

## **Presenting a Sensitive History: Different Representations of Hmong Involvement in the Communist Party of Thailand**

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Between the late 1960s and the 1980s, large numbers of Hmong joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and fought against the Royal Thai Army. Despite the importance of Hmong involvement in the CPT in northern Thailand, surprisingly little has been written about their crucial role in the CPT. In the early years after the CPT disintegrated as a result of battlefield defeats, internal conflicts, discontinuation of support from China, and the general amnesty in 1981, a lack of reporting about the role of the Hmong in the CPT might be explained by continued political sensitivities. Recently, however, the Hmong people become more interested in telling their story, and to advocate for land rights based on past CPT involvement.

Here, I compare information collected from former Hmong CPT members in Thailand in 2012 with two filmic representations of Hmong involvement with the CPT. The first is a 2010 Hmong language documentary, *Hmoob Thaib Keeb Kwm: Kob Rog 1968-1987*. The second is a 2012 full-length historical fiction movie in Thai and Hmong (with Thai sub-titles) called *Blood for Freedom*. Through considering different representations of Hmong involvement in the CPT, one can see how history is much more than simply clarifying and presenting facts. Rather, I argue that Hmong involvement in the CPT is being represented in quite different ways depending on the presenters, the political context, and the intended audience. Indeed, history is never neutral or apolitical.