

# The First Vietnam War



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How did the conflict between Vietnamese nationalists and French colonial rulers erupt into a major Cold War struggle between communism and Western liberalism? To understand the course of the Vietnam wars, it is essential to explore the connections between events within Vietnam and global geopolitical currents in the decade after the Second World War. In this illuminating work, leading scholars examine various dimensions of the struggle between France and Vietnamese revolutionaries that began in 1945 and reached its climax at Dien Bien Phu. Several essays break new ground in the study of the Vietnamese revolution and the establishment of the political and military apparatus that successfully challenged both France and the United States. Other essays explore the roles of China, France, Great Britain, and the United States, all of which contributed to the transformation of the conflict from a colonial skirmish to a Cold War crisis. Taken together, the essays enable us to understand the origins of the later American war in Indochina by positioning Vietnam at the centre of the grand clash between East and West and North and South in the middle years of the 20th Century.

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