to the Nanking Government finally convinced Japan that separation of Manchuria from China could only be achieved by force. Looking back, all these factors certainly influenced Japan’s course of action, but the root cause must still rest with Japan’s set policy to control Manchuria. On this basic policy, it should be stressed that the Kwantung Army and Tokyo were in full agreement. The often exaggerated differences between the two were on the timing of action, not on the action itself. Indeed, as early as May 1928, the General Staff had already prepared a mobilization plan, the implementation of which was put off only because of international pressure, particularly that from the United States. Within less than one year of the Mukden Incident, the puppet regime of “Manchukuo” was set up. The following year, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor Japan was bent on realizing her Grand Design as the Pacific War unfolded. And when Japan finally collapsed, as the author observes, “the Grand Design benefited no nation except, perhaps, the Soviet Union.”

Reviewed by TA-LING LEE

The ‘Neutralist’ Fallacy


One of the few fortunate by-products of the American involvement in Viet Nam has been the growing attention lavished on the problems of Southeast Asia by Western scholars. Studies of Asian international politics flow steadily from the nation’s presses, and it must be conceded that our knowledge of that area of the world grows apace. Thus far, unfortunately, too many of these efforts have been marred by a stubborn utopianism and a general failure to separate fact from ideological or political predilection. It appears to be typically assumed, for example, that great power intervention in Asia is responsible for the existing state of affairs on that continent: the United States, it is alleged, inspired by a misguided definition of its national interest, has undertaken a variety of political and military initiatives, and these in turn have stimulated reciprocal—if often reluctant—involvements by the communist powers. The road to peace for the region is thus assumed to be clear: the states of Southeast Asia should avoid entanglements with the major powers, and especially with the United States; ultimately, the area should be “neutralized” from cold war politics under international guarantees. The possibility that communist activity in Asia might be self-generating and constitute a serious threat to international order is too-increasingly considered.

Both of the volumes here reviewed, whatever their other merits, suffer in varying degree from defective analysis of this kind. Cambodia’s Sihanouk, of course, has for some time been a folk-hero of sorts for advocates of neutralism as a solution to the crisis in Asia; Leifer’s monograph is merely the latest in a series of attempts to make sense of the foreign policy of the mercurial autocrat. In the main, it is a thoughtful study, although adding little to previous knowledge. It is Leifer’s contention—which few students of recent Cambodian foreign policy would challenge—that Sihanouk’s diplomacy since his nation won independence from France has been dominated by a single concern, that of maintaining Cambodia’s territorial integrity and security in the face of a variety of perceived threats from within and without. Surprisingly enough in view of more recent events, Si-
hanouk's calculations immediately after the 1954 Geneva Conference were dominated by fear of the Viet Minh regime, whose expansionist designs he viewed as an ideological reincarnation of ancient Vietnamese imperialism. He therefore sought explicit security guarantees from the United States through a strong SEATO. In part due to Washington's rather unenthusiastic response to his overtures, however, and in part because of the growing appeal of Nehru's philosophy of "positive neutralism," Sihanouk began during 1955 to move toward a policy of nonalignment, in the process seeking closer relations with Communist China. The staunchly anticommunist governments of Thailand and South Vietnam were at once afraid and outraged, and attempted through the application of diplomatic and economic pressures to force Sihanouk to return to a pro-Western stance. They succeeded only in reviving ancient Cambodian fears of Thai and Vietnamese imperialism, and thereby stimulated Sihanouk to draw even closer to China. Relations with the United States deteriorated as well; our close connections with the Bangkok and Saigon regimes rendered us automatically suspect in Sihanouk's eyes, and the Eisenhower administration was in any event distinctly unenthusiastic about Cambodia's new course.

At times, as Leifer points out, Sihanouk has openly become Peking's unofficial spokesman in international politics, thereby further antagonizing the United States (although recently he has appeared more aware of the likely effects upon Cambodia's security of an American withdrawal from Southeast Asia, and his relations with the United States have shown some improvement). In explaining his policy Sihanouk argues that Cambodia may require Peking's support against Thai and South Vietnamese aggression; he occasionally suggests as well that Chinese domination of Southeast Asia is inevitable, and that it is only political wisdom to seek friendly relations with the winning side. Leifer appears fully sympathetic with his position. This defense of Sihanouk's foreign policy, however, ignores both history and current political realities. It was, after all, Sihanouk's own effort to establish closer relations with Peking which initially poisoned Cambodia's relations with Bangkok and Saigon, as Leifer himself indicates, and it surely cannot be denied that Thailand and South Vietnam had legitimate reason to fear the establishment of a communist salient in the heart of the Indochinese peninsula. Leifer fails to perceive, therefore, the extent to which Sihanouk's repeated denunciations of Thai and South Vietnamese "aggression" have constituted a self-fulfilling prophecy. Both Thailand and South Vietnam since 1954 have been absorbed with efforts to deal with native and foreign communist threats to their own security, and it is unlikely in the extreme that either would have provoked a quarrel with Cambodia had not Sihanouk appeared to be making common cause with their enemies. Sihanouk is now thoroughly mistrusted by the United States; since North Vietnamese troops operate at will on Cambodian territory and China has lately been supporting a mini-insurgency by Khmer communists, Sihanouk's foreign policy has left Cambodia virtually friendless, her future almost totally dependent upon the outcome of the American effort in Vietnam which Sihanouk has denounced so bitterly.

Anatomy of a Crisis, Bernard Fall's posthumously-published study of the Laotian crisis of 1961, suffers from similar failures of analysis. More sharply aware of the Hanoi regime's ultimate design for the Indochinese peninsula than is Leifer, Fall carefully analyzes Viet Minh activity in Laos prior to the Geneva Conference, noting that the basis for subsequent Pathet Lao control of both the northeast provinces and the southern highlands was established by General Giap's invasions of 1953. The Pathet Lao itself, Fall points out, has been since its inception virtually an arm of the Viet Minh: the North Vietnamese have normally treated Pathet Lao territory as an extension of their own, and Laotian com-
munist military units have been since the late 1940's heavily interspersed with Viet Minh advisers. "There is no reason to believe," he writes, "that the Pathet Lao's objective in Laos had ever been anything but a complete takeover." Fall was nonetheless convinced that there existed for a brief time in 1958 a real opportunity to establish in Laos a neutral nation on the Austrian or Burman model. In late 1957, he argues, the Pathet Lao reverted to the "legal struggle" pattern, and, having made a good showing in the 1958 elections, had no reason to resort again to open revolutionary war. The election results, however, panicked the Laotian anti-communists. Overconfident of their ability to deal militarily with the Pathet Lao as long as they had American support, they moved the government rightward; and by early 1959 the Pathet Lao, with North Vietnamese aid and encouragement, had set in motion the Laotian civil war. Had the anticommunist Laotians and their American supporters not disturbed the fragile coalition of 1958, Fall asserts, the North Vietnamese most likely would have left Laos alone and the civil war, whose outcome was a clear defeat for the West, might never have occurred.

At best, however, this is a dubious argument, since Fall has completely ignored simultaneous events taking place in Vietnam. In late 1958-early 1959 the North Vietnamese concluded that the time had arrived to bring down the Diem regime; essential to their strategy was unchallenged control over the Laotian panhandle so that men and material could be moved south as needed. That Hanoi was unhappy about the rightward shift of the Vientiane government after mid-1958 is doubtless true; that this alone explains North Vietnam's growing interest in Laos and the later outbreak of conflict there is highly doubtful. Since the second Geneva Conference in 1962, of course, it has been clearly apparent that events in Laos are almost totally dependent on what happens in Vietnam; this fact alone should lead us to interpret the complicated events of 1958-61 with more caution than Fall displayed.

Highly questionable, therefore, are the favorable conclusions which Leifer and Fall reach concerning the viability of neutralism as a possible foreign policy option for the smaller states of Asia. As long as the Asian communist regimes pursue expansionist foreign policies and seek generally to extend their power and influence in the region, other nations cannot escape involvement in what is still euphemistically called the "cold war"; indeed, under existing circumstances they must rely for survival either on communist benevolence or the help of outside powers. This is the real lesson of recent Cambodian and Laotian history, and Western scholars ignore it at their peril.

Reviewed by James E. Dornan, Jr.

The "Moral Equivalent"


Most analyses of the recurrent eruption of urban violence tend to follow either of two simplistic formulas, viz:

1) The violence is engendered primarily by economic deprivation and social discrimination, and can be ended by removing these causes; or

2) The violence results from a failure of law enforcement due in large part to obstacles created by recent rulings of the courts; the remedy lies in sterner laws and in stricter enforcement by police and judiciary alike.

In either case the analyses appear to work toward preestablished conclusions derived from ideological prejudice or con-