

the Thai state and other political actors have frequently used these feelings to foster national unity, mobilize support for authoritarian rule and suppress dissent. Rather than celebrate the country's continuous independence à la the Royalist-Nationalist narrative, National Humiliation discourse maintains that Thailand is under constant threat from both external and internal enemies: if Thai people do not unify under strong leadership, then further suffering and loss will result. As a recent example, Strate highlights how politicians used this discourse in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis to portray the demands of the IMF as illegitimate. Today, traces of it can be seen in the belief of the military government and its supporters that Western-style democracy and its proponents represent an existential threat to the Thai nation.

The core of *The Lost Territories* focuses on the 1930s and 1940s, particularly Thailand's role in the Second World War under the military regime of Luang Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944). Strate uses the development of National Humiliation discourse and its relationship with Royalist-Nationalism as a compelling analytical framework to shed new light on the policies and foreign relations of both the Phibun government and those of its post-war successor. In the late 1930s, Phibun sought to legitimize his increasingly authoritarian control and discredit the monarchy he had helped depose from power in 1932 by stirring up memories of the 1893 crisis. Government propaganda cast this confrontation with France as a defeat and a blow to national prestige: only the military could protect the Thai nation from further such humiliations and right the historic wrongs suffered at the hands of the Western imperial powers. This rhetoric was remarkably successful in generating popular support for the Thai military's invasion of French Indochina in January 1941, which ended with Thailand gaining possession of parts of Laos and Cambodia.

Strate goes on to show how the Phibun regime also used National Humiliation discourse both to explain the country's subsequent occupation by the Japanese and to justify its declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States in January 1942. By highlighting how all of Asia, including Japan, had suffered from Western imperialism to some extent, the government managed to link the discourse of National Humiliation with the Japanese ideology of Pan-Asianism. Rather than being occupied by Japan, Thailand was its junior partner in helping liberate its less fortunate colonized neighbours. Strate argues that National Humiliation discourse thereby enabled the Phibun regime to disguise its aims of (re)creating a great Thai empire across mainland Southeast Asia, evidenced by the Thai military's occupation of the Shan States in British Burma in 1942, as an anti-colonial liberation struggle.

Come the end of the Second World War, Thailand found itself on the wrong side, with both Britain and France wanting to punish the kingdom for its aggressive actions. Moreover, France insisted that if Thailand did not return the Lao and Cambodian provinces it had seized in 1941, it would block the country's application for membership of the UN. This placed the government of Pridi Banomyong, which had replaced that of the tainted Phibun, in a difficult position: the intense emotional attachment to the lost territories meant returning them to France would seriously affect its legitimacy. Therefore, the Pridi government revived the Royalist-Nationalist narrative of sacrifice and survival to justify its decision to give in to the French demands: returning the Lao

and Cambodian territories was necessary to make amends for Phibun's mistakes and illustrate its commitment to the UN and international peace. Nevertheless, the wound of the lost territories was left open as France's heavy-handed approach allowed the Thais to recast themselves as a peaceful nation that had been the victim of Western bullying once more.

For this reviewer, the most interesting part of the book is the examination of a little known aspect of the wartime period: specifically, the Phibun regime's persecution of Thai Catholics as fifth columnists because of their suspected sympathy with France. Strate traces the roots of this anti-Catholicism to the late 19th century, when French priests used extraterritoriality to protect their congregations and converts from the taxation and *corvée* labour demands of the Siamese authorities. The Phibun government's propaganda was thus able to link Catholicism with French imperialism, portraying the religion as a foreign ideology that threatened Thai values. To be Catholic was to be un-Thai. The government's anti-Catholic policies involved pressurizing Thai Catholics into converting to Buddhism and seizing Church property. Tragically, this resulted in state-supported vigilante violence in which several Thai Catholics were murdered and churches were burnt down. This episode serves as a powerful warning about what happens when governments incite religious intolerance for political ends. It also has some uncomfortable parallels with the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment within the Thai Buddhist monkhood in the present day.

In the final part of the book, Strate examines the historical origins of the long-running dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the Preah Vihear temple ruins on the two countries' mutual border. During the 1930s, the temple became a key symbol of the lost territories and was part of those areas temporarily seized by the military in the war. In the 1950s, the Thai government under a rehabilitated Phibun tried to bully newly independent Cambodia into surrendering Preah Vihear, with the military illegally occupying the ruins. These aggressive tactics backfired, however, when the Cambodian government decided to bring the international community in to resolve the dispute by appealing to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1958. Thai newspapers then revived the rhetoric of National Humiliation in order to build up public support and donations for the Thai legal case; linking the issue to French imperialism by depicting the leader and former king of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, as a stooge of the French and by even claiming that Cambodia was just a French colonial construct that had once been part of Siam. Similarly, when the ICJ ruled that Preah Vihear belonged to Cambodia in 1962, the military regime of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat explained this setback by accusing the ICJ of being a neo-imperialist institution of the Communist powers, the latest mortal threat to the Thai nation. Nearly fifty years later, the lack of emotional closure over the temple enabled the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to mobilize support for its protests against the Thaksin-backed People Power Party after that government agreed to endorse Cambodia's application to have Preah Vihear listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

As is to be expected for a work based on a PhD dissertation, *The Lost Territories* relies on extensive archival records such as government reports, speeches and newspaper articles. In his examination of the anti-Catholic episode during the Second World War,

Strate also uses the unpublished and previously unutilized eyewitness accounts of Thai Catholics from the Assumption Cathedral archives. The book also contains several political cartoons that provide graphic evidence of the National Humiliation discourse at work.

Taken as a whole, *The Lost Territories* raises some important questions, particularly about the relationship between the Thai media and public opinion. Rather than merely reflecting the public mood, Strate highlights how the Thai media has often been responsible for manufacturing public outrage and generating popular support for government policies. Just as significantly, the book builds on recent scholarship on Thailand that challenges the 'colonized' versus 'non-colonized' or 'colonizing' binary classifications used to describe Western and non-Western states. In this respect, Strate demonstrates how National Humiliation discourse has allowed Thai governments and other political actors to use 'un-colonized' Siam/Thailand's victimization by the West to disguise their own neo-colonial ambitions over neighbouring states. What is also clear is that the rhetoric of the lost territories is not going to disappear from Thai political discourse anytime soon. Commenting on how the various maps showing the lost territories issued by the Phibun regime often differed over what those territories actually were, Strate explains that: 'The *lost territories* were not a location. They functioned as a symbol, a monument commemorating the idea of a National Humiliation. Since the meaning of the symbol proved remarkably flexible, it could also be continually reinterpreted and used by later generations to meet contemporary needs' (p. 45).

In sum, *The Lost Territories* is an important addition to the historiography on modern Thailand and essential reading for those wishing to understand the origins of the Preah Vihear dispute. More broadly, it will be of interest to anyone interested in how governments and other political actors manipulate historical memory to mobilize popular support.

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