

Call for Papers

*südostasien* 3/2021

## **Colonialism and Memory Culture in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia has an extensive colonial history, starting with the Portuguese invasion of Malacca in 1511 and formally ending with Brunei proclaiming independence from the crumbling British Empire in 1984. Nearly all countries in the region were subjugated to colonial rule, with the notable exception of Thailand. However, despite avoiding European conquest, even Thailand (formerly known as Siam during the era of Western imperialism) was forced into the rivaling spheres of influence of the British and French imperial powers. In postcolonial times, tensions over national territory and sovereignty persist in the region.

These developments underscore the commonality of the historical experiences with foreign interference and colonialism that Southeast Asia's contemporary nation-states share. Colonialism in this context is defined as the Western practice of political domination and subjugation in Southeast Asia from the early 16th century to the mid-to-late 20th century. At the same time, the remnants of colonialism sustain and persist in the region, which manifest itself in the continuity of colonial power structures and epistemologies. This is where postcolonial theoretical and political struggles come to light. Part of these struggles is processing memories of the past, which in turn shape the construction and sustainment of political perceptions and projects in the present – from collective identities to systems of governance.

For the upcoming issue of *südostasien* (3/2021), we seek to publish articles exploring these conjunctures. In particular, we focus on how colonialism is remembered in the region. Taking into account their divergent histories, we ask if there is nonetheless a common culture of remembrance in Southeast Asia: How is the colonial past remembered, reconstructed, and interpreted? How is the postcolonial present experienced and shaped in light of the past? And how is the postcolonial future reimagined? Against this backdrop, we will also include a perspective on how European countries deal with their colonial past (in Southeast Asia).

We are especially interested in exploring the following questions, among others:

- What is the discourse surrounding the politics of memory in Southeast Asian countries? Do conflicts and contestation over interpretations of the past arise?
- How do former Southeast Asian colonies commemorate important events surrounding independence, national liberation, and anticolonial struggles?
- In which ways are the legacies of empire manifested in language, education, culture, and religion in Southeast Asia? Which roles do they play in legal and political systems, land tenure, trade, and economic relations? How do they shape everyday life in Southeast Asia and how are they addressed in political discourse and everyday practices?
- How are colonialism and postcolonial continuities presented, reproduced or critiqued by the media in both Europe and Southeast Asia? How is the colonial past depicted and contested, for instance in movies and television?
- Are there any ongoing campaigns and initiatives in Southeast Asian countries pushing for a more responsible and critical engagement with the colonial past? Are there renewed calls for demanding reparations, dismantling imperial landmarks, or renaming streets?
- How do European societies deal with the history of violence, exploitation, and racism they have imposed on countries in Southeast Asia in the past? Does ongoing contestation over the restitution of artifacts in museums or the renaming of streets mark a change in the perception of colonialism in Europe?
- Is the culture of remembrance in Europe distinct from Southeast Asia? In what ways? How is this reflected in remembering colonialism?
- Is there a difference in the discourses and practices between the Southeast Asian diaspora in the Global North and Southeast Asian citizens in their respective countries when it comes to remembering colonial legacies?

We would like to address these issues in various forms—commentaries, background reports, photo essays, portrait essays, interviews, and reviews of films, books or music on the subject. We look forward to your contributions!

### **südostasien:**

*südostasien* gathers voices on and from Southeast Asia on current developments in politics, economy, ecology, society, and culture. Each year through four different thematic focuses, articles on the region and its respective countries as well as their international relations are published on our website.

*südostasien* sees itself as a pluralistic forum for solidary and critical dialogue—as a space for discussions between actors in Southeast Asia and Germany with knowledge of and proximity to social movements. *südostasien* deals with the possibilities of transnational solidarity work in the face of unequal power relations between the Global South and North. *südostasien* wants to provide food for thought for action in Germany and Europe.

### **Editorial information:**

**Media:** Please send us photographs of good quality matching the article (at least 1000 px width, at least 300 dpi).

**Copyright & Copyleft:** Copyright questions should be clarified in advance and the pictures should be labelled (photographer and picture title). Principally, all content is published under a Creative Commons License Attribution (CC-BY-SA 4.0).

**Deadline:** Deadline for articles (max. 10,000 characters) is 15 June 2021 (in individual cases and after consultation with the editors, a later deadline may be possible). Please submit a short abstract (max. 1,000 characters) to the editors in advance.

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