It would be easy to dismiss this book as counter culture propaganda, except that the author is a Mennonite, whose principles of "friendly persuasion" go back to the seventeenth century. His beard is a tradition of the "plain folk" of Southeastern Pennsylvania and other locations in the US and Canada. Earl Martin and his wife, who speak fluent Vietnamese, served two long tours in Vietnam, living the simple life of the people as workers for the Mennonite Central Committee, a volunteer agency.

When Americans evacuated from Quang Ngai city in the spring of 1975, Martin sent his family to haven in Saigon and stayed on under the new revolutionary government, hoping to continue his work of helping farmers clear their fields of stray explosives. He was joined by a Japanese Mennonite, "Hiro" Ichikawa. Although the two men had assurances of support from the new regime, officials eventually "encouraged" them to leave and make their way south to Saigon.

Despite Martin's clumsy striving for suspense and his stagy reconstruction of conversations, the journal gives a vivid account of the first few months of the communist takeover. Martin, who studied political science at Stanford, has an eye for detail and generally keeps his anti-war polemic under control. Inevitable, though, all Americans, except other "volags," are bad, and all Vietnamese, especially the revolutionaries, are good. Although Martin is an effective spokesman for the breed of pacifism he espouses, the world is a more
complex place than he is willing to admit. Yet the book will be of interest to those who served in Vietnam, especially at village or hamlet level.

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