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HST 195: History of Vietnam War F16 (Escobar 21065)

Home ► Fall 2016 ► HST 195 F16 (Escobar 21065) ► Week 2 ► Week 2 Forum ► Patriots & PBS



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Patriots & PBS

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Patriots & PBS

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, October 1, 2016, 10:29 AM

This thread is for discussions on the Patriots & PBS topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Patriots & PBS

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Epic Protest

by Jessica Fialho - Monday, October 3, 2016, 3:47 PM

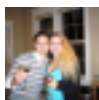
There isn't just a single story from the Appy book that is the most significant. In fact all the stories are full of detail about the war and people's different experiences. Many of the stories play into different developments of the war and we are able to gain insight with them all. However, the single story I am going to mention today is the significant story of Malcolm Browne "You could smell the burning flesh" (64).

In "You could smell the burning flesh" we get to read and learn about the perspective of a journalist. Now Malcolm Browne's story touches on a few different events, but the biggest one is the Buddhist protest. In fact Browne was "...the only journalist on the scene when a sixty-seven-year-old Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, burned himself to death in protest against the anti-Buddhist policies of South Vietnam's Catholic President Ngo Dinh Diem" (Appy, 64). This moment marked the start of a protest that Diem didn't seem to anticipate the continuation of. This moment shocked so many people and with reason. With Browne being the only journalist there he realized "...this was something of great, great importance, so the immediate task was getting the film sent by air freight to our bureau in Manila" (69).

Now, in episode 2 America's Mandarin, it touches on many different aspects of the Vietnam war as well. However, one of the major developments that is brought up is the Buddhist protest (35:00). This is a major moment during Diem's presidential time. It doesn't surprise me that we are able to get a variety of perspectives on this event. This protest touched everyone around and it even "horrified the west" (34:48). Can you imagine what it was like to stand there and watch Thich Quang Duc? This moment sends shivers down my spine. This moment is one of the reasons why Episode 2 America's Mandarin connects to Browne's story. Browne was the reason we have a picture of the Thich Quang Duc on fire.

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Re: Epic Protest

by Meadow Benedict - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 12:17 AM

Yes, there are a lot of stories that have a lot of substance we could have talked about. There were many to choose from. I liked your post and your story was great. It is a sad day when people feel they have to burn themselves to death to get people's attention to show they are not happy. The monks seemed like a very powerful force that could help Vietnam by pushing Diem out. It was interesting watching how many monks kept on coming and coming. Everyone just wanted a good life and the right to vote in a free election. "The horrifying picture of Thich Quang Duc burning became one of the two or three most familiar images from the Vietnam war-a robed monk, head shaved, sitting perfectly upright in the middle of a city street, engulfed in flames".(Appy, p.64) That was a powerful stance and picture. I think the monks showed the vietnamese that they needed to fight.

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Re: Epic Protest

by Jessica Fialho - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 12:37 PM

Thank you for the thoughtful reply. As you stated, Meadow, "it is a sad day when people feel they have to burn themselves to death to get people's attention..." I have been thinking a lot about this and how powerful of a force the Buddhists were. I continue to wonder why the monks took such a huge protest step. I can only imagine how trapped they must have felt to resort to such a large protest statement. I have been trying to put myself in their shoes and I have been trying to understand the Buddhists decision more clearly. One thing that came to my attention is one of the patterns I have seen was the fear that some of the people had, about how long the war would go on. There is a couple stories I have seen this mentioned in. However, the big one of them that sat with me is about Le Lieu Brown called "There was one coup after another". The couple last sentences just felt like there was so much weight attached. "But still I didn't think the Viet Cong could win. I just thought the war would go on forever" (Appy, 75). From there I contemplate if the Buddhists also felt that no one would win and the war would just never end so more people need to speak out and see the truth. The truth being the death of so many people.

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Re: Epic Protest

by Amber Gaboriault - Friday, October 7, 2016, 9:37 PM

Hi Jessica, I like how you pointed out the strategic plan of the Buddhist making sure a journalist was present with the protest. I didn't even think of that aspect. I agree if it wasn't brought to the media's attention America would have continued to ignore the reign of Diem.

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The importance of Buddhist Thich Quang Duc

by Amber Gaboriault - Monday, October 3, 2016, 9:41 PM

The story "Kick The Tires And Light The Fires" on page 60 in the Appy book, was a live account of the Buddhist Thich Quang Duc protesting Diem's government and setting himself on fire. The story relates to Episode 2 of the documentary. In the documentary, the Buddhist protest was the start of the downfall of Prime Minister Diem. When the Buddhist had set himself on fire and became a martyr for the Buddhist community, it started a series of protest and suicides. Many stories and pictures were shown in the USA causing the American people to show concern

about what was happening in southern Vietnam. With many Buddhist lighting themselves on fire, it showed that Diem was losing control of the people in southern Vietnam. Fear that the communist could overrun the southern part of Vietnam without the support of the people, America pulled support for Prime Minister Diem and secretly supported the planned coup inside Diem's own army. All the actions starting with the Buddhist Thich Quang Duc and ending with the coup, lead to the assassination of Prime Minister Diem. How could one ignore the passion and desire to find freedom using the example of lighting themselves on fire for the world to witness?

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Re: The importance of Buddhist Thich Quang Duc

by Jessica Fialho - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 1:30 PM

Amber, I find it amazing that our first posts were both related to the "Kick The Tires And Light The Fires" section and Buddhist Thich Quang Duc. I feel that is another way to back up how important this protest was and that it caused quite the after effect. Your ending sentence just sinks in so well. "How could one ignore the passion and desire to find freedom using the example of lighting themselves on fire for the world to witness?"

With Buddhist Thich Quang Duc's protest decision it did mark a large turning point in the continued decline of Diem's rule. I also want to touch a little more about it being a turning point for the increased concern for what was going on in Southern Vietnam.

As we know from reading through and watching more about the war, quite a few people involved start distancing themselves from the enemy. What I mean by that is some people seem to make the enemy less human or forgetting about the lives of the enemy, as a way of coping with the death rate. In the story of Tran Thi Gung, "I was stuck in a tunnel for seven days" we do see this view.

"We had to wait for them to come very close. as soon as I started to fire, I killed an American. After he fell, some of his friends came rushing to his aid. they held his body and cried. They cried a lot. This made them sitting ducks. Very easy to shoot. From then on we knew that if we just shot one American soldier others would rush to him and then we could shoot many more (Appy, 17)."

"Sitting ducks" is what she compares American's to. The story goes to explain how when the American's would retreat with their friends, Tran Thi Gung's group would take the American's weapons. Perhaps it's just me, but I feel comparing people to ducks and getting their materials helps put some distance.

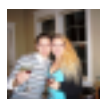
My point in bringing up the distancing away from one's enemy is, I am considering that the Buddhists were able to see this. Where I have no solid evidence to say it influenced Thich Quang Duc's decision to do such a major protest statement, I was wondering if anyone else thought he used his death with the media to not only bring

attention to what was going on in South Vietnam, but to remind anyone who forgot that everyone in this war is human and as long as the war continues people will die and that lives do matter.

(I hope I communicated that clearly.)

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Re: My connections between Patriots and PBS

by Meadow Benedict - Tuesday, October 4, 2016, 11:25 PM

The most important connection between the movie and book was the United States and the backing of Ngo Dinh Diem to be the president. I think the U.S chose someone too quickly. Diem seemed to have a very mean side to him that the people were not happy with. In the Patriots Christian G. Appy wrote a short story about Ngo Vinh Long and his life in Vietnam. "I saw the callousness of Diem's officials, police, and army. The Diem government had many public executions".(Appy p.58) In the movie Vietnam a Television history episode 2 the people talked about how cruel Diem was. "The manners and tortures of these people by Diem and his hound dogs were extremely inhumane. As the Americans and Diem became more and more repressive, people started telling us that we would have to fight. They said we'd be wiped out if we stuck to our plan of just political struggle.(Vecchione,Vietnam) I think the connection in the book and movie shows that is when the people decided to fight against Diem and America. I believe this is a very important part of the war. I think this development is what made a lot of people distrust America. We trusted the wrong person to be president of Vietnam and in doing so, the people became very angry and decided to take us to war. I think if we had let the people of Vietnam choose who they wanted for president and not what America wanted, then there could have been a different outcome.

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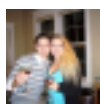
Re: My connections between Patriots and PBS

by Amber Gaboriault - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 10:36 AM

Hi Meadow, I do agree that America made a poor choice with Diem, and that the people of Vietnam should have had the right to choose, but at that time I believe America thought Vietnam would have chosen Ho Chi Minh and that would have allowed communism to win. I also believe America thought they could control Diem more than they did. I was shocked to learn we broke the agreement with the North when America didn't receive the outcome they had hoped for with Diem.

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Re: My connections between Patriots and PBS

by Meadow Benedict - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 3:04 PM

I agree. The United States did feel that Ho Chi Minh would win the election. They thought that Diem was a good person for the job as president and someone they could control. I think they should have given it a little more time to see how the people responded to Diem. By the time they knew the kind of man he really was it was too late and Diem was already president. I think the people deserved better from The United States by making sure they had a president who would listen to the people and give them the freedom they so badly wanted. I am sure it was frustrating for the people of Vietnam to know that another country was controlling who they were going to have for president. I know the United States was scared to death about communism, but they should have kept their end of the bargain and let the people choose.

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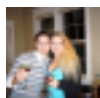
Re: My connections between Patriots and PBS

by Zachery Brown - Thursday, October 6, 2016, 2:21 PM

I agree with this post, and the statement that, "The Americans chose a leader to soon." Which we see this all through out history. Although I don't necessarily think that it is the, "choosing of a leader", more then it is the, "Choosing of sides." This has been one of Americas boldest stances in War, but yet its largest disconcerting roles in my opinion. Which is Everything vs. Communism. And the reason I don't say Democracy vs. Communism, is because, for America, at least, it isn't. They have been siding with whoever opposes a Communistic Government for decades. Whether it is a ruthless Dictator like Sadam Hussein, which we supported before he went rogue and started raiding Kuwait and what not. We did that because he opposed the communist rule or practice of any kind. So America stood behind him even knowing the atrocities he was committing. That's really what I see with Vietnam as well. All a part of the, "Containment Program" that began after WW2. America siding with and supporting whoever is willing to be the front man for the fight against Communism.

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Re: My connections between Patriots and PBS

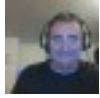
by Meadow Benedict - Sunday, October 9, 2016, 2:24 PM

I agree the United States has opposed a Communist Government for decades and that is why they chose to side with Diem. But I also believe they played a huge role in choosing Diem for president, even though they seem to downplay their role. They could have stood up to Diem and stopped the economic aid they were contributing to Vietnam until he held free elections for the people. But

the United States didn't do that because they thought Hoi Chi Minh would win the election and that wasn't what the U.S wanted. If the United States didn't feel like they could have a certain amount of power and control over Diem to a certain point, then I think it is possible that the U.S. would have backed someone else to lead the people of Vietnam who they thought they could influence so the U.S. could get the outcome they desired.

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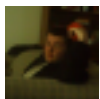
Patriots

by Eric Devall - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 12:42 PM

The biggest comparison I grew from was the first chapter of Appy's book, *Patriots*. I take personal reverence to this because I'm a veteran myself. I found it interesting how he discussed one commanders experience in Vietnam as it transitioned from an advisory role to a combat role, and how this parallels the overall role the US had early on in the Vietnam conflict and throughout its duration.

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Re: Patriots & PBS

by Jimmy O'Neal - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 1:35 PM

Which single story from Part 1 or 2 of the Appy book is the most significantly related to any event or development which has been presented in either Episode 1 or 2 of the documentary?

Malcolm Brownes story from the "Kick The Tires And Light The Fires" part of Appys book really touched base with the second episode of the PBS show.

Why?

I believe this part to be important because it shows the censorship of the Buddhist religion by the supposed Democratic South. By censoring their religion and forcing Catholicism upon the people it seemed more like an act of Communism and less like an act of Democracy.

What is the connection?

In Brownes story we see an American journalist that made a real connection with the Buddhist monks that resided in the city of Saigon. In his story we see South Vietnams oppression of the Buddhist religion. They began to stamp out most Buddhist teachings and ways and began to reinforce Catholic traditions and beliefs on the people. This then lead to one of the elder monks, Thich Quang Duc, to stage a protest which resulted in his burning alive. Browne then began to take snap shots and then sent these photos back to the states.

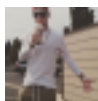
In the second episode of the PBS special we see the same problems going on in the Southern part of Vietnam. This episode contains scenes of oppression that the Buddhists faced during the new Democratic government that was in place. This led to many Buddhists sacrificing their lives in protest to the censorship that they were subjected to.

Why is this event or development significant?

I believe this event was significant because it was one of the first things that Americans started to pay attention to. With the publication of the pictures and the Buddhist monks coming to our country to protest on our televisions it became more wide spread and caused Americans to really think about what was going on in Vietnam.

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Civil Action Program

by Zachery Brown - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 7:46 PM

Being as this is my first post, I will bring up the very first connection between, Vietnam; A Television History, and our Patriots book. This first connection I noticed was after watching the Episode 2 of the Vietnam series. I had already read through the stories and noticed that, at about 31:30 seconds into the episode, when Major Robert Ryan is asked how he believes the war is going. He responds by stating, "Well I think we are beginning to win the people over." The reporter then asks, "What evidence do you have that tells you this?" The Major responds, "Well we have this strategic program going on."

What stood out to me in this short interview clip, is the connection with the very first story in our Patriots book, "Commanders; Bernard Trainor." On page 8, Trainor states that, "We thought Westmoreland's strategy of attrition was the dumbest thing to do. We felt the solution was to put marines or soldiers into the villages and stay there in small teams to protect the people and gain their trust, to respect their culture and generate a legitimate government that they could support." Which would deprive the North Vietnamese of important things that they depended on.

Although the program was short lived and rejected by Westmoreland, the program was very successful. To me, I got a sense that this was the program Major Ryan was speaking of in the interview. Being as he says that he felt they were winning the people over, and the sole purpose of the program was to do just that.

I believe that this is an important detail based on the outcome of what Westmoreland thought was a better strategy. Which as Trainor says in the very last sentence of his story, "Your only alternative was the heavy club, which was what Westmoreland tried,

and it was totally self-defeating." I'm not saying that the war would have been completely different with the Civil Action Program. But I do believe that there could have been a possibility to save more civilian, and US marine lives.

This is just one of the connections I have made so far. I am excited to read and reply to the other connections made by the rest of the class.

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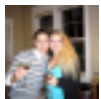
Communism and nationalism for independence?

by Will Lawhon - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 8:01 PM

While reading patriots and reviewing the documentary I could not help my admiration for the vietnamese people. I found it ironic that after the defeat of the Japanese and French imperialist in the north, Ho Chi minh Used part of our very own Declaration of Independence to get into the hearts of the Vietnamese people during his speech in Hanoi. The Vietnamese had been fighting for thier independence for thousands of years Prior to french rule. They were willing to fight and protect for thier country No matter the casualties As long as they had leader like Ho Chi Minh

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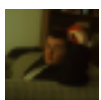
Re: Communism and nationalism for independence?

by Meadow Benedict - Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 11:54 PM

I felt sorry for the Vietnamese as well. They had been fighting and pushed around for too long and they knew the only way to really set them free was to fight again. It is very sad how most of the poor people in Vietnam who didn't have any money were usually the ones getting killed and forced to leave their homes. Could you imagine another country coming to our country and dictating what we can and cannot do? There is no way the American people would go for that. We would fight until the end for our country and freedom. That is exactly what the Vietnamese were doing. We went over there and angered a lot of already angered people. They had enough and decided to take us to war.

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Re: Communism and nationalism for independence?

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 8, 2016, 2:13 PM

Yes, the Vietnamese people were dealt a very bad hand. I really felt bad for them when reading stories like Phan Xuan Sinhs when they had to burn down the Vietnamese family's home so that they would not return to their land and they returned anyway because this was the land that their ancestors born, raised and died on. They had nothing else, so of course they didn't want to leave the only thing they had left. Especially something that is so important to their families history. This made me feel very bad for them because you have to think that this was also happening to hundreds if not thousands of other families in Vietnam.

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Re: Communism and nationalism for independence?

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, October 8, 2016, 2:53 PM

I agree with the few of you who are bringing up some valid points on reasons to feel for the Vietnamese. I feel for them as well. The stories we read help bring out the fact that everyone involved is human. A particular imagery from the story, "If they're making maps, they're preparing for war" (Appy, 54) comes to mind. It actually twists my stomach and I can understand why Ngo Vinh Long refused to move on with his travels so he could try and help the village of Ka Rom.

"One day I entered a village by the name of Ka Rom where highlanders had been regrouped into a strategic hamlet. They said that two hundred people had starved to death in the past month. I knew they were telling the truth just by looking at them. Their hair was crinkled and brown, their skin was dark and flaky, and they smelled horrible. It was just what my father said people had looked like during the famine of 1944-45 in the North. (Appy, 57)"

Everyone involved in the war was suffering. Families were falling apart. Many Vietnamese were forced to be re homed to the strategic hamlet camps. It was a war that many people feared would never end.

Now, the strategic hamlet camps had good intention it seems. However looking back on it, I am not entirely sure how Diem or the Americans didn't anticipate for regular attacks on these camps. From how I see it, if you build bases to fight, your enemy will try to destroy it. In a way, these camps contributed to the death count of the Vietnamese people. Although it was a good effort until the effort gave way and the residence of the camps began to starve or get regularly fired killed due to the attacks.

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