

Call for Papers

südostasien 4/2021

Racism and State Violence in Southeast Asia

Due to the spread of the capitalist system in Southeast Asia through the imperialism of the Western states (cf. issue 2/2021 on hegemony and 3/2021 on colonialism and culture of memory), the oppression of the population is as present in today's Southeast Asian states as it is currently in the entire Global South. Mechanisms of oppression express themselves through economic exploitation of the large working class but are also supported by brutal direct violence of state organs in the interests of capital.

This violence manifests itself especially in the case of so-called 'security forces'. In the Philippines, we see the consequence of this 'logic' in the currently more than 30,000 victims of police killings, in the course of the 'war on drugs' since 2016. There has only been one trial against the perpetrators so far, due to high pressure from the public and video recordings as evidence. This demonstrates once again that the state, in its violent enforcement of capital interests, is directed against the very people it claims to represent. People who raise their voices against this disproportion are targeted and intimidated, persecuted and murdered by the police and military. This has happened, and often continues to happen, with the direct support of Western powers, for instance in the mass murder of 1965/66 in Indonesia, to which an estimated 500,000 to three million people suspected of 'communist activities' fell victim. The victims included many Indonesians of Chinese origin.

In addition, there is state violence in various forms, such as that exercised through the courts. 'Law' is often pronounced in the interests of governments, local elites and corporations. In Southeast Asia, this can be observed, for example, in the case of land grabs from indigenous communities by corporations. Thus, the rights of ethnic minorities in the region are severely affected by dispossession, evictions and land grabbing. Traditional and customary rights are often not respected in the process, and civil society actors may face criminalisation, imprisonment or worse if they resist.

These practices are further legitimised by racist narratives that stigmatise indigenous minorities as 'anti-modernisation' people. Racism, which has long served as an instrument of domination and a means of legitimisation by dividing

the oppressed class in historical Western colonialism, continues to have a heinous and destructive effect in Southeast Asia today. The divisive effect of racism has been and continues to be used as a means of maintaining power by rulers, for instance in the racist persecution of the Rohingya by the pseudo-democratic government of Myanmar, previously celebrated by the West. Here too, workers are played off against each other in order to divert the focus from the real problem, namely their exploitation. Behind racist persecution there is basically a tangible motive: the maintenance and enforcement of capitalist profit logic. As is so often the case, racism is directed against the already exploited ethnic and religious minorities, as for example in West Papua or in the south of the Philippines.

In this issue of *südostasien* we want to take a deeper look at these issues and draw a picture of the current situation in Southeast Asia. Among other things, we want to answer the following questions:

- What are the current and historical examples of the racist division of society and violence perpetrated accordingly?
- What forms of state violence play a role in Southeast Asian countries and how do institutions legitimise the use of violence?
- How is state violence negotiated in media and public discourse in Southeast Asia and how is it justified and/or concealed?
- What role does the rise of authoritarianism play in relation to state violence and racism in the region?
- How does the racist mood-mongering in the public sphere and the media take shape?
- How does repression by the state apparatus affect concrete class struggles?
- What role did/do Western states play in the economic and propagandistic support and coverage of regimes and their crimes?
- What movements are forming and have formed against these tendencies and what can we learn from their political practice?

We would like to take up these questions in various forms - in commentaries, background reports, photo essays, portraits, interviews and reviews of films, books or music on the topic. 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).

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Deadline: Deadline for articles (max. 10,000 characters) is 15 September 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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