he talks of the 1963 coup against Diem, he terms it the American led coup. Again another fallacy since the coup leaderes had Washington's blessings, but was not led by Americans. Another small lie was the Cambodia invasion by Vietanm. Sheehan wants us to believe that Hanoi was not interested in dominating Cambodia. Most analysts would view this an incorrect statement. If you can read through Sheehan's opinions, it gives those interested in the war some perspective of what happened after the war. Caution is in order for Sheehan's opinions.

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