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War Comes to Long An, the Classic We Hardly Know?

JEFFREY RACE

War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province. Updated and expanded edition, with new forewords by Robert K. Brigham and Jeffrey Record

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“A superb study, one of the few indispensable books on Vietnam . . .”¹

Few books occupy a more curious place in the history of academic study of Southeast Asia than Jeffrey Race’s *War Comes to Long An* (WCLA), now re-issued in expanded form by the University of California Press nearly four decades after its initial publication.² Since its appearance in 1972, this dense account of communist victory in a single province of the former South Vietnam has never gone out of print. A generation ago, rare was the graduate student at an American university—and rarer still the faculty member—with an interest in Vietnam or in modern Southeast Asia’s history and politics who did not add the book to his or her personal library. Even among scholars with no particular interest in the Vietnam War, the book’s familiar red spine and its cover photograph—showing the bomb-rack of an American plane flying over the flat ricelands of the Mekong Delta, a hamlet burning just after an air-strike far below—figured for many of us as a familiar part of our dissertation advisors’ office décor.

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The sheer volume of scholarship on Southeast Asia—and not least on Vietnam—across the disciplines has multiplied many times over since the 1980s, and even since the 1990s. Nevertheless, *WCLA* retains its place in the Southeast Asian “area studies” canon. It enjoys this status despite (or is it because of?) the fact that its author, while prolific in the years immediately following *WCLA*’s publication, did not embark on a conventional academic career or write a second book.³ Indeed, Jeffrey Race has long represented a somewhat mysterious figure to many admirers of his work.

Skeptics trained in Southeast Asian and Vietnamese studies in the last decade or so need only test for themselves the enduring consensus that *WCLA* is a good and important book. They need only, that is, ask around in order to discover the positive, if often rather vague, regard in which scholars still hold it. They would also do well, however, to quiz those whom they ask about *WCLA* on what exactly they took away from it. For to return to it in these times, really to sit down and read it from cover to cover, proves in two respects a rather astonishing experience.

First, one encounters the work’s striking methodological aspect, what one might call its “social science.” This encounter leads one initially to wonder how the “area studies” crowd of a generation and two generations ago could ever share high regard for *WCLA*. To be sure, Race’s book offers a studiously fair-minded and detailed narrative treatment of the rural insurgency in the Republic of Vietnam. Its balance, its refreshing freedom from tendentious political point-scoring and cant of either left or right, would in itself win *WCLA* enduring approval and even respect among academic specialists on the region. In its narrative detail, it would win popularity for use in the classroom. But how many of the Southeast Asianists who own *WCLA*, who consider it canonical, and who assign at least sections of the book to their students have actually read it in its entirety, let alone given serious thought to its methodology? To encounter *WCLA*’s social science is to wonder about the answer to this question.

The second respect in which returning to *WCLA* proves rather astonishing lies in one’s realization of how vividly and even movingly it speaks to the historiography of post-1945 Southeast Asia. Ironically, it makes this latter contribution not least through its social science and the terminology that it employs to operationalize that social science.

The detailed circumstances of *WCLA*’s creation—the chapters in its fine-grain intellectual history, as it were—are the subject of the extended interview

with Jeffrey Race that accompanies this review essay.⁴ The broad scope of that interview leaves the review free to focus on a narrower set of concerns. These concerns are three: *WCLA*'s "social science"; the new chapter and forewords that appear in the expanded 2010 edition of the book; and *WCLA*'s relationship to the historiography of post-1945 Southeast Asia.

Two features of *WCLA* make it the "superb study" that it is: its closely argued narrative history of insurgency in the Mekong Delta and its social science. This review essay focuses above all on the latter feature of the book. For Southeast Asianists have shared a tendency to focus on, learn from, and value the book's former, narrative feature. The essay confronts the unfortunate consequences of this incomplete reading of *WCLA*, this neglect of its pioneering theoretical dimension.

Scholars of Southeast Asia and beyond have derived little understanding, in either empirical or methodological terms, from the so called "Scott-Popkin debate" over "peasant" rationality and the bases of collective action. Race's book, even in its original 1972 edition, transcends the methodological limitations of that debate. It offers a deft and compelling "rational choice" argument, one overlooked by Southeast Asianists whose first encounter with rational-choice scholarship came via the attention-grabbing and unsatisfying work of Samuel Popkin. Recognition of *WCLA*'s more compelling, and even more sophisticated, approach ought to lead scholars of Southeast Asian politics—and even, the review's conclusion argues, of Southeast Asian history—to reconsider their general hostility to individual-choice-centered approaches.

The Social Science of *War Comes to Long An*

Jeffrey Race served in Vietnam as an officer in the United States Army during 1965–1967. He spent half of his time "in country" as a communications technician at the headquarters of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), at Tân Sơn Nhứt Airbase, and half as a member of a district-level rural advisory team in Xuyên Mộc District of Phước Tuy Province. By late 1967, within months of returning to the United States and leaving active duty in the armed forces, he was back in South Vietnam to begin the research that led to the publication of *WCLA* five years later. In the original preface to his book, Race locates its origins in his realization, while serving as a US Army officer in rural Vietnam, that "my fellow officers and I frequently had to make decisions affecting people's lives with an insufficient

understanding both of actual conditions and of the nature of the conflict itself of which we were a part.”⁵ He offers up *WCLA* as the fruit of his personal, after-the-fact effort to improve understanding.

In its origins, then, *WCLA* bears uncanny similarity to a pair of indispensable later works of scholarship on Vietnam by Americans likewise impelled by the need better to understand the conflict in which they had taken part during their military service. In the preface to *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, David Marr roots his work in curiosity about the striking “ideological consensus” among the adversaries that he confronted as a military officer in Vietnam in the early 1960s.⁶ Keith Taylor’s military service in Vietnam dated to the end of the same decade. Nevertheless, he begins *The Birth of Vietnam* by noting his curiosity, not about the events of that decade, but rather about his opponents’ history. He recalls asking himself, “Where did these people come from?” and calls his book, “my answer to that question.”⁷

Like those of Marr and Taylor, Race’s book grew out of a determination formed during military service better to understand Vietnamese and their conflict, not Americans or America in Vietnam. Significantly, *WCLA* argues that the war in Long An had been won, or lost, by 1965, before the introduction of American forces into the province.⁸ In putting Vietnamese actors at the center of his understanding and of the story that he fashioned from that understanding, Race could draw, like Marr and Taylor, on a high level of linguistic proficiency. But Race did not seek training as an historian. He did not immerse himself in books from the 1920–1945 period in the holdings of France’s Bibliothèque Nationale, like Marr, or in Chinese and Vietnamese chronicles treating the first ten centuries AD of Vietnamese history, like Taylor. Instead, he returned directly to South Vietnam and focused his research on a single province.⁹ Race interviewed Vietnamese on both sides of the conflict of which he had been a part (albeit not in the province that he chose to study).¹⁰ He foraged for documents with immediate relevance to that conflict. Race made, that is, a series of choices that revealed a preference to seek understanding in recent events—rather than in more remote reaches of history—and in rural Vietnam, where his lack of understanding had become so disturbingly clear to him—rather than in the library. Viewed in retrospect, these choices come as no surprise. For Race was not yet 30 years old, and he did not face the disciplinary constraints of a doctoral

program or membership of an academic department. The surprise in all this lies, rather, in the enduring interest of the work of scholarship in which these choices resulted.

Or rather one of the surprises lies there. A second surprise is that the young Race developed so sophisticated a social-scientific apparatus through which to make clear to others what he himself had come to understand. For, despite telling himself that “my own prior academic training in political science was of virtually no use,” Race crafted a work of serious and in many respects innovative social science, a work that political scientist Tuong Vu credits with combining “formal modeling and interviewing.”¹¹

In making this characterization of *WCLA*, Tuong Vu might well reverse the order of his descriptors. As originally published in 1972, *WCLA* has six substantive chapters. The first three trace the progress of communist insurgency during 1954–1955, 1956–1959, and 1960–1965, respectively. These chapters offer a careful narrative of waning and then waxing communist fortunes; the carefulness of this narrative gives *WCLA* its denseness. The narrative draws on Race’s interviews, and it incorporates long, valuable quotations from his translations of captured communist documents. Rich and immediate—and thus magnificent for excerpting and use in the classroom—as these chapters are, what marks them above all is what Race terms “a certain selectivity of focus.”¹² They seek “to account for the communist success and the government failure in Long An . . . to show what provided this margin of superiority.”¹³ The chapters present a vivid record of Sài Gòn’s misapprehension of developments in Long An and of the communists’ emergence as the agents driving those developments.

At the time of their appearance and even today, these first three substantive chapters of *WCLA* would in their own right make for an excellent short monograph. But, not least as regards communist agency, these chapters have significance far greater than their empirical and narrative value. For they also lay the ground-work for *WCLA*’s most important section, the “analytic review” presented in Chapter 4, “Lessons from Long An.”¹⁴ That chapter builds its interpretation of the events and trends described in the preceding three chapters by means of what Tuong Vu has in mind when he refers to Race’s “formal modeling.” The present review labels this approach Race’s “social science.”

TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTS

In “Lessons from Long An,” the quotations from documents and interviews and the narrative of the preceding chapters of *WCLA* abruptly give way to the introduction of a range of abstract terms and to the explication of the conceptual framework that these terms define.¹⁵ Even after nearly forty years, Race’s explication proves fresh, elegant, and engaging. The most important of the terms introduced in the chapter include “reinforcement strategy” and “preemptive strategy,” “the assimilation of forces,” “the distribution of values,” and “contingent incentives.” The framework that relates these terms to one another conceptually is the social science of *WCLA*. At the heart of that social science one finds what lies in whole or part at the heart of all social science: a determination to stylize group and/or individual behavior—in this case, as we shall see, both—and the need, often ducked, convincingly to relate the two sorts of behavior.

Race tars the Sài Gòn government with pursuit of what he calls a reinforcement strategy in Long An. It opted only, he writes, “to consolidate and strengthen the existing distribution of values” rather than to build a broader base of support for itself.¹⁶ All of its policies and security measures thus amounted to “a reinforcement, and not a reordering, of the existing [social] system.”¹⁷ In contrast, Sài Gòn’s communist adversaries opted for “a strongly (though not purely) preemptive strategy.”¹⁸ They consciously broadened the base of support for their movement beyond that naturally, automatically, or initially won over by their “promised distribution of values.”¹⁹ To this end, they needed to “preempt just the minimum portion of the population necessary to gain victory . . .”²⁰

In practice, the communists’ strategy of preemption required framing and implementing a series of policies targeted at the broader base of support that they determined it necessary to win over in Long An, and indeed in rural South Vietnam generally. These policies included those relating to local recruitment, promotion of individuals without reference to formal educational attainments beyond the reach of most rural southerners, and programs “distinctly perceived as useful within the local community,” such as land redistribution and progressive taxation.²¹ Race conceptualized this raft of policies as the “assimilation of forces.”²² This approach contrasted markedly with that of the Sài Gòn government. It also, he argues in terms that will gratify even the

most demanding arm-chair tactician, enabled the communists to best government forces endowed with far superior material resources.²³

In introducing and explicating these concepts—preemptive strategy, the assimilation of forces—and in fashioning from them his abstracted, schematic, social-scientific account of communist victory in Long An, Race credits the Vietnamese Communist Party with a “social strategy.”²⁴ Indeed, it is in connection with that strategy that he first mentions the communists’ preemptive approach.²⁵ In writing of “social classes,” “preempted classes,” “target classes,” “the landless, poor, and middle peasants,” “rich peasants, and landlords,” Race roots his analysis in the existence of meaningful, even identifiable, categories within rural southern Vietnamese society.²⁶ He attributes to the members of these categories—these coherent aggregations of individual actors—an ability, a willingness, or at the very least a decision of some sort to come together in collective action. Race further observes that officials of the Sài Gòn government did not understand “the social content” of the acts committed against them, that they failed to see those acts as “consequences of the organization of society itself.”²⁷ The observation underlines what amounts to his implicit acceptance of such aggregations and of their role in making collective action possible.

While the historian may find such acceptance unremarkable, in Chapter 4 of *WCLA* Race leaves the well documented narrative of the book’s earlier chapters behind. In the terminology introduced in the chapter alone, he signals his aspiration to serious social-scientific analysis. Pulling sloppily defined or imprecisely specified categories of rural southern Vietnamese—categories on which analysis in turn depends—out of a black box would sit poorly with such an aspiration. How, then, does Race address the need to account for the collective action central to the “revolutionary movement,” whose victory in Long An he seeks to explain?²⁸ To what does he attribute the coherence of the categories within rural Vietnamese society, the aggregations of individual actors, on which his analysis appears to depend? What Race does not do, at least in Chapter 4 of *WCLA*, is present elaborate statistics on the province’s social structure, as indicated by income or land ownership, in an effort to divide its population into “classes.” Instead, he develops an approach grounded in the concepts of “values” and of “contingent incentives.”

Rather late in Chapter 4, Race writes that the “common characteristic” of the Vietnamese Communist Party’s policies in Long An—the same policies that underlay the assimilation of forces—“is that they offered *contingent incentives*.”²⁹ He defines a contingent incentive as one “contingent both on certain kinds of behavior by the target individual and on the continued existence of the sponsoring organization.”³⁰ The resultant “link of interdependence . . . is as strong as the individual’s desire for the reward offered, and as enduring as the contingency.” “Target classes” have now given way to “the target individual.” Individuals calculate the prospect of gain in the context of the likelihood that the circumstances making gain possible will continue to obtain. The communists may offer a farmer land, but he knows that his access to that land remains contingent on the continued success of the communists’ revolutionary movement. Further, that farmer recognizes his incentive to support the movement in order to contribute to the likelihood of such success.³¹

Far from satisfying himself with the ascription of agency to loosely specified aggregations of rural southern Vietnamese or even attempting some sort of satisfactory empirical specification of such aggregations, Race assigns agency to individual rural southern Vietnamese. Little wonder, then, that a footnote explains his derivation of the concept of contingent incentives from a related concept in the work of none other than Mancur Olson—arguably the pre-eminent early apostle of rational-choice approaches in political science.³² Tuong Vu’s reference to the formal modeling of *WCLA* is now rather clearer. The specific foundations of Jeffrey Race’s formalism and his modeling made him, that is, a “ratsi”—a scholar applying rational choice theory to the study of comparative politics—*avant la lettre*. It is an odd trait to discover in the author of a book that has enjoyed the enduring admiration of the “area studies” crowd.

And what of “values”? It is through reference to that latter concept that Race conceptualizes the aggregation of the individual choices among rural southern Vietnamese into collective support for the communists’ revolutionary movement. As we have seen, Race criticizes the Sài Gòn government for reinforcing the extant “distribution of values” in Long An. In contrast, he notes, “what attracted people to the revolutionary movement was that it represented a new society in which there would be an *individual* redistribution

of values.”³³ He notes that this peculiar term, “the distribution of values,” refers not only to “power and status,” but also to “material possessions,” to wealth, income, land.³⁴ In Race’s conceptualization, values and their distribution thus connect individual choice and preference to collective action in support of the revolutionary movement. In *WCLA*’s social science, values serve as Race’s answer to a question even more fundamental than how to understand the class structure of Long An society. For they offer a theory of how individual members of that society aggregate themselves into groups. Through its attention to values and their distribution, too, *WCLA* speaks to the historiography of modern Southeast Asia, or so the final section of this review argues.

The importance of Chapter 4 of *WCLA* is four-fold. First, its elegant and convincing theory-building, grounded in the empirical material presented in the three preceding chapters, represents a triumph of inductive scholarship. Second, the theory that Race builds in the chapter in turn powers his adroit critique of no fewer than nine “favorite explanation[s] or set[s] of explanations to account for the collapse of the government position in Long An” by 1965, as encountered during his interviews with officials of the Sài Gòn government.³⁵ Each of these same nine lines of explanation would later also feature in official public explanations of American strategy and tactics and in much early “Vietnam War revisionism.” Those of us whose own memories of Bob McNamara’s confident briefings pre-date “The Fog of War,” or who wonder whether “victory” would have been as simple a matter as Harry Summers, William Colby, and Lewis Sorley (to name but three) have contended, will find Race’s unimpeachable, nearly four-decade-old critique of each of these lines strikingly spot-on.³⁶ While such an exercise lies outside the scope of this review, it might prove instructive to line these nine explanations for South Vietnamese defeat in the countryside and Race’s critiques of them up against the arguments of the more recent “Vietnam War revisionist scholarship” associated with such scholars as Mark Moyar.³⁷

Third, the chapter presents a robust theory of the considerations and factors that account for rural Southeast Asians’ support for or participation in rebellion or revolution. Chapter 4 addresses many of the issues at stake, and treads the ground fought over, in the famous “moral economy-rational economy” or “Scott-Popkin debate.”³⁸ Yet James C. Scott’s *Moral Economy of*

the Peasant and Samuel Popkin's *Rational Peasant* appeared four and seven years, respectively, *after* Race's book.³⁹ To read *WCLA*'s Chapter 4 now is thus to wonder whether either of those books drew on *WCLA* and its theorizing. It is also to ask how retrospective attention to *WCLA* might inform our understanding of their debate. A fourth and final basis for the importance of the chapter is that it stimulates more general versions of these same questions. How ought we to understand Race's innovative work in the context of the history of American political science? What have political scientists made of that work? Have they used the social science developed and presented in *WCLA*'s fourth chapter? We now turn to these third and fourth aspects of the chapter's importance, in turn.

SCOTT AND POPKIN, BUT WHAT ABOUT RACE?

In 1979, seven years after the appearance of *WCLA*, Samuel Popkin (and, again, the University of California Press) published *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*.⁴⁰ From the opening lines of its preface, which refer to "romantic portraits of peasant life [that] are overdrawn and mislead us . . . [and] lead in turn to misguided programs," Popkin uses his book to attack what he calls "the moral economy approach" to understanding peasant life.⁴¹ While Popkin lists Eric Wolf, James C. Scott, and Joel Migdal as exemplars of this approach, he makes of Scott and Scott's ideas—not least as presented in the latter's well received, now classic, but then just three-year-old book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*—the principal targets of his critique.⁴² It is for this reason that the "debate" triggered by the appearance of *The Rational Peasant* came to be known as the "Scott-Popkin debate."

It is not the purpose of this review essay to revisit this controversy in exhaustive detail. In truth, and as the historian Edwin Moïse points out, the Scott-Popkin debate is not much of a debate at all.⁴³ In mischaracterizing the ideas that he claims to criticize, Popkin commits "serious errors."⁴⁴ Popkin suffers from confusion over what Scott and those whom he calls Scott's fellow "moral economists" actually mean when they use the term "moral."⁴⁵ His book is concerned, ultimately, with "different phenomena" from those that concern Scott.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Popkin's hand-waving had its effect. For no less prominent an anti-"area studies" rati than Robert Bates describes the Scott-Popkin

debate as the “bridge that connected rational choice theory to a wider audience.”⁴⁷ Bates may be correct in crediting Popkin with accelerating that approach’s entry into the mainstream of the field of comparative politics. At the same time, however, *The Rational Peasant* also helped engender Southeast Asianists’ lasting aversion to rational choice theory.

To be sure, dissatisfaction with Popkin’s book among Southeast Asianists has a number of sources. One is clearly political: Scott’s determination to understand and explain rural Southeast Asians’ recourse to armed rebellion could only resonate positively with scholars of the region in the immediate aftermath of America’s war in Vietnam. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* was read then and continues to be read as a book in great sympathy with rural Southeast Asian revolutionaries. The perception of Popkin’s lack of sympathy with Scott’s project would thus inevitably count against him.⁴⁸ A second source may lie in the shallow empirical foundations of *The Rational Peasant*. Even for scholarship pre-dating the growth of Vietnamese studies since 1990, the breeziness and superficiality of Popkin’s treatment of rural Catholic society in Vietnam, of the Cao Đài and Hòa Hảo, and of communist revolutionaries, inspire little confidence in his arguments.⁴⁹ Popkin’s uncompromisingly deductive approach to the study of Vietnamese society only deepens this lack of confidence.⁵⁰ Third is the matter of sensibility. Popkin makes it all too easy to conflate his determination to root his work in individual choice with another issue: what Moïse calls Popkin’s writing “as if there were no connection between economics and other aspects of human life.”⁵¹ We need to return to this point. For now, it suffices to say that this point complements the two preceding points in helping account for the side that scholars of the region overwhelmingly took in what was for them the non-contest between Scott and Popkin. Likewise, it helps account for Popkin’s role in giving individual-choice-centered approaches and the ratsis who practice them a bad name among a generation or two of serious Southeast Asianists.

Samuel Popkin and Jeffrey Race had significant contact both in Vietnam and in Cambridge, Massachusetts.⁵² *The Rational Peasant* includes *WCLA* in its bibliography.⁵³ It cites the book but once, however, on a narrow empirical matter relating to conditions in Long An at the conclusion of the First Indochina War.⁵⁴ The two books share overlapping concerns in both the theoretical and empirical realms: each takes a choice-centered approach, and Popkin

devotes an important section of *The Rational Peasant* to a discussion of communist success in rural central and southern Vietnam.⁵⁵ But *The Rational Peasant* neither addresses, criticizes, nor builds on the earlier *WCLA*. This is a terrible shame, for reasons big and small.

First, the small reason: had Popkin learned from and drawn on *WCLA*, *The Rational Peasant* would be a far better and more serious book. His stubborn “focus on individual decision making” and his unremitting insistence on “a unifying investment logic that can be applied to markets, villages, relations with agrarian elites, and collective action” leave Popkin unable to present a convincing theory of collective action, of the aggregation of the interests of individual rural Vietnamese.⁵⁶ In an effort to back out of this conceptual dead-end of his own making, in the last ten pages of his book Popkin rather abruptly pulls out of his hat—and out of the work of Norman Frohlich, Joe A. Oppenheimer, and Oran R. Young—the idea of the “political entrepreneur.” He uses this term to indicate the capable and credible “organizer” on whom a peasant focused on his personal costs and benefits can rely to “deliver.”⁵⁷ In Popkin’s desperate denial of collective interests, he opts, that is, for a great-man theory of collective action. He turns to this theory rather than to one that, to recall Moïse’s critique of *The Rational Peasant*, acknowledges the importance of “other aspects of human life” in addition to individuals’ economic concerns.

Or does he? To enjoy success in bringing rural Vietnamese together into a movement, Popkin’s great man must, it turns out, draw on “terms and symbols [that] his targets understand.”⁵⁸ He ought also to “utilize cultural themes,” “moral codes,” and “visions of the future” that appeal to the peasantry.⁵⁹ But these themes, codes, and visions figure merely as tools to induce individual “investments” in the movements that Popkin studies. For all their necessity, they remain incidental to his theorizing. For all their shared appeal, these themes, codes and visions are denied the significance of shared *values*. To accord them such significance would, after all, be to acknowledge bases for action that transcend the economic calculus of individual “investment” decisions. It would be to give *The Rational Peasant* some of the power of *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*—or for that matter of *WCLA*, with its deft conceptualization of distributions of values as the bridge between individuals and aggregations.

And then the big reason: Gerardo Munck notes that *The Rational Peasant* represents “one of the first widely discussed applications of rational choice theory to a question of concern to comparativists.”⁶⁰ The serious Southeast Asianist of the late 1970s and early 1980s needed only to read a few pages of Popkin’s book before unease would begin to set in. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that that unease lay in the serious Southeast Asianist’s early intimations of what James C. Scott calls the “universalistic, Leninist tendencies of some people who do rational choice.”⁶¹ Had Popkin’s book engaged, truly engaged, the earlier and less rigid, empirically sounder, and altogether more modest and less “universalistic” rational-choice scholarship of *WCLA*, how much sooner, more valuably, and less alarmingly this approach might contribute to the serious study of Southeast Asia.

NEGLECT, MISUNDERSTANDING, AND LACK OF VALIDATION

Samuel Popkin’s hand-waving critique of the work of James C. Scott and others, and his failure to engage, learn from, or build on Jeffrey Race’s *WCLA*, did lasting damage to prospects for earlier, more fruitful co-existence between ratsis and mainstream Southeast Asianists. But blame for the neglect of *WCLA*’s social science does not lie with *The Rational Peasant* and that failure alone. For that same neglect also characterized most of the reviews that followed *WCLA*’s publication in 1972.

It did not begin that way. Praising *WCLA* as “brilliantly conceived and brilliantly executed,” John McAlister both firmly situates the book in Vietnamese history and offers a lucid explanation of Race’s concept of values and the importance of their distribution or ordering. McAlister’s review appeared on the cover of the *Sunday New York Times Book Review*, no less.⁶² Its prominence notwithstanding, reviews of the book in academic journals do not follow McAlister’s example of noting both *WCLA*’s empirical value and its social science. Some early academic reviewers of the book allude to its sophistication and the resultant value of its insight into communist success. But even these men decline in their reviews to grapple with or explicate the book’s terminology and concepts.⁶³ Other scholarly reviewers focus overwhelmingly on Race’s detailed narrative of revolution in Long An, making occasional references to the implications of that narrative for American policy in Vietnam.⁶⁴

Only Frances Fitzgerald's treatment of *WCLA* in *The New York Review of Books* joins McAlister in scrutinizing Race's social science.⁶⁵ Fitzgerald hails the book as one from which there is "much to be learned." She contrasts it favorably with "all the garbage that has been written about Vietnam." And, in her most important nod to the analytical force of Race's book, she acknowledges in passing *WCLA*'s devastating exposure of Sài Gòn's and Washington's misapprehension of "security" in the Vietnamese countryside.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Fitzgerald accuses Race of rooting his concepts of preemptive and reinforcement strategies in his own obliviousness to the "interests" at stake on either side of the Vietnamese revolution. Unfortunately, Fitzgerald does not accord these concepts, as Race explains them in *WCLA*, the serious consideration that they deserve. Instead, she seems to ground her criticism of those concepts in a belief that "revolutionaries" need not develop strategies, that the presence of "the dispossessed" gives those revolutionaries the automatic "allegiance of the countryside."

More recently, and prior to the publication of the 2010 edition of *WCLA*, Race's social science did earn the attention of two of the contributors to the ambitious 2008 volume, *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region, and Quantitative Analysis*.⁶⁷ This book has as its purposes both to showcase "the wealth of political knowledge" in which the study of Southeast Asia has resulted, and to argue for the theoretical relevance of work on the region to the broader field of political science, at least as that field is now practiced in North America.⁶⁸ To an outsider to the field, the distinct formalism that marks that practice, not only in its most positivistic and quantitative ("large-N") or its most economics-envying rational-choice variants but also in its current theoretical mainstream, proves quite striking. That formalism certainly informs *Southeast Asia in Political Science*.

The sixty-page-long bibliography of *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, a "who's who" of scholars who have published on the politics of the region, includes two entries for Jeffrey Race: one for *WCLA* and the second for a 1974 book chapter, "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution."⁶⁹ As befit contributions to a book on political science qua political science, the chapters of *Southeast Asia in Political Science* that consider Race's work take the methodology of these two publications seriously.

The first of these contributions surveys the study of "contentious mass politics" in the Southeast Asian setting.⁷⁰ As noted above, its author Tuong

Vu has perhaps recognized *WCLA*'s success in combining empirical research and formal methods more clearly than any other scholar. All the same, his brief review of Race's argument neither explains nor assesses *WCLA*'s social science, the formal aspect of its approach.⁷¹ Rather, distinguishing between "peasant studies" and "political organization research" as "genres of analysis" in scholarship on contentious politics, Tuong Vu assigns both Race's book and his 1974 article to the latter genre.⁷² Placing the work of Scott and Popkin in the former, peasant-studies, genre, he treats their "opposing causal ontologies" in some detail.⁷³ The assignment of Race on the one hand and Scott and Popkin on the other to different genres of analysis makes good sense. The latter two scholars explicitly focus their work on peasant societies and on the nature of political agency within those societies, while Race pitches his book and his social science more broadly. Nevertheless, having assigned *WCLA* to a different pigeon-hole from Scott and Popkin, Tuong Vu does not address the possibility that its social science bridges the latter authors' opposing ontologies. Neither does he in fact note the potentially broader applicability of the social science of the 1972 edition of *WCLA*.⁷⁴

In contrast to Tuong Vu's chapter on contentious politics, Benedict Kerkvliet's chapter in *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, on agrarian politics, does not artificially wall *WCLA* off from the work of Scott and Popkin.⁷⁵ Too, the chapter calls particular attention to one of the most important of the book's concepts: that of reinforcement. Its explanation of that concept is, however, misleading.⁷⁶ Kerkvliet correctly apprehends Race's contention that attention to social issues—the matter, again, of values—has more fundamental importance than organizational achievement in explaining revolutionary success.⁷⁷ But Kerkvliet does not retrace *WCLA*'s social-scientific path to this conclusion. Indeed, he calls attention to the theoretical and generalizing ambitions of Race's 1974 "exchange theory" article rather than to *WCLA*.⁷⁸ And, inexplicably, he similarly hails Popkin and his *Rational Peasant* rather than Race and his book's crucial fourth chapter as numbering among "the first to study rebellion or revolution in Southeast Asia using in-depth methods that deliberately sought to contribute to theory."⁷⁹ Such, apparently, are the perils of opting for grounded, inductive methodology instead of showy but poorly argued deduction.

A third contribution to *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, Ardeth Maung Thawngmhumg's review of scholarship on "rural political economy," makes

no mention of *WCLA*.⁸⁰ This neglect comes in spite of the review's focus on illustrating the great "opportunities for using rural Southeast Asia as an empirical base to generate new theoretical and analytical concepts" and of Race's success in doing just that in *WCLA*.⁸¹ Like Tuong Vu, Ardeth Maung Thawngmung appears not to associate Race's book and its approach with the methodological issues over which James C. Scott and Samuel Popkin sparred. Her review commends these latter scholars for having "introduced innovative analytical concepts and addressed larger theoretical questions that can be applied beyond Southeast Asia, making them stand apart from the broad body of studies devoted to Southeast Asian rural economy."⁸² Of course, *WCLA* meets each of these criteria.

The treatment of *WCLA* in *Southeast Asia in Political Science* further underlines the curiousness of its position among works of scholarship on the region. Not only has the book enjoyed enduring regard even though one of its significant features (its compelling narrative of communist success in Long An) has overshadowed another (its innovative, choice-centered social science). But even methodologically attuned political scientists engaged in a concerted effort to identify the innovative contributions of work on Southeast Asia to their field have also slighted, misunderstood, and ignored that social science. We must try, at the very least, to account for this latter development. Three factors appear germane.

First is Race's genuinely inductive approach to the study of rural Southeast Asian society, which contrasts with the deductive approaches of Scott and Popkin. Race does not have as his primary goal the deployment of extant "theory" or of fundamental assumptions about the behavior of one subset of humanity—"peasants," for example—to explain his "case" or "cases." Race in fact understands the social-scientific analysis in Chapter 4 of *WCLA* as a matter of recognizing, naming, and explaining underlying patterns in human events as much as one of theory-building.⁸³

The structure of *WCLA* reflects the book's inductive approach. The book begins with its three detailed and convincing empirical chapters. Neither those largely narrative chapters nor any preceding introductory section of the book lays out the theoretical arguments advanced in the fourth chapter. This choice moves *WCLA*'s social science, its statement of "the puzzle" and proposed theoretical solution thereof, farther from the spotlight than the

conventions of North American political science have favored in recent generations. In marked contrast to *The Rational Peasant* or even *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, as well as to more recent mainstream work in the field of comparative politics as practiced in North America, *WCLA* fails to begin with a clearly indicated presentation of falsifiable, confirmable or “disconfirmable,” and parsimonious theory. The formalism of that field, certainly today and even for several decades now, means that, ideally, this introductory presentation of theory ought also “specify” its “variables” explicitly. *WCLA*’s deviation from these norms, with its author’s failure directly to signal his contribution to an ongoing theoretical debate in the field, may lead many habituated to such formalism not to regard it as “social science” at all. They may relegate it, rather, to the disdained category of “descriptive” scholarship in “area studies.”⁸⁴ But this view would bespeak a depressingly narrow, ahistorical, and frankly unsustainable view of what constitutes social science.

The second factor is timing. Unlike both *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* and *The Rational Peasant*, *WCLA* appeared while the United States remained at war in Indochina. The book thus spoke both to questions of policy that remained very raw and to issues in American politics and society that remained very emotional. That most reviewers of the book devoted little attention to its theoretical achievement proves therefore unsurprising. Further, in 1972 the very notion that social-scientific research on revolutionary warfare conducted in contemporary rural South Vietnam would result in work of lasting scholarly or intellectual value would have struck many as far-fetched. The reason for this likely reaction is no mystery. Indeed, *WCLA*’s original preface makes it clear. Calling the Vietnam conflict “the most ‘researched’ war” in American history, it notes the role of “the American government as the sole sponsor and consumer of the research,” the poor linguistic and academic preparation of most researchers working for that government, and the focus of their research on “trivial areas of study only marginally relevant to the basic issues of the conflict.”⁸⁵

The timing of *WCLA*’s original publication also helps account for the neglect of its social science, even among social scientists, in another way. In tracing the history of the field of comparative politics, as that field is practiced in the United States, Munck describes the era between the late 1960s and the late 1980s as “the post-behavioral period.”⁸⁶ It followed the break-down of the

long behavioralist consensus that made modernization theory the dominant approach in the field.⁸⁷ The period preceded the appropriation into the field of formal methods rooted—like those *WCLA*, as it happens—in economics, what Munck calls “the second scientific revolution.”⁸⁸ He sees this two-decade-long theoretical interregnum as a time of increased methodological diversity and diminished disciplinary coherence.⁸⁹ The era brought experiments that would have lasting influence, ranging from Scott’s *Moral Economy of the Peasant* to Samuel P. Huntington’s *Political Order in Changing Societies*.⁹⁰ And, like any “period of great fertility and creativity,” it also included experiments destined, for all their promise, to have less influence.⁹¹ This latter outcome might be due to these experiments’ being lost in the shuffle of proliferating approaches, to their addressing a matter of political interest so great that it distracted from methodological innovation, or to their simply being ahead of their time. Each of these factors applies to *WCLA*.

A third factor germane to any effort to account for the relative neglect of *WCLA*’s social science proves simpler: the book was not seen as a contribution to “peasant studies.” Race does not entirely avoid describing rural southern Vietnamese as members of a peasantry.⁹² But his narrative of insurgency and failed counterinsurgency, like his analysis of revolutionary victory, would gain nothing from fixating on or seeking to explore the nature of peasant society for its own sake. He does not indulge in such a fixation or exploration, at least not explicitly. The empirical focus of *WCLA* and its social science might give it direct relevance to other exciting and important work on collective action in rural Southeast Asia, work explicitly about “peasants.” Yet, long before Tuong Vu’s contribution to *Southeast Asia in Political Science* assigned the book to another genre of scholarship, earlier rounds of such pigeon-holing seem to have excluded Race’s social science from that body of work.

Broad neglect of *WCLA*’s social science among political scientists means that it has enjoyed none of validation, “testing,” or confirmation that characterize good social science. The absence of formal statements of testable propositions in Chapter 4 of *WCLA* notwithstanding, it certainly contains a number of such propositions. Yet no political scientist seems to have sought to falsify them, to confirm or “disconfirm” them with a rigor corresponding to that of the chapter. Even among narrowly focused, data-rich studies of

communist victory in the Mekong Delta, studies that cite *WCLA* and agree with some or all of its conclusions, one also finds a failure to submit the theoretical basis of those conclusions to testing. Eric Bergerud's book on Hậu Nghĩa Province—itself in fact created in 1963 from territory stripped away from Long An and two other provinces—epitomizes this failure.⁹³ The focus of this book is military. *WCLA*'s uncompromising case against the usefulness of such a focus notwithstanding, that focus nonetheless helps explain Bergerud's decision neither to test Race's theorizing against his own data on Hậu Nghĩa nor to draw on *WCLA*'s social science in seeking to understand those data.

It is far harder to offer such an explanation for similar failures in David Elliott's more recent, monumental, *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930–1975*.⁹⁴ As its title indicates, the relationship of revolution and social change lie at the center of this work's concerns. While Elliott's bibliography lists *WCLA*, neither volume of his fifteen-hundred-page study of a province lying directly to the southwest of Long An includes sustained discussion of the book or application of its approach to understanding the social bases of revolutionary collective action in the Mekong Delta. From its introduction onward, in marked contrast, *The Vietnamese War* would draw on the theories of James C. Scott and Samuel Popkin in interpreting its data.⁹⁵ In practice, Elliott's references to these scholars' ideas serve as little more than rather casual, even trivial, short-hand for the primacy of collective or individual interests at certain junctures in his story.⁹⁶ Use of that short-hand may serve Elliott's presentation of a central theme of his work, relating to the changing nature of community and the broadening social horizons of the people of rural Mỹ Tho/Định Tường Province in the quarter-century after 1950. But it is impossible to find in *The Vietnamese War* either serious testing or rigorous application of "moral economy" and "rational economy" perspectives. The work's empirical heft, the sheer mass of detail that distinguishes it, would make it well suited for each of these purposes. It would be equally well suited to validation of the social science of *WCLA*'s Chapter 4, to testing that social science against another "case." Elliott contends that, as his account of the Vietnamese revolution nears its end, Popkinian perspectives have increasing explanatory power.⁹⁷ One is left, alas, to wonder what application of Race's choice-oriented

approach, so much sounder than Popkin's, might teach Elliott and his readers about the course of revolution and accompanying social change in Mỹ Tho/Định Tường.

War Comes to Long An, 2010: A New Chapter, Two New Forewords

The 2010 edition of *WCLA* includes a new chapter, Chapter 7, entitled "Revolutionary Dynamics and Starting Mechanisms."⁹⁸ The chapter presents analysis that, along with the contents of the 1972 edition of *WCLA*, comprised Race's 1973 doctoral dissertation.⁹⁹ Much of the content of this additional chapter of *WCLA* also appears in "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution," which Race contributed to an edited volume published in 1974.¹⁰⁰ While it cites no material published later than that same year, the chapter draws on a much wider range of scholarship on organizational theory, in the social sciences, and on Vietnam than do the chapters in the original edition of the book. In its theorizing, its social science, this chapter departs even further from the empirically grounded narrative of the book's first three chapters than does Chapter 4 of *WCLA*. The rigor and theoretical insight of the new chapter notwithstanding, then, it is not hard to imagine for it a future of the same neglect among students of Vietnam and Southeast Asia as that earlier chapter has suffered. Such an outcome would be unfortunate.

The purpose of *WCLA*'s new chapter is to deepen and solidify the book's analysis of the aggregation of individual interests in a revolutionary context. It focuses on, and indeed takes a particular interest in the nature and potential of, the "emergent structures" to which this process of aggregation gives rise.¹⁰¹ The chapter uses as its point of departure a rather arresting question that it attributes to Huntington. How, that is, can one "make power," or, in Race's own formulation, "create influence relationships where none existed before and with few or no material resources?"¹⁰² To answer this question, Race turns to "exchange theory."¹⁰³ Emergent structures, such as revolutionary movements, supplant exchanges among individuals in dyadic relationships with exchanges in "authority relationships." These latter relationships convey rewards to aggregations of individuals, rewards comprised of both material benefits and of a new scheme of—once again—values.¹⁰⁴ And, unlike in the pages of the 1972 edition of *WCLA*, Race now offers an explicit definition

of values: “the body of pre-rational beliefs about proper behavior that limit permissible maximizing behavior . . . Particularly in regard to politics, this category subsumes ideology, or the goal- and means-defining part of the belief structure.”¹⁰⁵ Race here reaffirms the rational-choice foundations of his scholarship on Vietnam: individual members of his emergent structures remain rational maximizers. But, they conceive of benefits as deriving from policies framed by the superiors within those structures, policies informed by what Race calls values.

In many respects, this analysis, the underlying social science of the new chapter of *WCLA*, appears straightforward and even self-evident. Nevertheless, three of its implications or features make its significance clear.

First, the analysis in this new chapter does in fact considerably deepen and make more convincing the approach to the aggregation of rational actors into a base of support for the communists in Long An that Race develops in the 1972 edition of the book.¹⁰⁶ Not least, it puts the operation of “contingent incentives” into a considerably more systematic framework.

Second, in dialogue with Huntington and certain sections of *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Race builds on this analysis to present a theoretically grounded interpretation of the political economy of South Vietnam during the presidency of Ngô Đình Diệm. He argues that, “obsessed with autonomy,” Ngô Đình Diệm eschewed exchanges even as his communist rivals built structures intended continually to “expand the volume of exchanges.” His regime ended up as a result with organizations amounting to little but “hollow shells” and without a constituency of support among upwardly mobile groups in the rural society of southern Vietnam.¹⁰⁷ Like the rest of *WCLA*’s social science, this contention awaits verification and testing. But it offers a sophisticated interpretive starting point for empirical work on the history and political economy of the Republic of Vietnam.

Third, in its attention to a wider range of scholarship on Vietnam and Southeast Asia, this new chapter of *WCLA* explicitly situates the emergence of the structures of collective action, indeed of revolution, treated in earlier chapters of the book in the longer sweep of history. Drawing not least on the work of Robert Sansom, but also citing Scott’s pre-*Moral Economy* work on patron-client relations in Southeast Asia, Race understands that the new exchange relationships and new aggregations about which he writes arose

when they did for particular reasons.¹⁰⁸ They filled, that is, a vacuum left by the erosion of earlier patterns of relations, above all between landlords and tenants, in rural Vietnamese society.¹⁰⁹ In this understanding, in his use of Scott's work, Race places himself and *WCLA* firmly in a tradition stretching back to John A. Larkin's path-breaking scholarship on Pampanga Province in the Philippines, and through Larkin to the ideas of John Sydenham Furnivall.¹¹⁰ Nothing confirms that lineage, and with it *WCLA*'s Furnivallian aspect, so clearly as Race's attribution of the development of "social bonds" and of "stronger integrative bonds" to the structures for "making power," the emergence of which this new chapter theorizes.¹¹¹

The concluding section of this review essay considers this Furnivallian aspect of *WCLA* in more detail. The point to be made here is that awareness of *WCLA*'s place in this longer lineage in the study of Southeast Asia has a knock-on effect of singular importance. It permits Southeast Asianists to transcend the noise of the Scott-Popkin debate and to consider the possibility that the weaknesses of *The Rational Peasant* were its own, rather than those inherent in its choice-centered approach.¹¹²

In addition to this important additional chapter, the expanded version of *WCLA* also contains a pair of new forewords. Each serves the book poorly. Neither addresses the social science of the 1972 or the 2010 version of the book in any way. While Robert Brigham's foreword offers an intelligent and eloquent summary of the narrative chapters of *WCLA*, it is in the end only a summary. Jeffrey Record contributes a *Fire-in-the-Lake*-style rehash of clichés emanating from poorly informed American debates over war in Indochina.¹¹³ His foreword misapprehends some of Race's fundamental arguments about the reasons for communist victory in Long An. Its reference to Iraq fails to engage in any serious way with the implications of *WCLA* for the American military's recently renewed interest in counterinsurgency—the "CI" of yesterday, re-branded as the "COIN" of today.¹¹⁴ *WCLA* deserves better.

War Comes to Long An as Southeast Asian History

By 1965, as far as Jeffrey Race was concerned, the contest for Long An had effectively been decided. The final two substantive chapters in the 1972 edition of *WCLA* relegate the "American war" in the province through 1970 to wasteful and sad irrelevance to the outcome of the Vietnamese conflict, even

as they confirm the analysis developed in earlier chapters of the book. That edition of the book ends with two appendices; one of these provides some statistics, while the other offers “a graphic presentation of concepts” and even includes equations. These chapters and appendices are reproduced in facsimile in the 2010 edition of *WCLA*.

In its conclusions, its tone, and its terminology, *WCLA* is a studiously, perhaps even preciously, modest book. The first paragraph of its original preface famously notes:

The reader will find few evil or incompetent characters in this book, but rather an account of how . . . a revolutionary movement was able to gain victory despite the efforts of a considerable number of honest and conscientious men, acting according to their best understanding.¹¹⁵

Tuong Vu cites this passage to highlight Race’s exceptional status among social-movement scholars in his lack of overt sympathy for the movement about which he writes.¹¹⁶ But is Race really so neutral, or is his frame of reference simply broader than those of the political scientists to whom Tuong Vu would compare him? By the final paragraph of the 1972 edition of *WCLA*, after all, Race allows himself to reveal his sympathies rather clearly:

Long An is not a poor province; the soil could provide a bounteous life for all. But man is moved by the need for spiritual values: a sense of power over his own destiny, a sense of respect from his fellow man . . . A decade and a half of killing and destruction in Long An provides evidence of the superhuman sacrifices which some men, deprived of these values, will endure to redress their deprivation; yet it also provides a melancholy example of the lengths other men will go, already abundantly enjoying these values, to perpetuate their privilege.¹¹⁷

This closing reference to “other men,” to the officials of the hapless Sài Gòn government and the stubborn landed elites of the Mekong Delta, exemplifies *WCLA*’s persistent tone of studied modesty. This tone betrays none of the outrage and little of the self-righteousness typical of so much critical American writing on Vietnam by the early 1970s.¹¹⁸ But central to this in-itself-melancholy closing paragraph is that curious term that also lies at the center of *WCLA*’s social science: “values.”

In the centrality that they assign to values, are *WCLA* and its social science so modest after all? Regarded as a contribution to the historiography of modern

Southeast Asia, to understandings of the region's post-1945 history, *WCLA* hardly appears modest. To view the book, nearly four decades after its original publication, as such a contribution is to see in a new light John Lewallen's memorable accusation against Race, made in an early review of the book. Race, he charges, misses a point that "emerges" from *WCLA*: "that, in order to win, the [Sài Gòn] government would have had to become the revolution."¹¹⁹ But does this point "emerge" from *WCLA*, or does the book's author embed the point in his work, under cover of his social science and his focus on "values"?

The clearest answer to this question, and to Lewallen's charge, appears in the final chapter of the original edition of *WCLA*. In discussing the land reform legislation adopted by the government of General Nguyễn Văn Thiệu in March 1970, Race writes:

The program was widely propagandized as a "revolutionary" step, and had it been carried out in 1945, it certainly would have been. In the context of 1970, however, it was hardly revolutionary and in fact little more than the Saigon government's stamp of approval on a land redistribution already carried out by the Party—in many cases a quarter of a century before.¹²⁰

Vietnamese who had "abundantly enjoyed" a certain distribution of values had, that is, at the end of the colonial era in Southeast Asia also enjoyed the opportunity to effect a meaningful redistribution of values in their society. By 1970 and indeed long before that date, however, Race seems to consider it too late. New structures—the new "social bonds" and "stronger integrative bonds" mentioned in Chapter 7 of the 2010 edition of *WCLA*—had developed to meet the need for what Furnivall calls the "reintegration of society on new basis" in post-1945 Southeast Asia.¹²¹

As Furnivall considers the impact of the great changes of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth—in the first instance on Burma but more generally on Southeast Asia as a whole and on the "tropical dependencies" of other colonized regions of the world—he focuses his greatest concern on the issue of "social disintegration" or "atomization."¹²² The result of the operation of colonial states and colonial economies, this process destroys the traditional bonds that have held societies together; it leaves societies devoid of "social will."¹²³ In their attention both to the erosion of landlord-tenant relations and to the complementary role of the colonial state in abetting social disintegration, James C. Scott and

John Larkin work very much in this Furnivallian tradition. Similarly, in their focus on agrarian unrest in colonial Vietnam and Burma and in the Philippines' Pampanga Province, respectively, each of these scholars would highlight the consequences of this variant of atomization.¹²⁴

Jeffrey Race's classic work contributes to this Furnivallian legacy in a different way. For, having diagnosed atomization as the ailment of colonized societies, Furnivall places his hope for the post-independence era in South-east Asia in the "reintegration" of these societies. Central to this process is the achievement of "a common social will."¹²⁵

In its attention to the redistribution of values in line with at least a considerable segment of social will, and to the integrating role of "emergent structures," *WCLA* is, one comes at last to see, in its essence a brilliant treatment of an episode in that regional story of reintegration.

At the same time, a considerable segment of social will—just that segment that the communists' preemptive strategy was in fact designed to attract—is not quite the same thing as the common social will across the entirety of a reintegrated society that Furnivall envisages with such hope. The cover of the new edition of *WCLA* remains red, but it now displays a different photograph: one that shows a South Vietnamese soldier (from a unit under CIA control) leaning over a bound communist guerilla in his captivity. This same picture appears in the photographs section of the 1972 edition of book, where its caption reads, "Protagonists of two social orders meet on the battlefield."¹²⁶ Two unintegrated social orders, that is.

In the decades preceding the Pacific War, political and social dimensions of Southeast Asian anti-colonialism appeared to go hand in hand. Not only would independence from Western domination restore Southeast Asians' control over the states in which they lived, but it also promised to undo the economic inequities of the colonial era and the colonial order. In much of the region, however, the first few decades after 1945 brought the eclipse of this vision of the region.¹²⁷ One after another, Southeast Asian polities came increasingly under the domination of social groups and organizational formations with roots in the colonial era. Among post-independence Southeast Asian polities and societies, scholars have perhaps the least understanding of the Republic of Vietnam. Nevertheless, by end of 1963, the onset of military rule that would last until its defeat in April 1975 made clear that that polity

and society conformed to this broader Southeast Asian pattern. It is a pattern that Race describes when he writes of a “social system which, among other things, defines and maintains a particular distribution of values.”¹²⁸ And, at least in Long An Province, redistribution of those values demanded an attack on “a particular form of social organization.”¹²⁹

Without slighting the careful narrative of the first three chapters of *WCLA*, one must recognize that the work’s success in bringing clarity to its analysis of that attack owes much to its long neglected social science, to Jeffrey Race the *ratsi*. This was true of the original 1972 edition of the book. It is even truer of the new edition; the additional chapter makes more robust both *WCLA*’s social science *and* its history.

Insistence on the historiographical value of Race’s book has, in turn, implications of its own. *WCLA* presents an account of communist success, but it roots that account in the social dynamics of the 1950s and 1960s rather than in more distant historical, cultural, and intellectual developments. It thus avoids reinforcing the sense of inevitability that characterizes the Vietnamese Communist Party’s still influential interpretations of the country’s history. Or as Milton Osborne wrote, in his joint, appreciative review of David Marr’s *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925* and Jeffrey Race’s *War Comes to Long An*: “Mr Race’s book is salutary since it makes us remember that the revolutionaries who ‘won’ in Long-An did not couch their appeals in terms of the *Can-Vuong* (Royalist) movement of the 1880s nor make reference to Phan Bội Châu and Phan Chu Trinh.”¹³⁰ Not bad, for a work of rational-choice scholarship. ■

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ABSTRACT

First published in 1972, Jeffrey Race's *War Comes to Long An* has never gone out of print. It has now been republished in an updated and expanded edition. While highly regarded among Southeast Asianists as a classic account of communist success in winning control of a strategic province in the Mekong Delta from the government of the Republic of Vietnam, *War Comes to Long An* is also a work of innovative social science. Attention to the book's long ignored social science and to the rational-choice foundations of its analysis opens up new perspectives on the "Scott-Popkin debate." It suggests the need for reconsideration of the value of rational-choice approaches to the study not only of Southeast Asian politics but also of the modern history of the region, to which *War Comes to Long An* speaks in previously overlooked ways.

KEYWORDS: Jeffrey Race, Long An Province, rational-choice theory, Southeast Asian Studies, distributions of values, John Sydenham Furnivall

Notes

1. Edwin E. Moise, "Vietnam War Bibliography," <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/history/facultypages/EdMoise/bibliography.html>; quotation appears at <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/history/facultypages/EdMoise/54-64.html> (accessed December 12, 2010).
2. The 2010 edition reproduces the original 1972 edition, also published by the University of California Press, in facsimile. It includes an additional chapter and a pair of new forewords. Unless otherwise noted, the citations to the book that follow are to passages that appear on the same pages in both the 1972 and 2010 editions of *War Comes to Long An*. See Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1972] 2010).
3. See, for example, Jeffrey Race, "Mutual Self-Limitation in Civil War: The Case of Vietnam," *Southeast Asia: An International Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 211–232; "Thailand 1973: We Certainly Have Been Ravaged by Something," *Asian Survey* 14, no. 2 (February 1974): 193–203; "The War in Northern Thailand," *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 1 (1974): 86–112; "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution," in *Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia*, ed. John Wilson Lewis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 169–204; "Thailand in 1974: A New Constitution," *Asian Survey* 15, no. 2 (February 1975): 157–165; "Vietnam Intervention: Systematic Distortion in Policy-Making," *Armed Forces and Society* 2, no. 3 (May 1976): 377–396; "The Unlearned Lessons of Vietnam," *The Yale Review* 66, no. 2 (December 1976): 161–177; "The Future of

- Thailand,” *Pacific Community: An Asian Quarterly Review* 8, no. 2 (January 1977): 303–326; “Whither the Philippines?” *Prisma: Indonesian Journal of Social and Economic Affairs* 5 (March 1977): 30–42; and “The Third Indochina War,” *Foreign Policy* 38 (Spring 1980): 92–116, co-authored with William S. Turley. Many of these articles and chapters are available at http://pws.prserv.net/studies/publ_01.htm, “Publications of Jeffrey Race.”
4. A rather briefer treatment of the same matters appears in Jeffrey Race, “War Comes to Long An: Back Story to the Writing of a Military Classic,” *Small Wars Journal* blog, March 1, 2010, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/340-race.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2010); also accessible via http://pws.prserv.net/studies/publ_01.htm.
 5. Race, *WCLA*, ix.
 6. David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), vii.
 7. Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), xv.
 8. Race, *WCLA*, 15.
 9. Race’s book was by no means the only or even the earliest example of American scholarship on wartime Long An. During 1958–1959, a research team operating under the auspices of Michigan State University’s Vietnam Advisory Group made the Long An village of Khánh Hậu the object of its intensive study. See Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Window on a War: An Anthropologist in the Vietnam Conflict* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002), 75 ff. This is not the place to reflect on parallels between this MSU project on Khánh Hậu and the “Modjokuto project” undertaken earlier in the same decade under the auspice of MIT’s Center for International Studies with Ford Foundation funding. But, like that better known research effort in Central Java, the MSU project deployed a team of researchers to study different aspects of a small community in a Southeast Asian setting of interest and concern to the United States, resulted in several important monographs, and helped launch the career of an able and prolific anthropologist associated with it. Just as Clifford Geertz would become best known for work unconcerned with small-town Central Java, so of course Gerald Hickey’s principal scholarly focus would move away from the lowland villages of the Mekong Delta. In their discussion of the work of members of the Cornell Thailand Project under the leadership of Lauriston Sharp and Lucien Hanks on a Chao Phraya Delta village starting in the late 1940s and of the somewhat later Modjokuto project on Java, Victor T. King and William D. Wilder make passing reference to this research on Khánh Hậu. See Victor T. King and William D. Wilder, *The Modern Anthropology of South-East Asia: An Introduction* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 78. Among the results of this early MSU-sponsored work in Long An were what remain

perhaps the two best known English-language village-level ethnographies of pre-1975 lowland southern Vietnam. See Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Village in Vietnam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); and James B. Hendry, *The Small World of Khanh Hau* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1964). More recently, Natalie Hicks completed a dissertation on the province in the Đổi Mới era under the supervision of Benedict Kerkvliet. See Natalie Hicks, “Organisational Adventures in District Government: Central Control Versus Local Initiative in Long An Province, Vietnam” (doctoral dissertation, The Australian National University, 2005). The author thanks Jacob Ramsay for calling this dissertation to his attention. More readily accessible is Natalie Hicks, “The Facilitators of Rural Transformation and Development: The Role of Agricultural Extension Officers in Two Districts of Long An Province,” in *Beyond Hanoi: Local Government in Vietnam*, eds. Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet and David G. Marr (Copenhagen and Singapore: NIAS Press and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), 229–258.

10. The interview accompanying this review makes clear how important conversations with “enemy” prisoners during Race’s service in Phước Tuy proved in convincing him to embark on the quest for understanding that resulted in *WCLA*. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, viii, notes that his resolve “not to get involved in interviewing prisoners” helped him decide to seek understanding through historical scholarship. Marr’s position contrasts not only with that of Race but also with that of David Elliott, the relevance of whose work to our understanding of *WCLA* is discussed below.
11. Race, *WCLA*, 9; and Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia: Knowledge Accumulation and Cycles of Growth and Exhaustion,” in *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region, and Quantitative Analysis*, eds. Erik Martinez Kuhonta, Dan Slater, and Tuong Vu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 102–128 (108 and 343n18).
12. Race, *WCLA*, xv.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, vii, and 141–209. This chapter originally appeared as Jeffrey Race, “How They Won,” *Asian Survey* 10, no. 8, Special Issue on “Vietnam: Politics, Land Reform and Development in the Countryside” (August 1970): 628–650.
15. See the interview with Jeffrey Race that accompanies this review essay for a discussion of the development of these terms and concepts.
16. Race, *WCLA*, 155.
17. *Ibid.*, 155.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, 177.

22. *Ibid.*, 177 ff.
23. See *ibid.*, 178–179.
24. *Ibid.*, 149–150
25. *Ibid.*, 150.
26. All these terms appear on *ibid.*, 150.
27. *Ibid.*, 152.
28. On Race's decision to use this term, see *ibid.*, xvii–xix.
29. *Ibid.*, 173; italics in original.
30. *Ibid.*, 174.
31. For Race's understanding of the relationship between coercion, or "terror," and the more important "personal incentives" in the communists' approach to making revolution, see *ibid.*, 188–189.
32. Race, *WCLA*, 175n18. See Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), and its concept of "selective incentives." Another footnote in *WCLA*—p. 143, note 3—suggests the roots of Race's thinking about incentives operating at the level of the individual in Chester I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).
33. Race, *WCLA*, 176; italics in original.
34. *Ibid.* For the chapter's discussion of communist policies to effect redistribution of power, status, wealth, and income, see Race, *WCLA*, 165–171. The discussion of policies relating to land is particularly worthy of attention.
35. See *ibid.*, 193–208, and 193.
36. See *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons From the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (2003), DVD, directed by Errol Morris (USA: Sony Classics, 2004); Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1982); William E. Colby, *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989); and Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999). In fact, *WCLA*'s long fifth chapter, "Ignoring the Lessons: The American War in Long An," draws on the conclusions reached in Chapter 4 to criticize the very same Hamlet Evaluation System to which the latter two authors attach so much importance. See Race, *WCLA*, 214–216, 223, and 260–262.
37. Moyer signals his disagreement with the analysis of communist success advanced in *WCLA* on page 160 of Mark Moyer, "Section II Response," in *Triumph Revisited: Historians Battle for the Vietnam War*, eds. Andrew Wiest and Michael Doidge (New York: Routledge, 2010), 140–168. Disregarding the social-scientific framework through which Race structures his argument, Moyer distorts that argument to one about the quality of communist "leadership." He then ignores the rational-choice foundation of Race's analysis by

- writing that Race attributes “concern about the whole society’s welfare” to the communists’ appeal, and takes issue with a version of that analysis that any careful reader of *WCLA* will find unrecognizable.
38. For one treatment of this debate, see Edwin E. Moïse, “Review Essay: The Moral Economy Dispute,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 1 (January–March 1982): 72–77.
 39. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).
 40. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*.
 41. *Ibid.*, ix.
 42. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*. See Moïse, “The Moral Economy Dispute,” 72, and especially note 4.
 43. Indeed, James C. Scott has called it “a colossal waste of time.” See Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 361. This volume collects extended interviews with fifteen important figures in the field, including those with James C. Scott and Robert Bates cited here and below.
 44. Moïse, “The Moral Economy Dispute,” 72 and 75.
 45. See Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 2; and Moïse, “The Moral Economy Dispute,” 74. For Scott’s rather measured observations on Popkin’s confusion, or distortion, see Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method*, 360.
 46. Moïse, “The Moral Economy Dispute,” 76.
 47. Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method*, 548.
 48. In the early 1980s, Popkin himself complained that his analysis of rural Vietnam had led to his unpopularity among colleagues in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the late 1960s, long before the publication of *The Rational Peasant*. See Fox Butterfield, “A New Generation Decries Scholarly Arrogance,” *The New York Times Magazine*, February 13, 1983, 28 ff. Likewise, in the preface to the book that he published directly after *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, Scott acknowledges the role of American involvement in Indochina and of “a now fading left-wing, academic romance with wars of national liberation” in stimulating his and other scholars’ sometime focus on the narrow sliver of peasant history accounted for by rebellions. See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xv. In his attention to a broader slice of peasant life, Popkin was thus, in a certain sense, ahead of his time in the field of “peasant studies.”
 49. See Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 184–242.
 50. Of course, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* is also a work of deductive scholarship, in marked contrast to *WCLA*, as noted and discussed below.

51. Moïse, "The Moral Economy Dispute," 75.
52. See the interview with Jeffrey Race that accompanies this review.
53. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 281. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, has no bibliography; it cites neither *WCLA* nor any of Race's other work.
54. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 237n109.
55. In fact, Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 253 ff., even grapples with and expands upon the very same concept of Mancur Olson's, that of "selective incentives," that Race modifies into his own concept of "contingent incentives." See note 32. above. But *The Rational Peasant* makes no mention whatsoever of Race's earlier, fruitful engagement with the concept. See Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 213–242.
56. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 17 and 244; italics in original.
57. *Ibid.*, 259.
58. *Ibid.*, 260.
59. *Ibid.*, 261–262.
60. Rather, that is, than to questions of concern to scholars in the field of American politics. See Gerardo L. Munck, "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics," in Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft and Method*, 32–62 (54n53).
61. Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft and Method*, 387. Elsewhere in the same interview, Scott remarks that the "whole argument [of *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*] could have been done in a completely rational choice format." See Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft and Method*, 360. A glance at "Table 1. Distribution of Risk in Tenancy Systems" on page 45 of *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* gives credibility to this remark.
62. John T. McAlister, Jr., review of *WCLA*, *The New York Times Book Review*, May 14, 1972. Without emphasizing it as much as does McAlister, a lengthy recent review of the 2010 edition of *WCLA* also makes explicit positive reference to some features of Race's approach. See Jason Johnson, "Book Review: Deep into the Roots of War," *Asia Times Online*, October 23, 2010, available at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/LJ23Ae01.html (accessed December 12, 2010).
63. See Milton Osborne, "Anti-Colonialism and War in Vietnam," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 4 (October 1973): 747–758, which reviews *WCLA* alongside David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); and Melvin Gurtov in *The American Political Science Review* 67, no. 4 (December 1973): 1418–1419.
64. See Dennis J. Duncanson in *International Affairs* 48, no. 3 (July 1972): 529–530; Allen E. Goodman, review of Jeffrey Race, *WCLA* and F. J. West, Jr., *The Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), *Pacific Affairs* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 1972): 469–470; John Lewallen, review of *WCLA* and Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism*, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 405

- (January 1973): 180–181; and John A. Hardway in *Military Affairs* 38, no. 4 (December 1974): 164.
65. Frances Fitzgerald, “The Invisible Country,” *The New York Review of Books* 19, no. 6 (October 19, 1972), reviews *WCLA* alongside Paul Mus, *Hô Chi Minh, le Viêtnam, l’Asie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1971), and Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism*.
 66. See Race, *WCLA*, 146–148 and 193–196.
 67. Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*. The contributions in question are Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia,” 102–128; and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, “In-Depth Research and Knowledge Accumulation about Agrarian Politics in Southeast Asia,” 129–143.
 68. Erik Martinez Kuhonta, Dan Slater, and Tuong Vu, “Introduction: The Contributions of Southeast Asian Political Studies,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 1–29 (2).
 69. Race, “Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution.”
 70. Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*.
 71. *Ibid.*, 124–125.
 72. *Ibid.*, 103. Here Tuong Vu sketches out the typical concerns of work in each of these genres and, on pages 122–123, summarizes the principal features of these two genres and three others in tabular format. See also Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 104. There is unfortunate irony in this assignment. For both Race, *WCLA*, 165, and Race, “Vietnam Intervention,” 390, underline Race’s insistence that *values* and policies affecting their distribution were of far more fundamental importance in his analysis than communist organizational achievements. In the period during which Race was writing, the influential stress of scholars such as Douglas Pike and Charles Joiner on the superiority of communist organization per se gave this distinction, and the sharp manner in which Race draws it, a significance that may seem curious today.
 73. Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 104–105 and 109.
 74. Indeed, *ibid.*, 112, explicitly credits Race, “Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution,” but not *WCLA* with proposing a systematic “general theory of revolution” (and also with subjecting that theory to cross-case comparison; see note 100, below).
 75. Kerkvliet, “In-Depth Research and Knowledge Accumulation about Agrarian Politics in Southeast Asia,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*.
 76. *Ibid.*, 134–135.
 77. *Ibid.*, 136; also see note 72 above.
 78. *Ibid.*, 137 and 347n26.
 79. *Ibid.*, 137–138.

80. Ardeth Maung Thawngmung, "The Missing Countryside: The Price of Ignoring Rural Political Economy in Southeast Asia," in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 252–273.
81. *Ibid.*, 271.
82. *Ibid.*, 256.
83. See Race's discussion of his "gift" for recognizing such patterns or structures in events in the interview that accompanies this essay.
84. The author thanks Tuong Vu for prodding him to think about these issues with, he hopes, greater clarity.
85. See Race, *WCLA*, x.
86. Munck, "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics," 47 ff.; also see the chart on 38–40.
87. *Ibid.*, 46–48.
88. *Ibid.*, 52 ff.
89. *Ibid.*, 47.
90. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Munck, "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics," 47.
91. Munck, "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics," 50.
92. See, for example, Race, *WCLA*, 11, 16, 39–41, 97–98.
93. Eric M. Bergerud, *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991). See also Race, *WCLA*, 1–2n1.
94. David W.P. Elliott, *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930–1975*, 2 vols. (Armonk, New York, and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2003).
95. See, for example, *ibid.*, 16–17, 85, 88, 259, 686, 689–691, 897, 1007, 1104, 1212, 1224 ff., 1317.
96. For example, in the theoretically abortive discussions in *ibid.*, 689 ff. and 1224 ff.
97. *Ibid.*, 6.
98. Race, *WCLA* 2010, 277–306.
99. Jeffrey Race, "Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province: An Historical and Theoretical Analysis" (doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1973).
100. Race, "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution," in *Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia*, ed. John Wilson Lewis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 169–204. As Tuong Vu notes, that chapter may represent the only case in which Race's social scientist is tested, albeit by Race himself. See Tuong Vu, "Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia," in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 112. For the chapter seeks to validate the theory of revolution derived from his research on Long An through application of that theory to the "unlikely case" (in Race's words) of communist insurgency in

- northern Thailand. See Race, "Toward an Exchange Theory," 200 ff. The results of this exercise in validation, not included in Chapter 7 of the new edition of *WCLA*, are most enlightening. The exercise itself rests on the empirical foundation of Race's stimulating 1974 article on the Thai insurgency. See Jeffrey Race, "The War in Northern Thailand," *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 1974): 86–112.
101. Race, *WCLA* 2010, 280; Race borrows this concept from the work of Peter M. Blau.
 102. *Ibid.*, 280.
 103. See *ibid.*, 283n7, for the previous work in this area on which the chapter draws. Significantly, as we shall note below, this scholarship includes a pair of articles by Scott. See James C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *The American Political Science Review* 66, no. 1 (March 1972): 91–113; and "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in Rural Southeast Asia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 32, no. 1 (November 1972): 5–38.
 104. Race, *WCLA* 2010, 282–284.
 105. *Ibid.*, 286. With only very minor difference, this definition also appears in Race, "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution," 176.
 106. Popkin does not cite this chapter's forerunner, Race, "Toward an Exchange Theory of Revolution," in *The Rational Peasant*, and it goes without saying that his book advances nothing like either that earlier piece's or the new chapter's elegant and sophisticated analysis of the emergence of the "four organizations"—those of the Catholics, Cao Đài, Hòa Hảo, and communists—brief histories of which he would narrate in support of his theorizing. Again, see Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, 184–242.
 107. Race, *WCLA*, 289 and 296–297.
 108. Robert L. Sansom, *The Economics of Insurgency in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979). Also see note 103 above.
 109. *Ibid.*, 283, 291, and 297 ff.
 110. See John A. Larkin, "The Evolution of Pampangan Society: A Case Study of Social and Economic Change in the Rural Philippines" (doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1966); and *The Pampangans: Colonial Society in a Philippine Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
 111. Race, *WCLA* 2010, 283 and 289.
 112. It will, of course, do nothing to overcome serious Southeast Asianists' aversion to what James C. Scott sees as the Leninist universalism of some ratsis. See note 61 above.
 113. See Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).
 114. Todd Greentree, "A Letter from Bagram," *The American Interest* 4, no. 6 (July/August 2009): 17–19, exemplifies recourse to *WCLA* for help in waging today's American wars of "counterinsurgency." As Race, "War Comes to Long An: Back

Story to the Writing of a Military Classic,” 7–8, notes, *WCLA* remained an assigned text at the United States Army’s Command and General Staff College even after 1975, and it has recently returned to reading lists at a range of American institutions of military education. One must assume that, in addition to civilian institutions’ courses on Indochina’s various twentieth-century conflicts, the book’s use in military education helps account for its never having gone out of print, even during decades that allegedly saw the United States military forget about counterinsurgency. Similarly, it is impossible not to suspect a connection between the University of California Press’s decision to publish a new edition of the book in 2010 and the current vogue for “COIN” at the Pentagon. Indeed, the back cover of this new edition features a blurb from none other than Washington’s favorite Australian counterinsurgency guru of the moment, David Kilcullen.

115. Race, *WCLA*, ix.
116. Tuong Vu, “Contentious Mass Politics in Southeast Asia,” in Kuhonta et al., eds., *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, 110 and 343n23.
117. Race, *WCLA*, 276.
118. One gains some sense of those times by recalling that *WCLA* appeared in the same year that Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972) did, and that that latter book won a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, and a Bancroft Prize.
119. Lewallen, review of *WCLA*, 181; see note 64 above.
120. Race, *WCLA*, 273. In the 2010 edition of the book, this chapter remains Chapter 6, with original pagination.
121. J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 141.
122. See, for example, *ibid.*, 9, 107, 141, 293, 296–303, 538.
123. *Ibid.*, 296.
124. See Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*; and Larkin, *The Pampangans*.
125. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, 141, 535, 545–546.
126. Race, *WCLA*, following 134.
127. This line of analysis is sketched out briefly in Michael J. Montesano, “Bandung 1955 and Washington’s Southeast Asia,” *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, eds. Tan See Seng and Amitav Acharya (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 198–220 (207–209).
128. Race, *WCLA*, 151.
129. *Ibid.*, 208.
130. David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). See Osborne, “Anti-Colonialism and War in Vietnam,” 754.