

capturing the complex realities of the historical events that led to the imposition of dictatorial rule by Marcos in 1972 and of the realpolitik beyond romanticized narratives and the mythmaking of contending political forces. His revisiting of and sharp reckoning with the long shadow of the dirty dealings, cynical conspiracies and power plays of the insurgent leadership in the Philippines is long overdue. By the epilogue of *The Drama of Dictatorship*, the earlier ruthless criticism shifts to a melancholic reflection on how the past is restaged in the present. Scalice suggests that the struggle for socialism is the way forward, echoing Trotsky's view that it provides the best defence of democracy. This idea, however, requires further elaboration in future work.

**Karlo Mikhail I. Mongaya**

Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature, University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines; email: kimongaya@up.edu.ph.

## REFERENCES

Briones, Jervy, and Karlo Mikhail Mongaya,. 2024. "Did Stalinism Pave the Way for the Rise of the Marcos Dictatorship? A Review of Joseph Scalice's *The Drama of Dictatorship*". *UP Los Baños* 22, no. 2: 51–79.  
Fuller, Ken. 2023. "Book Review: With Scalice Aforethought". *Communist Review* (Autumn 2023): 23–29.

DOI: 10.1355/sj40-3j

*Indigenizing the Cold War: The Border Patrol Police and Nation-Building in Thailand*. By Sinae Hyun. University of Hawai'i Press, 2023. xxii+226 pp.

How did Thailand's Border Patrol Police (BPP) evolve until today? To what extent did it build a "human border" in terms of inoculating the hearts and minds of the people (p. 5)? What role has the BPP had in state formation? This well-researched book, based on original fieldwork, addresses these questions. The author is a historian specializing in the Cold War, nationalism and Southeast Asian studies

at Sogang University in South Korea. This work derives from her dissertation.

The introduction defines the concept of indigenization as adapting global causes to local elites' interpretations of nation-building (p. 2) and argues that these Cold War postcolonial processes were particularly bloody in Southeast Asia, including Thailand. The BPP, created in the early 1950s, was responsible for safeguarding the psychological, anti-communist "human border" as a nationalistic agent of the monarchy.

Chapter 1 examines the early period of anti-communism in Thailand and the formation of the BPP (1947–62). The author traces the origins of an army-controlled military police to 1940, including the Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit (PARU) in 1953 and formation of the BPP in 1955. US and monarchical support for the BPP and PARU ensured their survival following the coup by army commander Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, although they became administratively coupled together.

Chapter 2 scrutinizes how, in the 1960s, the BPP sustained itself under the patronage of the United States and Thailand's royal family. The main purpose of the BPP was civic action projects, but it also shifted increasingly from prioritizing armed suppression to political/psychological operations, including village security and narcotics suppression. Thus, the BPP became a monarchical tool in indigenizing the US-led Cold War to gain authority among Thai people.

Chapter 3 details the evolution of the CIA-created PARU, symbolized as the "Black Panthers" under the Naresuan Committee (composed of CIA officials and senior Thai military officers) as well as the monarchy. PARU served in the CIA's "secret" war in Laos, but after returning to Thailand amid the Lao communist victory, it was placed, ignominiously, under the control of the BPP. PARU veterans saw the 14 October 1973 victory of students over the Thai military government as the triumph of communism and increasingly became agents of royalist nationalism.

Chapter 4 investigates the BPP during 1969–76, a period that turned it into an ultra-right-wing institution that considered most

university students as communist and opposed to the monarchy. Eventually, the BPP, PARU, BPP-trained Village Scouts and the metropolitan police violently stormed Thammasat University on 6 October 1976. These groups saw the massacre they perpetrated as a victory over communism and a successful illustration of loyalty to the palace despite the ugly nature of the event. In the narration of this event, the author downplays speculation of US involvement in bringing about the massacre (p. 134).

In chapter 5, the author stresses that the BPP remains active today, though its primary duties have shifted from anti-communist counter-insurgency to protecting the Thai monarchy. The BPP has a major role in managing royal projects as a form of state-building. These projects, a form of civic action, began as royally indigenized Cold War efforts, symbolized by trips made by King Bhumipol's mother to villages in the northern Thai border areas and her sponsoring of BPP school projects. Her patronage of BPP projects secured the BPP's future: Military governments could not disband an institution that the Princess Mother supported, even if they were suspicious of it. Where the BPP's future is concerned, given its role as a royal agent, it will remain active as long as the monarchy survives. Yet the weaknesses of the BPP are its institutional insecurity, potentially excessive closeness to Princess Sirindhorn (p. 157), and ambiguous identity under the monarchy.

This work represents an insightful study of the BPP, showing how a paramilitary police force born of Cold War needs became vernacularized (indigenized) to serve Thai royalist nationalism. The author illustrates intricately how the BPP engaged in a variety of operations (such as securing border schools) during the Cold War to safeguard a "human border" of protection for Thai people. Particular strengths of this work include the author's use of interviews with key participants, including the late Gordon Young and William Lair, as well as Thai-language sources. Perhaps she could have provided more historical background on the police in Siam before 1940 or more thoroughly discussed who in 1976 directed the BPP (and other units) to attack the students (Thonglek 2016). But those are wider

questions. This is an excellent, well-written book, and I recommend it for anyone with an interest in Thailand or its security forces, especially during the Cold War.

**Paul Chambers**

Thailand Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore; email: pwchambers@gmail.com.

**REFERENCE**

Nipat Thonglek. 2016. “You Have to Believe It ... the First Police Chief in Siam Was a British Foreigner”, *Matichon*, 8 October 2016. [https://www.matichon.co.th/columnists/news\\_314044](https://www.matichon.co.th/columnists/news_314044)

DOI: 10.1355/sj40-3k

*Chiang Mai Between Empire and Modern Thailand: A City in the Colonial Margins*. By Taylor M. Easum. Amsterdam University Press, 2023. 288 pp.

This book by Taylor M. Easum delves into the history of nineteenth-century Chiang Mai during the height of colonial expansion in Southeast Asia. Easum showcases Chiang Mai as a key kingdom on the “the colonial margins”. He illustrates how Siam treated Chiang Mai as a kind of semi-colonial state while the British took advantage of the city. Even though Chiang Mai was not a main hub like Bangkok was, it was vital for linking the big players in both the political and economic arenas.

The book opens by diving into Chiang Mai’s past life as part of the Lanna Kingdom. During the nineteenth century, the British began to push into Lanna to advance their economic interests after colonizing Burma. As a result, Chiang Mai, being the major city in the region, became contested territory as the British took an interest in the local teakwood sector when Burma’s supply was dwindling. In response, Siam, which had jurisdiction over Chiang Mai, began to intervene actively in the administration of the city. Easum digs into the historical changes that Chiang Mai underwent, such as how