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## **Crime, Society & the State, by Bankoff**

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that Gramsci is hardly mentioned; Marx not even once. This is astonishing since the basic concepts of this book—the bourgeois elite, the masses, ideology, the oppression and silencing by the elite of the masses—are Marxist concepts. This project claims to be deconstructive, but it is not. It does not achieve the multiplicity of meanings and the loss of the objective reality central to deconstruction. It does not subvert the binaries but rather reaffirms them by upholding the unfashionable but always relevant idea of class struggle. It claims allegiance to that which it is not and shuns what it is. Thus, the irony of this study is that its failure stems from its desire to be new, but its triumph—a reading not fashionable but always relevant—is in its practice of the old.

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**Crime, Society and the State in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines.**

By Greg Bankoff. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996.  
251 pages.

Filipinos today find themselves amid a sea of changes as the country is ushered into a new millennium. A shift in the economic base with rapid industrialization, population, growth, a rise in the crime rate and a state rapidly realigning its policies to match the country's needs are only a few signposts of these changes. The author, Greg Bankoff, asserts that many of the problems that Filipinos face now are the same ones faced by their forebears in the nineteenth century. His thesis focuses on crime, who committed it and how it was dealt with in the nineteenth century, as a means of analyzing the social situation and the policies and practices of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines.

The book is divided into two major parts. The first part deals with a detailed examination of existing criminal records and statistics on crime. This treatment gives a solid grounding in understanding the social, economic and political conditions in the Philippines during this time. "Crime in the colonial or neocolonial context," Bankoff says, "is explained in terms of the disruption caused to the social fabric of society by large-scale migration, urbanization, and the needs of industry for surplus labor." He points out that the crime rate started to rise when the *indio* started to lose the security of the familiar village structure that set the rules governing his day-to-day existence and social intercourse, and was confronted by the aforementioned phenomena.

Bankoff further classifies crime in its urban and rural setting. Urban crime largely depended on the interaction between the servant, to the Spaniards,

the rise of commercial centers such as Binondo, and of Tondo as Manila's enclave of the city's poorest. This led to such crimes as robbery, murder, prostitution and gambling. On the other hand, rural crime stemmed from growing discontent among the landless farmers and tenants toward their landlords and the exclusion of upland people from participation in any economic activity and gain. Many of these individuals formed groups of armed bandits and engaged in ambushes, smuggling and other nefarious activities. However, the policy of differentiation and exclusion set by the Spanish colonizers also contributed to the rising crime rates. This bred much resentment, discontent and superiority or inferiority between the different social classes.

In the second part of the book, Bankoff clearly develops the position the colonial government took in response to the growing needs of the colony. He shows how the state that initially had a joint executive and judicial apparatus slowly grew into a judicial state. This was caused by the decline of military and church power by the late eighteenth century, after which the state began to depend on its judicial branch to maintain control over the colony. In an exposition of the court and police establishments as well as the various punishments imposed for the crimes, Bankoff underlines the well-meaning endeavors of the state to cause reforms and administer justice in the colony without prejudice. He also outlines the various reasons how such good policies were drawn by the higher authorities were never properly implemented. Among the most visible of these is the lack of funding to hire personnel and improve facilities, and the corruption that infected the existing personnel.

In conclusion, Bankoff cites four recurring motifs in the book—crime, society, state and time. He shows that although such terms are generalized notions prone to constant interpretation and reinterpretation, they form a particular substance in the context of nineteenth-century Philippines. With crime, some actions were "defined as depending on the public perception or the exigencies of colonial policy." The action of the colonial government to what they saw as a rise in the crime rate was to "expand the judicial structure of the state." However, they would learn later—with the outbreak of the revolution—that force would be "the only means of maintaining social order."

*Rogel Anecito L. Abais, S.J.*

**Bishop Francisco Claver, 1972–1990, On the Local Church.** By Mary T. Fitzpatrick, FCJ. Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1995. vii, 78 pages.

Through the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Church "opened her windows" to the world and embarked on an *aggiornamento*—a renewal based primarily on the revolutionary concept of the Church as the People of God. In this new model, the Church obliged herself to become immersed in the