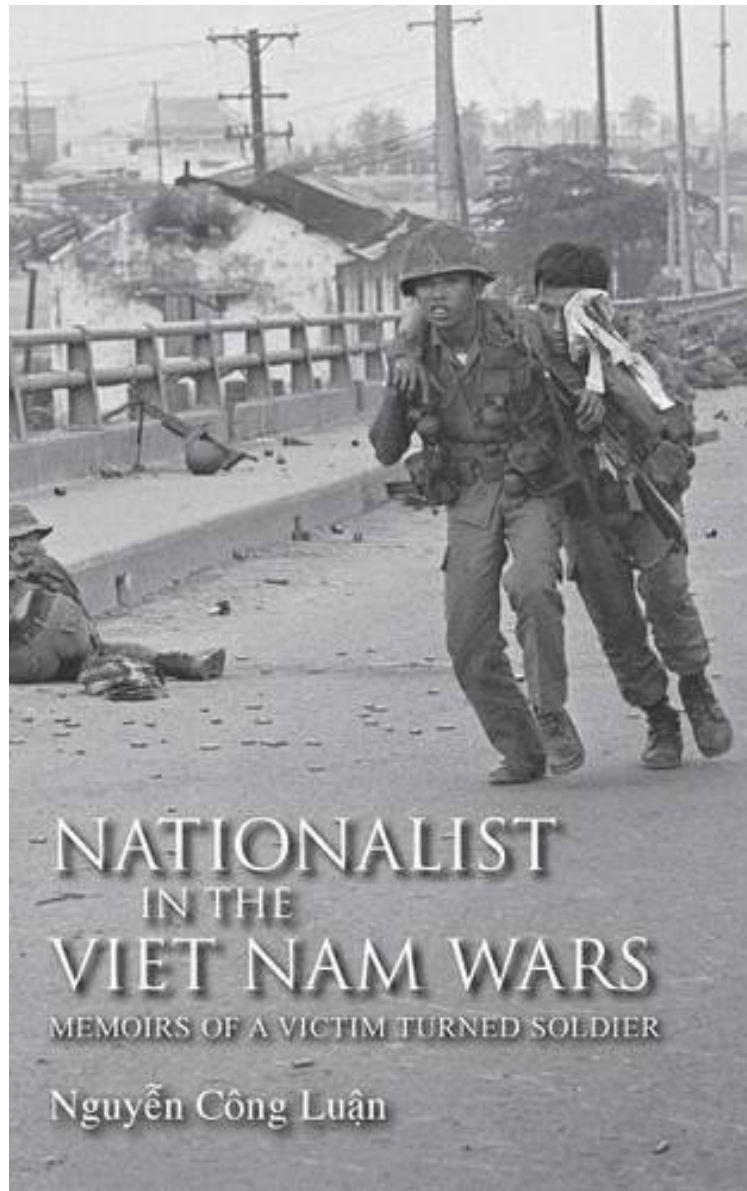


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Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier

Nguyen Công Luan

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Nguyen Công Luan : Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An American Advisor to ARVN ReviewBy Will KingThis book brings home the real feelings of the Viet Nam people and provides an excellent, detailed documentation of the political and military history of their amazing struggle to simply be free. It clearly shows the anti-communist attitude of the people throughout the 1940's and up to today. It should make any American who fought for these brave people in any capacity especially proud of that effort; it was worth our sacrifices.I'm beyond the half-way point and am enjoying hearing the same story that so many of my Viet Nam friends told me. But Luan gives the reader the gut-wrenching feelings of the people who were put upon by so many French, North Viet Nam Communists, North and South Viet Nam Nationalists, Buddhist Hoa Hao, Buddhist Cao Dai, South Viet Nam Viet Cong and the many Ngo Dinh Diem etal regimes. The people were persecuted over and over but only the Americans that lived and fought with them understood; only the Americans could understand the frustration of the farmer who sees the US helicopters as the enemy because they just shot and killed his water buffalo because the farmer lives in a VC-controlled area. Now we hear from the native that can verify what the farmers were feeling.It is chilling to read the names of Viet Nam soldiers I fought with that stayed to the last and then committed suicide rather than be subjected to phony communist re-education camps. What a shame that this true story can't be told to more people. It is also fun to be reunited by footnotes and off-the-cuff comments with the "Cochin Chinese" dialect language that I spoke so fluently so long ago but is now fading quickly!An excellent book that reinforces the uniquely American instinct to stick up for underdogs, stay the course and do what is right, even if the politicians so often quickly run out of backbone and abandon that uniquely American value.Will King, 21st Infantry Division, Army of Viet Nam5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Nationalists in the Viet Nam War by Nguyen Cong LusnBy Cong chua PPTThis is a well researched, well written book. I was so moved by it, especially the part where he grew up in north Vietnam. Readers familiar with the VN war, like me, probably will read about this for the first time. I was very familiar with all the horror stories both in the north and south Vietnam during the war, but always in vietnamese or french. This is the first time i read it in english. Mr Nguyen Cong Luan has described in detail his life. He might as well describe the life of thousands of vietnamese men his age or his generarion. He conveyed his message to the world clear and loud.The french has a saying: la raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure, the reason of the strongest is always the best. There are countless books about vn war but they are written by the victorious side, the north vietnamese writers in vietnamese or english. There are also a lot of books written by american writers for the american audience. Most of those books present a distorted point of view. However, there are none written by the vietnamese whose side is lost. This is by far the most thoroughly written account, candid and moving description of an extraordinary vietnamese who sees himself as an ordinary man living in a country at war.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A MasterpieceBy neihntThe author of this book, Nguyen Cong Luan, was born in North Vietnam in a family of nationalists who had been fighting the French since the 1930s. It is this background which allowed him to recount in full details how Ho Chi Minh and his communist party, in the few years after 1945, coopted the movement for independence and tried to eliminate their nationalist opponents. While some nationalists were assassinated outright, his father was imprisoned in a communist reeducation camp where he eventually perished. What happened then explains why, when Vietnam was partitioned in 1954, one million North Vietnamese, including the author and his family, chose to leave their villages and cities to go South even though their future there was by no means assured.In simple and clear prose, the author leads us through his life in the South, from his training as a cadet in Vietnam's military academy to his service in the 22nd Division, and later his running of the Reception Directorate in the Open Arms program. That's the program that induced an estimated 150,000 communist soldiers to defect throughout the war.In April 1975, after a training stage at Fort Benning, he chose to return to Saigon less than a month before North Vietnamese divisions finally conquered the South. While military and civilian leaders fled the country, he remained at his post until the very end and spent six years in several concentration camps in South and North Vietnam. His description of those harrowing years is filled with facts but it is surprisingly devoid of rancor.Throughout the book, he minces no words about corruption and misguided policies taken by South Vietnam and its US allies. Still he remains level-headed, only reserving his harshest criticisms for the North's leaders who sacrificed millions of Vietnamese lives, only to give the unified nation a government much more corrupt and brutal than the one they overthrew.This masterpiece of a book is well-researched, with ample footnotes from many diverse sources. However, it represents above all the honest feelings and unique viewpoints of a man who lived through the worst of it and survived to tell the rest of us what nightmare South Vietnam had gone through in the last half of the 20th century.

This extraordinary memoir tells the story of one man's experience of the wars of Viet Nam from the time he was old enough to be aware of war in the 1940s until his departure for America 15 years after the collapse of South Viet Nam in 1975. Nguyen Cong Luan was born and raised in small villages near Ha Noi. He grew up knowing war at the hands of the Japanese, the French, and the Viet Minh. Living with wars of conquest, colonialism, and revolution led him finally to move south and take up the cause of the Republic of Viet Nam, exchanging a life of victimhood for one of a soldier. His stories of village life in the north are every bit as compelling as his stories of combat and the tragedies of war. This honest and impassioned account is filled with the everyday heroism of the common people of his generation.

This book is of incredible value for anyone interested in Vietnam--its history, politics, and culture--and in the American involvement with Vietnam. It is also a meditation of a Vietnamese patriot on the substance of patriotism during a time of civil war in a context of international alliances. Amid the terrors and harsh imperatives of war, the author's is a rare voice of human decency. (H-Net)A dark and fascinating tale...illuminated by...honesty and integrity, which shine through on every page. (VIETNAM MAGAZINE)Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars is a dark and fascinating tale. But it is illuminated by Nguyen's story of escape from Communist tyranny to the United States in 1990, and by his honesty and integrity, which shine through on every page. (historynet.com)Long overdue, this memoir will be a worthy addition to any academic library interested in the tragedy of Vietnam. . . . Essential. (Choice)This is a first-rate book with perhaps a single downside: It is not a book for someone who has never read anything about Vietnam. It is, however, an essential read for those who seek to understand the complex tragedy of the wars of Vietnam. (ARMY) Of all the many books I have read about the Vietnam War, this one pays the ultimate tribute to the incredible sacrifices made by the courageous soldiers and people of South Vietnam. Through the eyes of a true patriot, the history and decisive operations of the conflict are reviewed from the unique perspective of a victim turned soldier. I have known the author for nearly four decades and can attest to his personal courage, his passion for life, and his intense love for his country. This book is a must read for those who want the complete picture and whole truth about a tragic war that consumed the world for over two decades. (Lawson W. Magruder III Lieutenant General, US Army Retired. Vietnam '70-'71)An important book. One of the most compelling and thoughtful ARVN [Army of the Republic of Viet Nam] accounts I have ever read. . . . It is an unblinking, unflinching account . . . a very honest book, the author's integrity comes through on every page. (David T. Zabecki Maj. Gen., U. S. Army (ret.))About the AuthorNguyen Công Lun was born in 1937 and grew up in northern Viet Nam. Following the 1954 Geneva Agreement, which divided the nation in two, he moved south and enrolled in the Republic of Viet Nam Military Academy, then served in the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam until 1975. Incarcerated for 6 years 7 months in communist prison camps, he immigrated to the United States in 1990. He was an associate editor of The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War.