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Political Violence in Southeast Asia since 1945: Case Studies from Six Countries. Edited by Eve Monique Zucker and Ben Kiernan. London: Routledge, 2021. xix+308pp.

The editors, Eve Monique Zucker and Ben Kiernan, begin the introduction for this excellent collection with the United States' use of the atomic bomb to obliterate Hiroshima (p. 1). The brief history that follows, from the end of the Second World War through decolonization and spanning the Cold War in Southeast Asia, is a depressing recounting of incredibly brutal wars and episodes of horrendous political violence. And, as several of the essays in this collection attest, the end of the Cold War did not mean political peace. Rather, repression and violence have continued to be central to political contests across the region.

The collection focuses on political violence in Indonesia, Burma/ Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam, covering topics like genocide, mass violence and the technologies of violence. The fear and injustice associated with political violence and the legal impunity of perpetrators are also traced through several of the chapters. This book is an antidote for what Australian political rock band Midnight Oil describes as “Short Memory” in their classic musical dissection of colonialism and war. No one should forget the destruction of Cambodia and the internal genocide that followed (chapters 4, 7, 10, 13, 14 and 17) or the atrocities against Vietnamese in Lon Nol's 1970s “religious war” (chapter 16). Likewise, memories of Indonesia's 1965–66 genocide (chapter 1), the West's war in Indochina and the terrible deaths, maiming and destruction this brought (chapters 6 and 9), and the recent ethnic violence in

Myanmar (chapters 2, 5, 8 and 11) should not fade. Yet memories are both short and politically selective. So, when Western allies cosy up to the authoritarian regimes in the Philippines and Thailand for political and strategic gain over China, former president Duterte's war on drugs that killed thousands (chapter 3) seems conveniently forgotten, along with the Thai state's decades-long repression and murder of political activists (chapters 12 and 15).

While readers may feel like there is already sufficient murder and mayhem for any one book, an important omission is Laos. For two decades, from about the period of the Geneva Accords until 1974, Laos became a frontline state in the West's efforts to "roll back" or "contain" communism. This involved the United States establishing a client state operating from Vientiane and waging a brutal war that saw merciless bombing of much of the country; some even suggest that Laos is the most bombed country ever. As such, a chapter on violence in Laos would have rounded out this excellent collection.

In their chapters, sometimes in agonizing terms, the authors discuss events and add new perspectives while reminding readers of the cruelty and viciousness of political contests for the region's postcolonial history. This violence has left indelible marks on each country and its people. The details provided can be disturbing. For example, Geoffrey Robinson cites an eyewitness account of the 1965–66 Indonesian killings: "Usually the corpses were no longer recognizable as human. Headless. Stomachs torn open. The smell was unbelievable" (p. 21). Usefully, Robinson cuts through the obscuring claims of officials, both local and international, to assign blame for the deaths and repression to the Indonesian Army. He also points out the complicity of the US and UK governments as they waged a regional "Cold" War against communists and others identified as leftists.

Readers might marvel at the stoicism of those on the receiving end of state violence and their efforts at resistance. While there are few suggestions for a more hopeful future, Laura McGrew explores some mechanisms for resilience and recovery in her chapter on Cambodia, highlighting the work of Buddhist peace movements and

non-governmental organizations. In today's Cambodia, however, the space for such movements is relentlessly squeezed by Hun Sen's authoritarian regime.

In this context, Zucker and Kiernan are not unnecessarily pessimistic when they conclude that Southeast Asia is "at what may appear to be a pivotal moment in history", as the political powers that be "have proven increasingly resistant to the checks and balances of governmental institutions or to the concerns of [their] citizenry..." (p. 14). A cycle of violence and authoritarianism is exemplified in Alfred McCoy's chapter on extrajudicial killings under President Ferdinand Marcos and, more recently, those under President Rodrigo Duterte taking on the guise of a war on drugs. As the editors highlight, the result is that this "volume stands as a warning that what has happened before may happen again, and in some cases already is" (p. 14). Perhaps adding to the pessimism, McCoy's chapter also highlights the context of rising regional authoritarianism with a global rightist drift and under the sway of the politics of distrust and violence.

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Returning Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution. Edited by Louise Tythacott and Panggah Ardiyansyah. Singapore: NUS Press, 2021. xv+303 pp.

Repatriation of looted Southeast Asian antiquities has been regularly reported in the news recently. The largest repatriation hoard was the return of thirty Khmer Buddhist and Hindu objects in 2021 from the United States to Cambodia. Another important return was of two Khmer lintels from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco to Thailand in 2021. Southeast Asian countries celebrated the return of these pieces with religious ceremonies because they are considered