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Determining the Truth

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, October 8, 2016, 10:23 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Determining the Truth 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.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

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: Determining the Truth

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Not a puppet

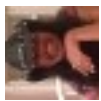
by Jessica Fialho - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 12:24 PM

It is sometimes difficult to discover the truth about what really happened in the past. However, a way that can help us is by comparing different books, stories, and documentaries. As we compare, conflicting information does come forward. I believe a huge part in comparing is seeing the patterns. If say three different sources claim an event happened one way and they are backing their side up with trustworthy evidence and the other 1 source is saying it happened a completely different way and has no evidence, it's easy to see which source to believe. The 3 different sources are the ones who would have the event correct. Comparing our material is one of the ways that can help us be confident we are learning accurate historical knowledge.

Now, between the AIM video and the PBS series there are quite a few conflicts that occur. One of them that is pointed out is, "...it tells us that new Diem was an american puppet which he certainly was not" (AIM Part 1, 17:20). I find it difficult to not believe "The Real Story" AIM video because of the actions of Diem. In a few different ways, Diem showed that he was not listening to the United States. The PBS video even points out with Lucien Conein explaining "...I know that I gave them a green light prior to the coup--upon the instruction of my government" (PBS, episode 44:30). The United States would not have been approving Diem's Coup, if Diem was an "American puppet"

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Re: Not a puppet

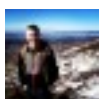
by Sohni Maan-Davie - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 6:38 PM

Jessica,

I agree that it is difficult to know what the truth is about things that have happened in the past, one of the ways to try to uncover the truth is by reading letters from the soldiers that fought in the war. I have noticed that the Herring book and the PBS show are very similar, yet the AIM video is different, and that it is claiming that some of the events happened a different way. The PBS show is viewing Ho Chi Minh as a hero, and the AIM video calls Ho Chi Minh a communist because he was fighting on the communist side. The best thing about history is that new information can be uncovered and that can change some mistakes that have been previously made.

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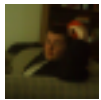
Deciphering bias to extract truth.

by Andrew Dellinger - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 9:11 PM

The AIM video brings to light discrepancies of historical facts produced by the PBS series we have been watching. After watching the video I felt pretty confused on who to believe. In light of the information presented by AIM, I realized that although PBS is supposed to be depicting historical events, they too are inclined to be biased just like the rest of society. Which obviously poses a problem for students trying to study and understand the events of the war in Vietnam. The main problem that came to my attention was what Bruce Loeb had to say about the elections or lack there was of them. Bruce brings to light the fact that the U.S. publicly stated that it was not bound to the Geneva Accords and that neither was South Vietnam (AIM 23:27). And that a U.S. official stated that it would not condone elections unless they were under the supervision of the U.N. for fear that it might not be legitimate. PBS does not acknowledge this information, and instead dumb it down to American and South Vietnamese intervention that stopped the election. George Herring seems to skip over this part as well, although he does mention that no country signed anything at Geneva therefore not binding them (Herring pg. 49). Deciphering the bias to find the truth proves difficult, but by compiling all the information from all our course material I think we can get to the root of what actually happened.

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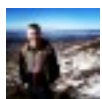
Re: Deciphering bias to extract truth.

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 12:51 PM

Hi Andrew, this is something that caught my eye as well. The Herring book and PBS series seem to match up but the AIM show largely disagrees with this information. The Geneva Accords was something that I found to have differing facts as well. Another thing I would like to point out would be their facts on Ho Chi Minh. The Herring book and PBS series seem to portray him as a kind of underdog while the AIM show brings up his communist involvement with Russia and how he would accept aid from them if it was needed, which would probably end up being needed. What do you think of the differing points on Ho Chi Minh? Do you think its strange that one side wants him to seem like a hero while the other wants to show a darker side of the man?

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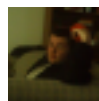
Re: Deciphering bias to extract truth.

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 9:21 AM

Hi Jimmy, I think you're spot on about how the two videos show Ho Chi Minh differently. The PBS videos make Ho look like a well-loved caring leader, and AIM is definitely more anti-communist. If you haven't already, you should read my forum post from Thursday, because I talk about this very topic. I used the

“Introduction to Vietnam” pdf file from the first week to weed out some of the discrepancies between the videos. I found that PBS did leave out important information about the atrocities that Ho’s communist regime committed, including the massacre that led to the migration of the Catholics in 1954. Furthermore, I used the Herring book to (in my opinion) discover that Ho is indeed a communist first. So to answer your question, I don’t think it’s strange that the videos show him in differing light for the mere fact that it is media. I will say that the extent to which PBS tries to cover Ho’s evilness was pretty shocking, and it is odd that they would so blatantly make America and South Vietnam look like bad guys. I’m not sure why they did it, but it certainly does seem like the PBS people were anti-war and did their best to portray American involvement as unnecessary and for no good reason.

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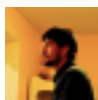


Re: Deciphering bias to extract truth.

by Jimmy O'Neal - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 12:43 PM

Thanks for the insight Andrew. I was also surprised to see that Ho was a communist before he claimed to be a nationalist. His massacre of Catholics being left out of the PBS series seems to me like a grave injustice to the people that died in order to further Ho's agenda. As for why PBS would cover up his misdeeds and vilify the South and US is still beyond me but I'm sure as the class goes on we will learn more about this. Its also weird how PBS could be considered anti-war but they seem to refuse to discuss the atrocities that took place in the North.

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Dealing with AIM vs PBS

by Nick Cervantes - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 11:12 PM

Academically, we can analyze each source, PBS and AIM, and question their sources and motivations. What are their biases. We can look at their telling of Vietnam history, or any history, with the understanding that such a complex war probably cannot be 100% correctly understood, but that a continuous reexamining of different pieces will strengthen the accuracy of a historical understanding.

Both sources are non-profits; AIM is known as right-leaning and PBS as left-leaning. AIM is a self-proclaimed “media accuracy organization,” and I would say it’s staunchly anti-communist. In AIM’s video, Reed Irvine (the founder of AIM) accuses PBS of failing “to put across one of the most important lessons that should be learned from the Vietnam experience, and that is: the imposition of communist rule inevitably results in great human tragedy.” This is not a piece of factual information,

just an opinion if what we should do. Because, if Ho's a communist, he's a national security threat, simple as that. The AIM video also plays intense, scary music the moment the Soviet Union is mentioned. I'm not excited about defending the international communist community, but the "Accuracy In Media, Inc." uses propagandist tools to critique PBS. And what are those books next to Charlton Heston? Is he selling books?

Accuracy is a noble goal in reporting. I agree that PBS put Ho Chi Minh in a positive light, though I don't think they glorified him as much as AIM made an effort to demonize him. In the AIM video, Dolf Droge tells of Ho betraying other nationalists to the French "for gold" (including his "oldest teacher"--what a monster Ho must be!), gold used to finance a communist movement that further betrays the unnamed teacher. I try to be objective when viewing these materials. I know it gets filtered through my experience and it's impossible to be totally unbiased, but we can still identify and analyze conflicting information to find the most accurate histories available.

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Re: Dealing with AIM vs PBS

by Mason Fisher - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 11:20 AM

Nick, Thank you for going in depth on the context of the two different video producers as it may seem obvious to some, I on the other hand was blind to see how right wing vs left wing the two are. "Such a complex war probably cannot be 100% correctly understood" you say this in the first paragraph of your post and I think this is very important to point out. This war we are learning about is so intricate that fully understanding it to full historical correctness is near impossible.

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Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Nick Cervantes - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 11:15 PM

There were a number of differences in the two videos. PBS claims Ho was a known nationalist for 25 years. AIM says it was really about 1 year. PBS associated Ho with a nationalist revolt that AIM claims had nothing to do with Ho. I believe PBS did make substantial errors and omissions, even skimming over the brutalities of the communist party in Vietnam. It's just that the actor from Planet of the Apes doesn't lend AIM a lot of credibility. I think the most glaring contradiction is the extent to which AIM says that the Vietminh killed so many other leaders, activists, and potential leaders in Vietnam, to secure their power. Also, an attack on Catholics in the North that drove many to the South. PBS did not go into that.

The books could help sort all this out in two ways. First, the Herring book helps because it is so dense with chronological information and citations that can be referenced. Second, Appy's personal accounts give different perspectives, from people who were there. I can't research everything Dolf Droge says, for example. I can't research everything said in the Appy book, either, but it helps paint a broader picture. Herring's book especially can be used as a more factual and less television-biased source.

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 7:20 AM

Nick, thank you for touching on the contradiction about the North Catholics going South. I was shocked to hear the AIM video points out that,

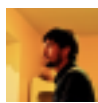
"It wasn't because of any religious doctrine which had told them they had to fear the communists. It wasn't because as the PBS series suggests, most of them had collaborated with the french, although some of them had. Nor was it because as the PBS series unfairly suggest because the Catholics had been incited by CIA propaganda to be fearful of the communists when they didn't need to be. No there was a very practical experience they had that caused them to flee. That's because in 1950 the communist led my Ho Chi Minh launched an unprovoked military attack against them. In spite of the fact the Catholics of north Vietnam were fighting against the french in alliance with but independently of the communist." (Aim part 1, 23:00)

When watching the PBS video, I had been led to believe that the North Catholics went South due to the Catholics disagreeing with the Communism in the North. I definitely agree that this was a huge contradiction and should not have been skimmed over in the PBS series.

I definitely am thankful we are getting a variety of information from different resources. It would be ridiculous to believe the first thing we read and just take it to heart. The different sources are very helpful and where I understand we do not have all the time in a History class to cross check all our sources, I do believe it will give us some good resources to reference and go back to even after this term is over.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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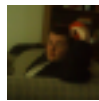
Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Nick Cervantes - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 12:18 PM

Hi Jessica, I appreciate you pointing out how ridiculous it would be to just take the first thing we read to heart. I admit that, watching the first two episodes of the PBS documentary, I did just that. I wasn't questioning the information they presented, I just assumed it was factual. Ho Chi Minh did come off as a sympathetic character, and I even defended him while talking to my girlfriend about the subject. Now I realize how little surface-level information I did have and still have. My personal opinion is still that PBS has more credibility than AIM, but I am glad to see other perspectives and am going to watch the rest of the PBS episodes a little more critically.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 1:05 PM

Hi Nick, now that you mention it the PBS series didn't mention the violence of the Communist party in China. Did they do this so they could make Ho Chi Minh a more relatable? I don't recall seeing anything in the Herring book related to these incidents either. One thing the AIM show didn't touch on however was Diem's general dislike of the Buddhist religion. Diem was trying to make Catholicism the main religion of South Vietnam which led to the censorship of Buddhist monks in SV, which then led to the self-sacrifices of monks in SV. What do you think about the AIM program also withholding information? Do you think this could be another form of propaganda, trying to demonize the North and make the US and South seem like the heroes?

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

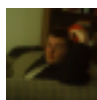
by Peilin Duan - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 8:29 PM

Hi Jimmy, I totally agree with your ideas. I think the PBS may skim some parts of the Vietnam War but the AIM doesn't tell all the truth as well. AIM didn't mention that the Buddhists were suffering from persecution from South Vietnam which supported by the U.S. A same incident has many different ways to tell depend on which side you stand for.

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations



by Jimmy O'Neal - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 12:52 PM

Hi Peilin, this is true. I guess both sides of media will omit facts in order to get their point across. But the major difference between Diem and Ho when it came to religious persecution was that Diem was trying to faze out Buddhism by banning it and Ho was getting rid of Catholicism by massacring any that were open about their religion in the North. While both are horrible things to do one is clearly worse than the other, I just wish that the PBS series would touch on some of the horrible things that happened on the Norths end as well as what happened in the South.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Nick Cervantes - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 12:28 PM

Jimmy, I do wonder how consciously the PBS producers were trying to make Ho. It could have been a bias that just showed through in their editing down a large bulk of information. Maybe the communist violence of North against South will come up more later. AIM definitely has a reactive tone against the PBS doc. I don't think they were trying to thoroughly cover a section of the war, they wanted to correct omissions and perceived errors.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Fighting Contradictions with Citations

by Jimmy O'Neal - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 1:42 PM

Thanks for the response Nick. I also wonder why the PBS series wanted to make Ho out to be such a nice guy. He had also done awful things but we hardly get to hear about it. I do hope that we get to more content like the AIM video. I would love to see more differing viewpoints when it comes down to who did what and why they did it.

Sum of ratings:(1)

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Hello Nick, responding to both; Fighting Contradictions with Citations & Dealing with AIM and PBS

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 9:01 PM

Until reading your post I didn't put any consideration into AIM contributors being over dramatic about their interpretation on the PBS videos. I was quick to come up with answers on how to analyze conflicting information but didn't actually analyze the AIM video in the way I was analyzing the PBS video. With your strong words about the men who spoke in the AIM production I find myself wondering exactly why those people would gain anything by setting the Vietnam War story to rest. It makes me really wish there was a Vietnamese production that could input some of the missing pieces that are not in these videos and books.

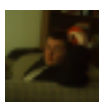
With this new analyzation of the AIM speakers I reference to the Herring and Appy book for a different impression of Ho. The landing of OSS agents in his remote base back in 1945 was a factual event that must've given our american soldiers a solid impression of Ho before the war began. (Herring, pg. 11) This allowed the americans to get close in relations with Ho Chi Minh. Something that really stood out to me was that Herring mentions, "Ho Chi Minh clung to hopes that the friendly demeanor of OSS agents reflected official American views." this reminded me of the story in the Appy novel about one of the Generals that went on this mission. (Herring, pg 14)

The story by Henry Prunier in the Appy novel describes his experience as being one of the members of the "Deer Team" of OSS. This general even exactly states that, "Ho did not foresee the struggle between the United States and his people." further pointing out that Ho really was expecting an ally of the U.S from this OSS mission. We were there before any of the actual fighting began in 1945 helping him with a 7 man team to train his people. Why exactly would we do such a thing for such a horrible man?!

-Treva

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Jimmy O'Neal - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 2:42 PM

The biggest contradiction that I have noticed between the AIM video and the PBS series would be the people of Vietnams view towards Ngo Dinh Diem and the election decisions of the Geneva Agreement. As we have seen from the PBS videos, Ngo Dinh Diem was not highly regarded among the Vietnamese people. In our readings we also see Diem regarded as a less effective leader as Ho Chi Minh. In the Herring book we see that Ngo Dinh Diem was "introverted and self-absorbed elitist

who did not relate easily with the people he served” (Herring, pg. 59). This was a conflicting message from the AIM video, where they say that most of the Vietnamese people not only knew of Diem but completely agreed with his policies (AIM historian “Lansdale”). And with the discussion of Diem comes the supposed rigged elections. In the Herring book and the Appy book we see the authors talk about the elections in Vietnam and how Diem and the US rigged the elections in his favor (Herring, pg. 66, Appy, pg. 46). But in the AIM video we see that the Geneva Agreement didn’t specify any election terms what so ever (AIM historian “Loebs”). Loebs even stated that the Geneva Agreement didn't talk about elections what so ever in its final form. The US even went so far as to oppose elections unless they are supervised by the UN (AIM historian “Loebs”). This is a completely different story from what we have learned so far.

I think that the best way to deal with conflicting statements would be to find additional information, either in our texts books or on academic writings through things like the internet and our libraries. Such information could help shed light on certain statements and show use which ones are false and which ones are truthful. So far it would seem like the texts and videos that we have watched seem kind of biased on the subject of the war. They can help us understand one point of view but they do seem to clash with the information provided by the AIM video. So I would like to look for similarities in the books and the video and weed out what information is factual and what is propaganda.

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Hello Jimmy,

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 9:18 PM

I certainly agree with your choice of the election being the most contradicting piece so far. The simple political facts of what was spread by PBS compared to what Dr. Loebs referenced was the most shocking to me. PBS completely left out two political addresses by the american government about the Geneva conference in all of the video episodes. (AIM video, Dr.Loebs) This aspect of the conflict is all I focused on when addressing my most glaring contradiction for this Forum. I definitely didn’t look into the additional exploitation of Diem himself as a Leader. Herring even had to include the simple sentence stating, “He lacked the charisma of Ho Chi Minh.” opening my eyes to the personal opinions that are certainly being expressed throughout these videos and novels. (Herring, pg. 60) This does prove that the actual demeanor of Diem seems to be very hard to figure out and is a conflicting piece of info in and of itself aside from the election of 1956.

-Treva

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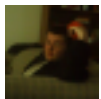
Re: Determining the Truth

by Amber Gaboriault - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 3:42 PM

In the PBS videos, I have been soaking up all the information given to me without question. I was shocked after watching the AIM videos. I had studied little about the Vietnam war growing up and had always thought it was a fight against communism. When watching the PBS series, I was starting to change my views that we were in a country that would have been fine without our involvement. I believe the biggest conflict in information was the character described by Ho Chi Min in the PBS series. In episode 1 they show Ho playing with children longing to give him freedom never once mentioning all the murders he had committed against his people that were brought to light in the AIM video, such as the assassinations of 1945 of all anti-communist followers killing thousands of people. Another conflict that I found was the PBS series video 2 was the idea America had not followed through on the Geneva Accord. The AIM video explained America's involvement in the Geneva Accord and why we had taken away the free election. America taking away Vietnam's free election was something I found disturbing. The PBS series had given me distorted information, and I had not even questioned the information.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, October 14, 2016, 2:48 PM

Hi Amber, the PBS series does seem to be pretty biased when it comes down to information. As for the topic of elections it was my understanding that America wanted elections but ones that were monitored by the UN so as to eliminate any chances of rigged outcomes. I could have misunderstood what was being said but it didn't seem to me like they wanted to take away free elections.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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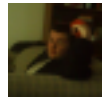
Re: Determining the Truth

by Amber Gaboriault - Friday, October 14, 2016, 11:13 PM

Hi Jimmy, I do think America wanted the elections only if it produced a non communist result. I think they found a loop hole to prevent Mihn from winning. Herring page 66 they talk about encouraging Diem to agree in principle but delay the elections. I wonder what the actual result would have been if an election was held.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 12:38 PM

I see. After reviewing the reading it does clearly state that the US wanted to delay the elections. As for who would have won the elections I would take a wild guess and say Diem. After doing more research online I have found that the Vietnamese at the time really liked him and his policies but his anti-buddhist behavior would have clearly lost most of that favor. But it could have been very close.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Beth Gaines - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 4:59 PM

Hi Amber,

You stated that when you were watching the PBS series you were starting to change your views that we were in a country that would have been fine without our involvement, what in the PBS series made you start to feel that way? I think the conflicting information in the videos coupled with the interviews in Appy book make it that much harder to decide if we were doing the right thing. We thought we were but I'm still not sure.

Beth

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Amber Gaboriault - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 9:02 PM

Hi Beth, I think the biggest parts that made me rethink our involvement in Vietnam was when they described Mihn in the PBS series, it showed him playing with children, and how he traveled to France just to find a resolution. While in France they were sorting out their own government and ignored his presence. I also started swaying toward Mihn when he was using parts of the American declaration in hopes of freedom for Vietnam. I thought why didn't we try to work things out with him, but I also was viewing him as a nationalist instead of a communist. I didn't know what horrible things he was doing.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Peilin Duan - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 9:04 PM

Hi Amber, I think for the election, PBS just tells the fact than mislead the audience. The meaning for the free election is to make the people have their own choose, no matter what the choice is, so if the U.S cancel the election because they notice that Ho might be the winner then it can not be called a "free election", it's a political trick played by the America under the name of freedom.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Minh and the Motivation

by Timothy Lucas - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 4:24 PM

As soon as the Accuracy in Media (AIM) video started, a few warning bells went off in my head. I waited till the end to look up the organization to make sure I wouldn't have too many biases throughout the video. However, by the time I heard Charlton Heston (I recognized the voice was him before he announced himself) evoking the phrase, "the only war we ever lost," (AIM :45) signaling a note of shame in the face of exceptionalism, in reference to the Vietnam war memorial I had a pretty good idea where this was going to go.

The entire video seems to be a rebuttal of what I found to be some of the most important points in the first few hours of the PBS series. These mainly include the character of Ho Chi Minh and events leading the United States to deeper involvement. The question of whether Minh was Communist or Nationalist seems to be of dire importance to the message of *The Real Story* as it secures the links of the Vietnam War to the overall conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the fear of expanding China.

While *America's Longest War* argues, "although a dedicated communist, Ho Chi Minh was no tool of the Kremlin." (Herring 26) the word 'communist' is a large part of the demonization of Minh. Stephen Morris goes so far as to say Minh had, "a commitment to the internationalist communist community." (AIM 7:25) I find this hard to completely accept when we consider what Herring also spoke of the efforts of Minh to secure democratic support at the Paris Peace accords after World War 1, the efforts to support the Allies against Japan in his own country and the, "hopes that the friendly demeanor of OSS agents reflected official American views" (Herring 14) in relation to Vietnam's independence after World War 2.

What I gather from this source is someone who was rejected as an insignificant person from a French colony by the Allies, who was at his core an opportunist who embraced whatever philosophy or methodology that would work best to secure independence for Vietnam. This is not a defense of Minh or his tactics, but I cannot help but see the contradiction of AIM's message when Reed Irvine, Chairman and founder of Accuracy in Media states, "the imposition of communist rule inevitably results in great human tragedy" (AIM 6:45), especially when we consider the events and possible missteps of the world community leading up to American involvement in Vietnam and the amount of tragedy that would occur after it. It seems as though Irvine is quick to disparage PBS for not using proper hindsight, when his media watchdog group seemingly does the same.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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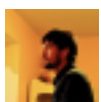
Re: Minh and the Motivation

by Amber Gaboriault - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 11:09 AM

Hi Timothy, great perspective on Ho Chi Minh's motivations, I believe that Minh was trying to play all sides to see where he could get the most support. While watching the PBS series I believed Minh was a nationalist at heart, but after watching the AIM video, I was shocked by how harmful he was to his people who didn't agree with him. With the contradicting information on Minh, I decided to reread some information in the Herring book to see if which side of Minh's character they supported. On page 16 in the Herring book, it stated. "After years of trying to play all sides, Minh's Viet Minh officially joined the emerging Communist bloc." I think this statement supports AIM's view of Ho Chi Minh as a communist and not a nationalist.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Minh and the Motivation

by Nick Cervantes - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 12:39 PM

Hi Timothy, excellent post. I appreciate with your point about Ho trying to "secure democratic support at the Paris Peace accords." AIM makes a strong assumption that communism, and any of its supporters, are naturally evil. The nationalist vs communist element of *The Real Story* felt too black and white to me. So far none of the class materials have given evidence that Ho valued the worldwide spread of communism over independence and strength for Vietnam, except for AIM's automatic demonization of all things communist.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Communism Running Rampant

by Mason Fisher - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 6:51 PM

Throughout the AIM video it is made extraordinarily clear that the PBS documentary portrayed many different things incorrectly to what actually happened in Vietnam. The biggest thing in particular that I wanted to point out is the fact that the PBS documentary makes zero effort in pointing out Ho CHI Minh's massive murder spree between 1945 and 1946 that he orchestrated himself. The killings happened for "6 months to a year" according to the video and approximately "10,000 people" lost their lives (AIM Video). The targets? People who did not agree with communism and/or spoke out against it including general public and nationalist leaders.

In every history class and even in historical events I have personally looked up I have found information being completely wrong, information being left out and also added information to historical situations. It happens frequently in many different subjects. Information can be expressed and received in many different ways causing mix ups and blatantly wrong information to be released to the public. As students and scholars of studies you have to remain diligent when researching things and always question resources you find. Simply reading something you find online and fully trusting it to be extremely accurate is ridiculous. Obviously it would be easier if wrong information wasn't out there waiting to be exposed to people. Unfortunately, in today's age, with the ability to write and produce almost anything you want and release it into a massive community for the world to see, it is hard to distinguish between correct and incorrect information.

Our textbooks can help when sorting through information that may be suspect to being false or even partially accurate. When researching and/or learning about historical events I refer to many different sources before I fully convince myself that what I am being told happened, actually happened. This can apply to anybody when doing research and is what I have been taught in the past when dealing with sources. It is not foolproof but is definitely something you can do to help make sure you are receiving the correct information.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Communism Running Rampant

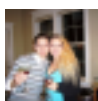
by Amber Gaboriault - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 7:36 PM

Hi Mason, I agree with your view. I was shocked by all the information that was missing in the PBS show according to the AIM video. I was also surprised by the way PBS portrayed Diem. While he did many wrong things, PBS portrayed Diem's

bad character more than Ho's. By comparing the videos and seeing the difference in information, it was a good reminder to find multiple sources and validate the facts.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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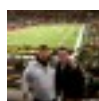
Re: Determining What is Accurate and Inaccurate

by Meadow Benedict - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 8:11 PM

The most glaring contradiction I discovered between The Real Story and PBS episode 2 movies so far was how the US portrayed Diem. In the PBS documentary they made it seem like Diem was unknown to his people. "A little known Nationalist appointed prime minister during the Geneva Conference." (PBS Episode 2) In The Real Story they believe that Diem was well known by his people. "I started talking to them about him and I discovered he was very well known by them. Most of them felt he was perhaps one of the best known of a living Nationalist left in the country and was much more favorably known than Ho Chi Minh was by most of the people in South Vietnam." (AIM, Lansdale) I believe that I or we should deal with conflicting information by studying and having conversations about what happened. I also think we need to look at all the information and try and determine if some of what we learn could be considered bias. I think the two textbooks can help me be confident that what I am learning is accurate historical knowledge by seeing if the two books agree with one of the movies. Most of the information I have read and viewed seemed to be accurate. There are a few conflicts here and there. If both movies have conflicting information I look to see if the books have the same facts.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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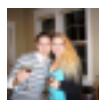
Re: Determining What is Accurate and Inaccurate

by Mason Fisher - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 11:00 AM

Hey Meadow, first off I fully agree with your observation about how Diem was portrayed between the two different historical resources. The two videos presented him very differently. You bring up a good point when talking about resources and that is "bias", people do not usually think about that. I believe bias plays a huge role in how information is presented to people through any educational tool whether it's a text book, movie or documentary. I think another way people as a whole can learn about what actually happened is asking people who were there and living at the time, obviously this is only possible if you have the resources and if the event happened recently enough.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining What is Accurate and Inaccurate

by Meadow Benedict - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 11:43 PM

I agree. It is hard to tell what is conflicting and what is true. I had an interview with a very nice Vet and he told me that the PBS is very bias. The movie made America look good and it made it look like they were doing the wrong thing. The person I interviewed says that there was a lot more going on over there that most people wouldn't know unless they were there and in combat.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining What is Accurate and Inaccurate

by Timothy Lucas - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 9:44 PM

"In the PBS documentary they made it seem like Diem was unknown to his people...In The Real Story they believe that Diem was well known by his people."

These two statements from the AIM video are not supported from this section of the PBS video. The people I point out have no official title from a university or government office around their name, so they probably do not carry as much weight in the official record. However, we should not completely ignore the stories of these people, because it can not only give a possible first-hand account (if authentic,) but if manipulated can expose a biased view.

At 18:41 in Episode 2 of PBS, Le Minh Dao and an unnamed woman states, "... Diem regrouped to the south and repression began. Those of us who had directly fought against the French and people who helped organize the resistance against them, were special targets to Diem's revenge."

Woman: "The manners of torture inflicted upon these people by Ngo Dinh Diem and his, 'hound dogs'...this was our term for the secret police, where extremely inhumane...We were not Catholics, we only worshiped our ancestors. And so they forced us to throw out alters to our ancestors away and become Catholics, and to denounce the communists."

These and many other dramatic actions played a part of the protests the Diem government could not effectively deal with. Eventually the actions taken against religious groups and student protestors would alienate the South Vietnamese people from their government. This would push away the American government support and eventually lead to the implicit support of the coup against Diem and support of the next form of government.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Glaring Contradiction and Accurate Knowledge

by Beth Gaines - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 9:27 PM

For me, the most glaring contradiction in the PBS series versus the AIM video is how the US viewed Ho Chi Minh. The PBS documentary states multiple times that Ho Chi Minh is “a Nationalist then a Communist” (PBS Episode 1) Archemedes Patti, who is interviewed in both videos but only expresses his opinion in the AIM video, shares that Ho Chi Minh is a “International Communist...who believed in the movement” (AIM video). Because we are studying history, I don’t think there will ever be 100% confidence that we are learning an accurate portrayal. Each individual has their own interpretation of events and no two people see a situation in the same manner. As a student, I can do my best to view all my resources, gather multiple perspectives of an event, and draw my own educated conclusion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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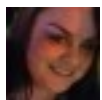
Re: Glaring Contradiction and Accurate Knowledge

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 7:34 AM

Beth, I completely agree that with studying history we will never be 100 percent confident that we are learning exactly what happened and there is no real way to know without being present for the event. Even if we would have be present, there still would have been conflicting views. However, I think this is huge part of what makes studying history so important. A big part in history is trying hard not to repeat the same mistakes and to take everyone’s different view and learn from it. You made a great point. We can draw from our resources and make our own educated conclusion on what happened. I think some of the hard part is determining which resource to draw from. Do you agree?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Glaring Contradiction and Accurate Knowledge

by Beth Gaines - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 12:04 PM

While I would love to say the U.S. learned from the mistakes we made in Vietnam, I'm not 100% confident we did. And while the documentaries we are viewing are old(er), the huge discrepancies in the view points are what make me think that we haven't quite grasped where we went wrong in Vietnam. We are very lucky that we have a huge digital file at our disposal to make educated and informed choices and arguments but i definitely agree that sometimes it can be difficult to find credible sources.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth



by Peilin Duan - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 11:05 PM

As a Chinese, I received basic knowledge of Vietnam War in China. The difference of knowledge I learned in China and in the U.S. made me so confused. If I didn't watch the "Vietnam War-The Real Story" which the instructor required, I wouldn't think the PBS published series "Vietnam-A Television History" had the motivation of misguiding the truth of the history because it mostly matched what I used to learn. If just based on the three episodes of the PBS series, to be honest, I don't apparently see any problem with that yet. According to the video "Vietnam War-The Real Story", one of the scholarships said that the PBS tried to build the Ho Chi Minh as the hero in Vietnam but uglified the America and the South Vietnam as enemies. I wouldn't say it's completely wrong but I didn't strongly feel that for now. If I have to say there is any motivation in the PBS series, I think some interviews they demonstrated kind of showing the strength and justice of the North Vietnam. Such as a previous military officer said that they would double the force to South to help people there (Vietnam-A Television History).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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True or False-Conflicting Information of the Vietnam War

by Sohni Maan-Davie - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 11:20 PM

When dealing with conflicting information, I look at the information and compare it with other information and determine fact from fiction, by reading the stories and watching documentaries on the topic. When watching the episodes from the PBS show, and I come upon a section that doesn't seem accurate to me, I will look for the information in my textbooks and compare the information. If the information is incorrect, then I will make a note on my notes that the information is incorrect and ask questions about it. When I first watched the PBS show and it talked about the French going to war with Vietnam, right away I started to read the first chapter of the Herring book, on page 5.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: True or False-Conflicting Information of the Vietnam War

by Beth Gaines - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 11:54 AM

Hi Sohni,

With all the resources available to us in this digital age, how do determine what is fact and what is fiction? We've been assigned different documentaries to review in this class and they contradict and paint different vastly different versions of the

war. My personal opinion is the truth lies somewhere in the middle and my interpretation is going to be different than yours but it doesn't make either one of us right or wrong.

 Beth

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: True or False-Conflicting Information of the Vietnam War

by Peilin Duan - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 7:36 PM

Hi there,

I just want to say it's so hard to identify truth of the history. Even the textbooks are not so accurate because some political reasons, like some stories I learned from history textbook in China was so different from the U.S. I, personally, prefer to understand a history from a "outsider's" view, such as for the history of Cultural Revolution, I like to know that how does other countries like the U.K or the U.S. describe this incident.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: True or False-Conflicting Information of the Vietnam War

by Amber Gaboriault - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 9:08 PM

Hi Peilin, I like the idea of learning other countries views of the war, although it might not be first hand information, or lacking some detail. I believe it could also be biased depending on which side of the war they were supporting, but what an intriguing thought!

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Hello Pelin,

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 9:50 PM

I told Nick in a response on his post that I had wished there was a Vietnamese production or text that could also be comparing. Your idea of the U.K describing the Vietnam War or even Russia would also be very clarifying I am sure. Of course political reasons will always play a part in the given interpretation that a nation wants to provide but the ability to compare them to these American sources is worth looking into them. Now I wonder if the

materials you used in China were published by the Chinese government or were they material created somewhere else? I guess it would be odd to use non american materials to learn about the subject in our nation and similar in China too.

-Treva

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Ho Chi Minh "Hero" Impression

by Jessica Fialho - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 7:55 AM

I am curious to know if anyone else questioned how the PBS series was portraying Ho Chi Minh before watching the AIM part 1 video? I know for me I questioned why they were leaning so heavily on showing him with the children and trying to make him, in a way, seem 'innocent' like the children. At first I was thinking that the PBS series was just trying to show all sides, but then they leaned so negatively on Diem. I wasn't able to put it into words at first, but when the AIM has Bruce Loeb explain, "Now every myth has to have a hero and the hero in PBS series is clearly Ho Chi Minh, but he needs to be constructed as a hero. Every myth has to have a villain . The villain in the PBS piece is South Vietnam and the United States" (AIM part 1, 23:30), I felt it did a good job at putting what I was questioning into words.

For me, I really feel that the PBS series was indeed trying to portray Ho Chi Minh as a hero. Especially, when it was pointed out that the PBS series didn't touch on the attacks on the Catholics in the North. Although I feel that Diem was leaned on for more of the villain role. I do agree that the South Vietnam and United States seem to be portrayed right alongside Diem. What is your take about this section?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Ho Chi Minh "Hero" Impression

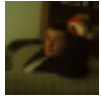
by Amber Gaboriault - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 10:34 AM

Jessica, I completely agree with you. I haven't spent much time studying Vietnam until this class. After watching the PBS series I was questioning what was so bad about Ho Chi Mine was just a man who longed for freedom for his country, he seemed a better fit than Diem. Even with reading the Herring book I didn't get a long history of Ho Chi Minh.

After watching the AIM video, I am shocked at how I didn't question the information. Although the AIM video may also be an exaggeration, I have the realization that I should research other information and see which is a more accurate description of the war and its leaders.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Ho Chi Minh "Hero" Impression

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, October 14, 2016, 5:20 PM

Hi Jessica it is like you said, the PBS series did indeed try to make Ho Chi Minh out to be more of a heroic figure. The AIM program brought out a little more truth to who he really was and why he was doing what he was doing. Although I didn't agree with the way PBS made Ho Chi Minh appear, I understand why he did what he did. It seemed like no one was taking him seriously so in order to get his point across he felt like he had to go back to war with France. I personally believe that Diem was not as bad as the PBS series makes him out to be. In the AIM video we see that a lot of Vietnamese people liked and supported him, they even left North Vietnam in hopes of a better life in the south.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Ho Chi Minh "Hero" Impression

by Peilin Duan - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 8:51 PM

Hello Jessica, I understand why you are saying that but remember the video er watched last week, it also shows the communist Ho Chi Minh playing with children but it has a complete different feeling because of the narrative, it portrays Ho as a double-faced person. PBS didn't mention the attacks on the Catholic in the North but also the AIM didn't mention the persecution to the Buddhist as well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Hello Jessica,

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 10:10 PM

I have to admit that I did not question the viewpoint of Ho in the PBS publication. When watching them I struggled to understand exactly why and how america had gotten involved. So I did very much take what they gave as far as who Ho was and his motives and let them become my concrete ideas of him. However, like you did, when Loebes goes into his metaphor on why PBS did what they did to portray Ho as a Hero I was able to see it more clearly.(AIM video, around 20 mins)

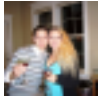
The heinous act of violence on the catholics by Ho was definitely one of the most disturbing facts brought to life for me. I had noticed there wasn't a story in the Appy novel connecting with that event either. It is additionally interesting to know that as a first time student watching the videos you were able to pick up on the

misinformation on Ho. Our teacher himself taught this class for years using the PBS publications as his main source and now in 2016 he has us comparing contradictions against other sources.

-Treva

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Hello Jessica,

by Meadow Benedict - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 11:52 PM

I agree that the catholics were treated very unfairly. Many of them moved thinking they were going to have better lives, but most of them didn't. I was also appalled that many Christians were killed for their beliefs. It is very sad and unfortunate.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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The path to the facts.

by Andrew Dellinger - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 6:57 PM

Following my first post, I started doing research in our various course materials to try to understand whether the PBS series is biased or if the AIM video is more biased. I recalled that in the beginning of the term we were told to read the pdf file "Vietnam Introduction," and began to re-read it. The most interesting of my findings is in regards to the contradiction a lot of the class has been finding between PBS and AIM. The fact that the two videos show different portrayals of Ho Chi Minh as either a communist first and nationalist second or vice versa. In the pdf Nguyen Cong Hoan, who is described as working with the NLF and then later in the National Assembly of the united Communist Vietnam, describes the communist regime as "the most inhuman and oppressive regime they have ever known" (Vietnam Introduction pg.20.) This is after the author talks about the same executions/massacres in 1954 as Stephen Morris does in the AIM video (The Real Story 23:37). This confirms that Ho was not the sweet innocent man that PBS would like you to believe. My next step was to see if George Herring's book could help further. Page 6 in Herring's book gave me the information I needed. In this page Herring describes Ho's early life, where he says "he became a founding member of the French Communist Party," also that "he organized the Indochinese Communist Party" (Herring pg.6.) By using multiple sources in collaboration, I think that it is safe to say that the AIM video was right to call out PBS for being biased and leaving out important details. However I will not say that AIM is without bias, for I think any media will inevitably give you the information they want you to hear. But as I stated before, we as students should be able to use multiple sources of information to get as close to the truth as possible.

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Sum of ratings:3 (1)



Election of 1956

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 4:30 PM

I picked the conflict with the PBS video about the false clarification of the election between Diem and Ho Chi Minh in 1956. Around the 24 minute mark of the AIM video Dr. Bruce Lobes explains the reasoning why PBS chose to highlight this election in the video publications of, "Vietnam a Television History". He declares that every Myth needed a hero and Ho Chi Minh was that Hero; while the S. Vietnam and U.S were the villains. PBS used this 1956 failed election as a way to justify Ho Chi Minh as a ruler of Vietnam and legitimize his aggression towards S.Vietnam. (AIM, Dr. Lobes) It was clear in the PBS videos that the U.S and S. Vietnam were Ho Chi Minh's enemies but now I can see the electoral conflict in a more realistic way. Dr. Lobes declares these PBS videos express 11 times to the viewers that it was S. Vietnam and the U.S that were responsible for the failed election that was "promised" at the Geneva convention. Little did I know that Eisenhower actually addressed the U.S in a press conference on July 21st stating, "The U.S was not a party to, and is not bound by the decisions made at the Geneva Conference." (AIM, Dr.Lobes) It was so baffling to me to learn that PBS had left this piece of info out because before watching this video, I did believe the blame was on the U.S for not holding true to the so-called agreement that was made at the geneva convention and helping S.Vietnam hold the election. Now, I understand that it was typical of me to believe that considering it being the most talked about point in the PBS video and that crucial piece of info wasn't even in it.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Contradicting Material

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 4:32 PM

I believe that when dealing with conflicting information that you should analyze all of the contributors to both sides of the conflict. I enjoy knowing the profession of the speakers in the videos because I can tell they have a job or study in a direct connection to whatever subject they are speaking on. Considering the history and credibility on the sources of the producers or publishers would greatly help in understanding personal motives behind the productions of videos and books. Another thing that could really help with better analyzing contradicting information is looking at personal accounts along with the given information. For example, our textbook Patriots is a wonderful source that has personal stories and interpretations on almost all of the events taken place during the Vietnam war and it can clarify a lot of misjudgement in the videos we see. This novel has a subtitle that says, "The

Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides” that means the stories can be biased or unbiased depending on what story the contributors are speaking on and that this isn’t just a typical textbook written by one or two people.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Opinion or Truth?

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 10:39 AM

One of the contradictions I found proved very difficult to understand, and I think is a great example of how tough it can be to be sure the information we are studying is factual. In minute 14 of “The Real Story,” AIM shows Archimedes Patti talking about his experiences with Ho Chi Mihn during his operation training the Viet Mihn during WWII. Then Stephen Morris and William Stearman attack Patti’s belief that Ho could have been an asset to America instead of an enemy. Stephen believes that it was a perfect example of Ho’s deviant behavior and that the young man was obviously being used by the communist. “Whether he realized it or not, what he was doing was making the Vietnamese people believe that the United States was backing Ho Chi Mihn” (Stephen Morris, The Real Story.) Then in minute 15:20, William Stearman explains “Later Ho himself would have been absolutely appalled had he been called a national communist by any other communist” and that “he was one of the last international communists.” To examine these claims I turned to the Appy book where I recalled reading about another OSS operative that worked with Ho. On page 38 Henry Prunier is interviewed about his time on the “Deer-Team” where he trained the Viet Mihn to fight the Japanese. The most interesting part is that Prunier seems to have the same view of Ho as Patti had. This is where finding the truth proves most difficult, because these are simply people’s opinions. However, in light of the information that I have recently found in my other posts about Ho, I personally don’t think it’s hard to believe that Ho was deceiving the two Americans. With all the information of the atrocities Ho’s regime committed during and after the war it becomes apparent that he was a devoted communist. This is, of course, my opinion based off the information that I have found, and I’m interested to hear if anyone else has a differing opinion?

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Moment of Pride

by Timothy Lucas - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 5:17 PM

AIM makes a claim at 3:57 by Douglas Pike that the PBS series “does not produce anything on the screen that an American could be proud of.” I do not entirely support this. While there are certainly reasons to challenge the PBS series in the roughly 13

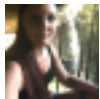
hours covering more than 15 years of history, the program does expose us to many dramatic events during that period that should have a range of emotions attached to them.

At roughly 23:35 during the first PBS Video, I found one moment particularly moving. In short, while the Japanese were surrendering on board the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945 there was reading of the American Declaration of Independence as Ho Chi Minh the day his newly formed government had declared independence of their own in Vietnam. "...after uncle Ho had finished reading the Declaration of Independence, an airplane circled over us. We did not know whose plane it was, we thought it was a Vietnamese plane, but when it swooped over us, we recognized the American flag, the crowd cheered enthusiastically." (Dr. Tran Duy Hung, 25:40, PBS)

No surprise AIM does not make mention of this moment. While I believe there is some measure of orchestration by Americans sympathetic to their version of an independent Vietnam, the idea that a people could find inspiration from a document forged during the struggle for our own independence I believe lends credibility not only to that document but the ideals it stood for. I believe this event also helps show an ironic tragedy that is certainly a part of the conflict.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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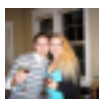
Re: Determining the Truth

by Kim Frey - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 10:17 PM

In the Aim clip it disputes most of the historical aspects that the PBS series is telling about. Whether or not one is more accurate than the other is possibly a matter of opinion. What side of the war do you take? It might be something that people choose which version of what happened more serious. I not knowing much about this topic seem to go with my instinct and take in all the facts and determine which seems more realistic. I would also assume that certain accounts would come up numerous times in different ways and would assume if they are told by different people that they most likely are true. This could be true with all of the guides we have used so far.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by Meadow Benedict - Sunday, October 16, 2016, 11:48 PM

I look at the resources we have and if the books and most of the movies agree then I tend to side with the information that most of them agree with. I also believe that the stories told by people has influenced my decision in believing their accounts.

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◀ Determining the Truth

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