

May knows that his foray into revolutionary history will incite a heated response. In the past he criticized the historical writings of nationalist Renato Constantino and received considerable flak from Filipino scholars. May has tried to keep the focus on evidentiary grounds and avoid the interpretive side of the debate. He follows in the traces of William Henry Scott, who used similar methods to expose the weakness of pre-Hispanic sources about the Philippines. The same thing that happened to Scott might well happen to May: Filipino writers, lay readers and patriotic intellectuals will deny or ignore his findings. The construction of Philippine history remains thoroughly intertwined with the aspirations of this still relatively new nation; hence, reality and myth-making intersect in much of the historiography. At least initially, few will care to see the sense in what an American historian has to say about one of their founding fathers.

Still, May's relentless inquiry is persuasive, and he rightly lands on the side of skepticism about these documents. His employment of background literature to justify his points is thorough and apt. Others who wish to resuscitate Bonifacio's reputation must now deal with May's queries or, better yet, find new, more authentic materials.

That May points out that many historians, including himself, were earlier taken in by the hoax provides little comfort. While tearing down the existing portrait, he has left little to build upon. Because of storage conditions in the Philippines, there will always likely be a shortage of documents on key historical subjects. Inevitably, forgeries will appear to fill the gaps, so watch dogs become necessary. Hopefully, historians will appreciate the services such sentinels provide.

While May's writing style makes the reading easy for the most part, this is a book about the crafting of history, of more interest to the specialist than to the beginner or casual reader.

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The Malay Handloom Weavers: A Study of the Rise and Decline of Traditional Manufacture. By MAZNAH MOHAMAD. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996. xvi, 338 pp. \$38.90 (paper).

The handloom weaving industry on the Malay peninsula during precolonial and colonial times was located primarily in the east coast state of Terengganu and to a lesser degree in Kelantan and Pahang, with centers in the towns of Kuala Terengganu, Kota Baru, and Pekan. The women weavers relied entirely on imports of silk, cotton, and other raw materials to make their textiles, which were used locally and also exported.

According to the 1921 Malay census, there were 7,341 silk and cotton weavers in Terengganu, most of whom were wage or piece-rate workers for middlemen. Many of the weavers did not own the looms on which they wove, and that is still the case today. The major difference since 1921 is that the number of individuals working as handloom weavers and in related occupations has dropped dramatically, to between 2,000 and 3,000.

Handloom weaving requires a number of specialists, each of whom accomplishes a specific task before the next expert takes over—an example of serial manufacture. Loom-makers and dye-preparers also work independently. No mobility exists between

specialist occupations, and there is also a separation between all of the workers and the middlemen who provide raw materials and have control of finished products.

The author argues that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the east coast handloom business had the characteristics of a proto-industry. She cites the work of several scholars, notably Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick, and Jürgen Schlumbohm in support of this view. She also points out the similarities between proto-industrial conditions in Europe and Malaya. The intriguing question is: why, unlike Europe, did the proto-industry in the Malay peninsula not develop into full-fledged textile manufacturing with mechanization and centralization of production?

Much of the book is focused on answering this provocative question. The author examines political, economic, and sociocultural elements in a historical context in seeking an answer. One of the most important contributing problems appears to be the dependence on imported materials such as silk and cotton. Drawings of looms and photographs of weavers at work—on the simple warp-reed or the more complex treadle-loom—and their products as well as numerous tables and charts support the text. There are also case studies of women who perform the various weaving roles. While these are informative, they are far too brief.

In her conclusion, the author argues that handloom weavers have many characteristics in common with factory-based textile producers. Thus they have been ill-served by being lumped with handcraft workers by government agencies. She urges rethinking of the place of handloom weavers in development planning.

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Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War. By EDWIN E. MOÏSE.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. xviii, 304 pp. \$39.95
(cloth).

President Lyndon B. Johnson's counselor Walt Rostow assured a student in my Vietnam War class in 1985 that on 4 August 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats repeated an attack staged two days earlier on U.S. destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf. Edward J. Marolda and Oscar Fitzgerald supported his claim the next year in a U.S. Navy publication that surveys the war's early history. Edwin E. Moïse's meticulous and dispassionate account exposes the official study as replete with "errors and omissions" (p. xii) and Rostow as a prevaricator. Thorough, careful, and probing analysis backs his conclusion that "the weight of the evidence is overwhelming: no attack occurred" (p. 204). Despite Hanoi's "very convincing" (p. 203) charge that "the Johnson administration knowingly faked the incident of August 4," however, an "enormous conspiracy . . . did not exist" (p. 101). Johnson initially was convinced that a second attack had occurred, ordering "on short notice" (p. 224) bombing of North Vietnam and securing the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Confirmation of doubts emerged quickly, but Johnson already had jumped on a "phantom streetcar" (p. 254) to defend an escalation that was almost inevitable but became much harder to justify.

Moïse begins with brief coverage of South Vietnam's internal weaknesses, explaining that because "the guerrillas were winning the war" (p. 1), the "Americans felt they had to do something" (p. 25). Reductions in defense spending required adoption of an inexpensive strategy to force the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) to abandon its goal of reunification. Despite pessimistic expectations, the Joint