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90/100

Mackenzie Clark

Tran Thi Gung pg. 15-19

Tran Thi Gung was a guerilla fighter who joined Ho Chi Minh's guerilla army in 1962 when she was seventeen years old. In the narrative "patriots" by Christian Appy she gives an account of her experience during the Vietnam War and tells her story of self determination. This story interested me because it gave an insight of the determination of some of the Vietnam guerilla fighters and that it truly was a war for Vietnam's independence. She recalls horrific stories of courage and proved that the Vietnam War was not a Russian insurgency but had nationalistic roots. In George Herring's text on the Vietnam War he states that, "Intelligence reports stressed that Ho had remained loyal to Moscow throughout his career. The lack of close ties with the Soviet Union simply meant that he was trusted to carry out Stalin's plan without supervision." (13). This means that the United States had a strong belief that Ho Chi Minh was a communist willing to enforce Soviet policy even though their was no clear evidence of this being true. Tran Thi Gung's account of her experience as a guerilla fighter gives testimony of the Vietminh's determination for independence. She tells of her self determination of "killing American GI's" during the war and recalls how "easy" it was. Her account is interesting because if Gung's account of the war is true to what the other guerillas felt then America truly misunderstood the Vietminh. Gung goes into detail about her self-determination to liberate "her" country and even recalls; "In that first battle against the Americans I shot so many G.I.'s I was awarded a decoration..." (17). She recalls many horrific experiences of the war and even recalls a time where a piece of shrapnel hit her in the head and went unnoticed until another "comrade" noticed. This proves that Gung had a strong conviction towards her cause and this could have blocked her judgment on the "events." It is hard to say whether or not Gung was being accurate about her "experience" in the Vietnam War because she believed in the cause with a strong passion. When a person believes in a cause it could mean that a person remembered the events in a light that would better suit their "cause." This means that information can be left out and in my opinion it seemed that Gung only was willing to talk of her victories and that she felt "just" for the killing she did; which can give an assumption that it

Excellent analysis. One of the very few students to ever come to this well reasoned conclusion about her.

was a one sided conflict. However, Gung still points out the determination of the guerilla fighter when they were trapped in tunnels for seven days nearly starving. The Vietminh continued to fight and Gung did as well and I believe that their determination and our misunderstanding of this is why so many lives were lost.

Malcome Browne pg. 64-72

Malcome Browne was the only reporter when Thich Quang Duc in protest **let** himself on fire as a sacrifice. Browne recalls the protest in horrific detail and as he does I found myself wondering, why? I could not see a reason why someone would feel oppressed to the point where they would go to such extremes in protest. The Buddhist began their protest in the spring of 1963 after Ngo Dinh Diem's soldiers killed eight worshipers. Diem refused to compromise and used force against the Buddhist protesters Thich Quang Duc lit himself on fire according to tradition. This seems like a drastic action but if a person is willing to subject themselves then the oppression of Diem's government must have been great. In my opinion the most frustrating thought while reading Browne's account is the fact that Diem was an American supported leader. The United States supported Diem's government because of the "threat" of communism but Diem had an oppressive government that lead up to the Buddhist protest.

The Buddhist were forced to this type of protest because of a philosophy of non-violence. Diem's regime was unwilling to listen to the Buddhist so Thich Quang Duc used the highest form of protest. The Buddhist used the western media in order to make the world conscious of Diem's oppression. They stood up to his regime in a horrific way but they did not harm any innocent for their cause. Even though Quang Duc's actions seemed drastic and obscene he achieved his goal in the end. Diem's regime would soon have renowned opposition and would soon fall. Diem's government did not fall solely for this reason but these protests showed public dissatisfaction with the government. This protest gave the western world an insight on the conflict and gave an assumption that it was "out of control." In my opinion I can not think of a more horrific way too bring attention to a cause but the Buddhist did succeed by utilizing the western media.

This paragraph seems a bit redundant. I take it you found no "positives"?

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