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tive arrangements which reduce the costs of trans-
actions.

One final point is the relative importance of the
cooperative village organizations the author discur-
ses in rural development in Thailand. He is well
aware that they have to compete with market or-
ganizations and thus cannot freely develop. Since the
Thai government is not very interventionist and
there is virtually no discrimination against Chinese,
compared with other Southeast Asian countries,
market organizations are fairly strong in villages in
Thailand. The author discusses certain areas
where village-wide cooperative organizations can
develop (such as cooperative purchase and 'pool-
distribution type organizations'; see Chapter 6),
but how important are they in rural development?
There is no question that they are marginally im-
portant, but it seems that they are overshadowed by
market organizations.

The book may be a little weak in relating its find-
ings to the body of analytical knowledge on rural
development, but it shows what type of cooperative
economic organizations are evolving in a Thai vil-
lage and why. It contains a great deal of factual
information on rural organizations and presents its
analysis in readable fashion.

Carl A. Trocki, ed. Gangsters, Democracy, and
the State in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian
Program Publications, Cornell University, 1998,
94p.

There are five chapters in the book, including the
editor's introductory chapter. There is one chapter
on Burma, another on Thailand, and two on the
Philippines. On reading through the book, however,
one wonders how these four chapters are related.
Only two of them seem directly related to the title.

The gangster, a word which appears in the title,
is ordinarily understood as a member of organized
crime. He uses thugs and weapons (or threatens to
use them) to get what he wants from others. The
title might convey the impression that such persons
run the democracy of Southeast Asia today. But
that is not what is meant. A local boss is consid-
ered also as a gangster since he uses the means of
violence under state control (e.g., police) in order to
get what he wants, and it is argued that such per-
sons run the democracy of Southeast Asia. This is
claimed for Thailand by James Ockey in "Crime,
Society, and Politics in Thailand" and for the
Philippines by John Sidel in "Murder, Inc., Cavite:
Capitalist Development and Political Gangsterism in
a Philippine Province." They do not, however, claim
that the whole country is run by gangsters. They
admit that in Bangkok or Manila, where a sizable
middle class has emerged as a result of past
economic development, the influence of gangsters is
small. But they maintain that gangsters wield large
power in provinces and that this puts an indel-
ible mark on the democracy because power lies there
rather than in the metropolis (e.g., in Thailand, 90
percent of the seats in the Parliament are allo-
cated to local provinces, p. 52).

Is gangsterism a passing phenomenon? James
Ockey says that the middle class is becoming frus-
trated, but that the influence of chaopho [local
strongmen] will decline because of the expanding
middle class and the increasing scrutiny of their
activities by media reporters. John Sidel ends his
chapter on a less optimistic note. He maintains
essentially that, although bosses keep changing,
bossism will remain. He shows that this is the pat-
tern established in the postwar history of Cavite.
The editor tends to side with Sidel rather than with
Ockey (p. 15).

If gangsterism is an entrenched phenomenon in
local politics in Thailand or the Philippines, one
cannot be optimistic about the future of democracy
in these countries. At present, Indonesia is also
moving in the direction of democracy and many peo-
ple predict a rosy future for the country because of
it, but what has happened in the Philippines and
Thailand may happen in Indonesia too.

The two other chapters do not seem to be directly related to the main theme of the book. The chapter on Burma by Mary P. Callahan entitled "The Sinking Schooner: Murder and the State in Independent Burma, 1948-1958" is a historical piece and does not seem to throw any light on the problems the country will face when it moves to democracy. The power base of local strongmen seems to have been destroyed by the military in the past three decades. The article on Mindanao by Patricio N. Abinales entitled "'Muslim' Political Brokers and the Philippine Nation-State" focuses on the role of a datu in Cotabato as the mediator between his community and Manila. He may be able to use violence to get what he wants in his area, but this aspect is hardly touched upon in the chapter. When he lost the ability to be a mediator because of an increased inflow of Filipino migrants, his Muslim community split, and it came to be dominated by the MNLF. The author's theme is very different from John Sidel's or James Ockey's.

The editor does a fairly good job in giving the reader an overview in the introductory chapter, but here and there, he gives the impression that capitalism is also responsible for the anomaly of Southeast Asian democracy. 'Transnational corporate interests' and 'rampant capitalism' are his villains. He then ends his chapter by pointing out correctly that political cultures have given rise to gangsterism in Southeast Asian democracy (p. 15). If that is so, capitalism is not to blame. After all, in industrial countries today, gangsterism was of minor importance or hardly noticeable in the process of their capitalist development. Capitalism can cohabit with many forms of government.

In the past, the economists had painted a rosy picture of Southeast Asia, but now that it is facing a serious economic crisis, they may be having second thoughts. What they have to be aware of is that the economy is not an island. If the political situation is what the authors of this book say it is, the economy cannot keep growing under such a political system, for public money is misused and the cost of transactions is high. To create a dynamic economy (echt capitalism) is partly a political problem.

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