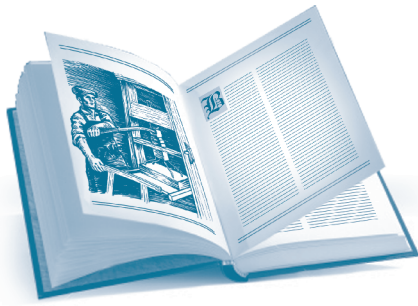


# BOOK NOTICES



## ***The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam***

By Max Boot

Liveright, 768 pp.

54 photographs; 3 maps

Hardcover: \$35

Paperback: \$19.95

In chronicling the adventurous life of legendary CIA operative Edward Lansdale, *The Road Not Taken* definitively reframes our understanding of the Vietnam War.

In this epic biography of Edward Lansdale (1908–1987), the man said to be the fictional model for Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American*, best-selling historian Max Boot demonstrates how Lansdale pioneered a “hearts and mind” diplomacy, first in the Philippines, then in Vietnam. It was a visionary policy that, as Boot reveals, was ultimately crushed by America’s giant military bureaucracy, steered by elitist generals and blueblood diplomats who favored troop build-ups and napalm bombs over winning the trust of the people. Through dozens of interviews and access to never-before-seen documents including long-hidden love letters Boot recasts this cautionary American story, tracing the bold rise and the crashing fall of the roguish “T. E. Lawrence of Asia” from the battle of Dien Bien Phu to the humiliating American evacuation in 1975. Bringing a tragic complexity to this so-called “ugly American,” this “engrossing biography” (Karl Marlantes) rescues Lansdale from historical ignominy and suggests that Vietnam

could have been different had we only listened. With reverberations that continue to play out in Iraq and Afghanistan, *The Road Not Taken* is a biography of profound historical consequence.

## ***Petroleum Pioneers of Pittsburgh***

By Al Mann

Hardcover: \$55

This work gathers and interweaves the stories and oil/natural gas business ventures of the following Pittsburgh men who helped develop and lead this emerging energy industry from the 1850s into modern times:

Michael L. Benedum	Andrew W. Mellon
Ebenezer Brewer	Richard B. Mellon
Andrew Carnegie	Joseph N. Pew, Sr.
John W. Chalfant	Thomas W. Phillips, Sr.
John Eaton	John Pitcairn, Jr.
John H. Gale	Joseph C. Trees
James M. Guffey	Herbert W. C. Tweddle
David Hostetter	Jacob J. Vandergrift
Samuel M. Kier	George Westinghouse
Charles Lockhart	John Worthington

## ***Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945-1975***

By Max Hastings

HarperCollins Publishers, 896 pp.

Hardcover: \$37.50

An absorbing and definitive modern history of the Vietnam War from the acclaimed *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Secret War*.

Vietnam became the Western world’s most divisive modern conflict, precipitating a battlefield humiliation for France in 1954, then a vastly greater one for the United States in 1975. Max Hastings has spent the past three

years interviewing scores of participants on both sides, as well as researching a multitude of American and Vietnamese documents and memoirs, to create an epic narrative of an epic struggle. He portrays the set pieces of Dien Bien Phu, the 1968 Tet Offensive, the air blitz of North Vietnam, and also much less familiar miniatures such as the bloodbath at Daido, where a U.S. Marine battalion was almost wiped out, together with extraordinary recollections of Ho Chi Minh’s warriors. Here are the vivid realities of strife amid jungle and paddies that killed two million people.

Many writers treat the war as a U.S. tragedy, yet Hastings sees it as overwhelmingly that of the Vietnamese people, of whom 40 died for every American. U.S. blunders and atrocities were matched by those committed by their enemies. While all the world has seen the image of a screaming, naked girl seared by napalm, it forgets countless eviscerations, beheadings, and murders carried out by the communists. The people of both former Vietnams paid a bitter price for the Northerners’ victory in privation and oppression. Here is testimony from Viet Cong guerrillas, Southern paratroopers, Saigon bargirls, and Hanoi students alongside that of infantrymen from South Dakota, Marines from North Carolina, and Huey pilots from Arkansas.

No past volume has blended a political and military narrative of the entire conflict with heart-stopping personal experience, in the fashion that Max Hastings’ readers know so well. The author suggests that neither side deserved to win this struggle with so many lessons for the 21st century about the misuse of military might to confront intractable political and cultural challenges. He marshals testimony from warlords and peasants, statesmen and soldiers, to create an extraordinary record.

***Workers on Arrival: Black Labor in the Making of America***

By Joe William Trotter, Jr.  
University of California Press  
328 pages, 17 b&w illustrations  
Hardcover & eBook: \$29.95

From the ongoing issues of poverty, health, housing, and employment to the recent upsurge of lethal police-community relations, the black working class stands at the center of perceptions of social and racial conflict today. Journalists and public policy analysts often discuss the black poor as “consumers” rather than “producers,” as “takers” rather than “givers,” and as “liabilities” instead of “assets.”

In his engrossing new history, *Workers on Arrival*, Joe William Trotter Jr. refutes these perceptions by charting the black working class’s vast contributions to the making of America. Covering the last 400 years since Africans were first brought to Virginia in 1619, Trotter traces black workers’ complicated journey from the transatlantic slave trade through the American Century to the demise of the industrial order in the 21st century. At the center of this compelling, fast-paced narrative are the actual experiences of these African American men and women. A dynamic and vital history of remarkable contributions despite repeated setbacks, *Workers on Arrival* expands our understanding of America’s economic and industrial growth, its cities, ideas, and institutions, and the real challenges confronting black urban communities today.

