

have been just as important an influence on the direction of Burmese development as the Mons of Ramannadesa.

It is a very unusual thing for so many good articles on premodern Burma and Thailand to be concentrated into one volume. But this does not limit its utility to the specialist on Burma or Thailand alone, as it will certainly serve as a major contribution to researchers of general Southeast Asian legal development. This collection will certainly be a valued acquisition by the specialist and the student alike.

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The United States and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, 1945–1975. By ALAN J. LEVINE. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. vii, 190 pp. \$49.95.

This book makes some effort to cover the U.S. role in Southeast Asia as a whole during thirty years of Cold War history; however, its primary focus is the Vietnam War. Of ten chapters, there is one chapter on the First Indochina War and six chapters which deal with the Second Indochina War. Of the remaining three chapters, one briefly discusses the global context and the domino theory, another focuses on the “Southeast Asian Revolts of 1948,” and a third briefly discusses Indonesia up to 1965.

As a contribution to the already compendious literature on the U.S. war in Vietnam and its wider context, this book has little to recommend it. Apart from the Department of State’s *Foreign Relations of the United States*, a well-known and voluminous selection of edited primary documents, the sources used by the author are a selection of the standard published histories and memoirs for the period. Nor does it offer a new interpretive synthesis which would allow it to stand out among the array of studies of the Indochina conflicts. Ultimately this book is another contribution to that subgroup of Vietnam war literature which is preoccupied with demonstrating that the U.S. could have won the war. Alan Levine criticizes the Johnson administration for its lack of leadership and its “failure to develop a sound military strategy” in Vietnam, while the role of the U.S. media and the North American intelligentsia is characterized as “a spectacle of shambling incompetence” (pp. 152–53). He concludes that “the task of opposing the Soviet Union, which was growing stronger militarily, was made immensely more difficult by the double mistake of intervening in Indochina, and then failing to fight there in a sensible and effective way” (p. 154).

While Levine criticizes the apparent inconsistency and lack of direction of U.S. policy, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, his analysis attributes a high degree of coherence and effectiveness to Soviet policy in Southeast Asia after World War II. He argues that Southeast Asia “was drawn into” the Cold War “struggle partly through the independent initiative of the Vietnamese Communists, but mostly by deliberate Soviet action” (p. 1). Despite their complex dynamics and very different contexts, the now famously unsuccessful revolts of 1948 are treated as little more than the result of the Zhdanov line of 1947–48. While Levine points to an apparent Soviet recognition of the complexity of the situation on the ground by the early 1950s, he continues to see Soviet policy as the driving force of the communist movements in Southeast Asia (pp. 39–40). He argues that in 1951 the Soviet Union “let” the various communist parties in the region “follow a more flexible policy.” This meant that the Communist Party in Indonesia, for example, began to work in alliance with Sukarno

and the Indonesian Nationalist Party. In a simplistic formulation, Levine concludes that this “was the first step toward a strategy of peaceful takeover in alliance with Sukarno” (p. 46). His analysis of Indonesian politics in the 1950s mirrors the perspective taken by Eisenhower and Dulles, who assumed that the rise to prominence of the PKI simply reflected the spread of a global communist conspiracy. Levine imposes a Cold War prism on the complexity of postcolonial Indonesian politics and reinvents the domino theory (although he rejects it elsewhere) which emerged to underpin the growing U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia generally and Vietnam more specifically.

Although Levine describes himself as “a ‘moderate’ opponent” of the war in Vietnam (p. 123), his book emphasizes that U.S. defeat flowed from a lack of will and a failure to carry the battle to the enemy in the North. He concludes that the U.S. was eventually able “to defeat the Vietcong guerrillas;” however, it “failed to employ its power so as to prevent North Vietnam from overrunning the south in a conventional offensive.” From his perspective the U.S. eventually “succeeded” at what was “a difficult and complex task” and then “failed at a straightforward conventional task which its power should have made easy” (p. 151). This has all been said before and this reviewer can see little need for yet another book on the Vietnam War which offers absolutely nothing new in terms of evidence or interpretation.

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Singapore's Authoritarian Capitalism: Asian Values, Free Market Illusions, and Political Dependency. By CHRISTOPHER LINGLE. Barcelona: Edicions Sirocco, S.L. and The Locke Institute, Fairfax Va., 1996. xxii, 168 pp. \$19.95.

In late 1994 Christopher Lingle, an economist working at the National University of Singapore, catapulted briefly to international fame when a newspaper article he wrote incurred the wrath of the ruling People's Action Party in Singapore. Following the publication of a short piece in the *International Herald Tribune* in October 1994, which made no mention of Singapore but did suggest that the judiciary in many parts of East Asia was used by the government to harass its political opponents, he found himself the object of a lawsuit. In a court case in January 1995, Lingle, along with the *International Herald Tribune's* publisher, Richard McClean, and its Asia editor, Michael Richardson, were found guilty of making contemptuous remarks about Singapore's judiciary. Lingle, who had already fled Singapore in late October, was fined about \$7,000 dollars (U.S.) and directed to pay the hefty court costs. A small part of this sum was recovered by the court when his personal assets were seized following his hasty departure from the tropical city-state.

It is Lingle's collision with the litigious PAP which was the immediate impetus for this book. And the introduction and first chapter provide an autobiographical account of the period stretching from Lingle's initial interrogation by the police to his decision to leave the country before he was run through the wringer of the Singapore legal system, an experience that he quite rightly feared would leave him bankrupt and/or in jail. With his personal story out of the way, in chapter 2 he summarizes and evaluates the Asian values debate in the post-Cold War era with a focus on the “Singapore School.” Chapter 3 looks at the political economy of