

frustration of the challenge, with its containment or defeat in one way or another."

Did it? In *Containment and Revolution* Deutscher's verdict is that "In truth, throughout the Cold War the West has not been able to record any significant or lasting success anywhere." In the same collection, Henry W. Berger adds impressive evidence that there was never any Soviet challenge and that most of our high officials knew it.

As history, *The Cold War as History* has grave deficiencies. It is mystifying that a serious historian of the cold war should begin his work with the statement: "The circumstances out of which the Cold War arose are simple enough in outline . . . the Soviet Union had suddenly, as if by sleight of hand (italics added), effected the military conquest of the Eastern half of Europe." And it is perplexing to read near the end of the book that: "The initiative in the Cold War had, from the beginning, been with Moscow. Obsessed throughout its history with the fear of foreign encirclement, it had throughout its history been pushing against the encircling powers."

A nation which had been nearly done to death on its own soil three times since 1913 cannot be said to be "obsessed" by a proclaimed encirclement, backed up by a monopoly of atomic bombs.

Yet this is a valuable addition to the literature of the cold war. It recognizes the Truman Doctrine as an effort "to establish a *Pax Americana* all around the globe," in "an unlimited commitment"; it exposes the myth of the Red monolith and explains the folly of ex-

tending the cold war to Asia to defend "China against Chinese, Vietnam against Vietnamese, Asia against Asians." In Asia the author sees that the United States "encircled" and pressed Russia and China together, and "under its pressure the semblance of solidarity" between them was maintained "for almost a decade"; though he would not agree that our encircling pressures on Russia in Europe were even more self-defeating and wasteful.

No one has explained better the dynamism of action and reaction which propelled the American people to the point that until after 1950 they acted "unwisely, and brought the good name of the United States into a spreading disrepute that could only weaken its influence and its cause." Halle's account of the devastation which McCarthyism wrought in the State Department and the country is particularly valuable.

The narrative ends after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. There are excellent chapters about the Eisenhower-Dulles years, with new glimpses of the efforts of the latter "to go to the brink" and to prevent the making of peace, in Europe and Asia.

*The Cold War as History* closes on a very ominous note, in consonance with the author's belief that our destinies must depend on balance of power manipulations: "In the new weapons, then, lay the hope of the world, no less than its peril, as it moved on into an unknown future." We are left sitting on our H-bombs, waiting for the third and final world war, in a time when nuclear weapons are due to be achieved soon by more and more governments.

## Unmaking a Village

THE VILLAGE OF BEN SUC. By Jonathan Schell. Alfred A. Knopf. 132 pp. \$3.95.

### JONATHAN MIRSKY

Mr. Mirsky teaches at Dartmouth College and New York University.

"To the villagers of Ben Suc the National Liberation Front was not a band of roving guerrillas but the full government of their village." Exactly—that is why, on the 8th of January, 1967, the village was depopulated and then erased by American forces. Americans finally are learning a lesson in Vietnam: a guerrilla movement ultimately succeeds not by terror or brainwashing but by *out-administering* the government. This means persuading villagers that guerrilla taxes are more just, and guerrilla social services more encom-

passing than those of the government. Once villagers know this and feel guerrilla military protection to be long lasting, the government faces two choices: admit the village is lost ("insecure") or wipe it off the face of the earth.

Jonathan Schell's remarkable and justifiably famous book, first published in *The New Yorker*, bleakly and with little comment details what took place at Ben Suc. It provoked outraged cries of "foul" in Vietnam and from some reviewers in America (notably *Time*); charges of unfairness, warping, and making a mountain out of a molehill filled the air. After all, critics pointed out, two very important NLF cadres were captured (Bernard Fall interviewed them for *The New Republic*); great tunnels and dugouts underlay the whole village; the place was being used to send NLF supplies up and down the

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