Phibun and WWII in Southeast Asian Context

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Abstract

In this article, the author argues that Phibun's actions during the Pacific War needs reassessment since most scholars of this period have explained his behavior and role in the wrong context. The main question concerns Phibun's decision to become one of Japan's Allies in 1941. The article suggests that the best way to understand Phibun's role is to consider him as one of the 'new elite' and a local nationalist leader in comparison to other leaders of Southeast Asia. Phibun and his neighboring leaders came from similar backgrounds and shared the same feelings towards Japan. They were members of the 'middle class' and of the new elite. Also they were all ardent nationalists, were impressed by Japan's victory over Western powers and were interested in Japan's development as an alternative model. Consequently, when the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Phibun and most of his neighboring Asian leaders chose to collaborate with the Japanese because they thought that only in this way could they survive and advance the cause of their political power, factions, and nations. Undeniably, collaboration was the best way in which they could achieve progress towards their own personal, political, and national goals. Collaboration was often the only alternative against the Western powers. In addition, collaboration offered the only opportunity to arouse the population's fever and to build a united front, as well as to strengthen native political power.

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีข้อเสนอใหม่ในเชิงการวิเคราะห์บทบาทของผู้นำกับบริบททางประวัติศาสตร์ กรณีศึกษาว่าด้วยจอมพล ป.พิบูลสงคราม และสงครามโลกครั้งที่สอง ซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับประเด็นหลักที่ยังถกเถียงกันไม่รู้จบในวงวิชาการว่าเพราะเหตุใดผู้นำไทยจึงตัดสินใจเข้าร่วมสงครามข้างญี่ปุ่น-อักษะ สาระสำคัญของการศึกษานี้ เริ่มจากการทบทวนความรู้ชุดเดิมทั้งหมดเกี่ยวกับคำอธิบายการดำเนินนโยบายสงครามโลกครั้งที่สองของจอมพล ป.พิบูลสงคราม ผู้วิจัยเห็นว่าฐานความรู้ และวิธีคิดของแนวทางการศึกษาวิจัยที่ผ่านมา ทั้งในแวดวงวิชาการของตะวันตก และของไทยเราเองนั้น แม้มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมากมายทั้งในเชิงวิธีการศึกษา และข้อเสนอหลักก็ตาม แต่ล้วนกลับมีจุดอ่อนที่ผิดพลาดเหมือนกันในการวิเคราะห์บทบาท และพฤติกรรมของผู้นำไทย เนื่องจากเป็นการพิจารณาบทบาทของจอมพล ป. ในบริบท (Context) ของการตามกระแสโลก-ลัทธิฟาสซิสต์ คือ มักเปรียบเทียบผู้นำไทยกับผู้นำของเยอรมัน-นาซี ทำให้ภาพของจอมพล ป. อยู่ในบริบททางประวัติศาสตร์ที่ไม่ตรงกับความเป็นจริง ผู้เขียนพบว่าแนวทางที่ดีที่สุดในการสร้างความรู้ชุดใหม่ เพื่อทำความเข้าใจบทบาทและพฤติกรรมของจอมพล ป. นั้น น่าจะพิจารณาในบริบทของกระแสการต่อสู้ของผู้นำท้องถิ่น-นักชาตินิยม โดยทำการศึกษาเปรียบเทียบจอมพล ป. กับผู้นำประเทศต่างๆ ในเขตเพื่อนบ้านเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ด้วยกัน ด้วยวิธีการศึกษาทาง Prosopography or Collective Biography เพราะในฐานะผู้นำประเทศเล็ก ๆ นั้น พวกเขามีภูมิหลังทางสังคม-เศรษฐกิจที่เหมือนกัน และต่างมีประสบการณ์ทางการเมืองซึ่งล้วนตกอยู่ภายใต้สภาพแวดล้อมที่คล้ายกัน คือ ต้องต่อสู้กับอิทธิพลของมหาอำนาจตะวันตก จึงไม่แปลกใจที่จอมพล ป. และผู้นำในแถบเพื่อนบ้านส่วนมากต่างหันไปพึ่ง และตัดสินใจเข้าร่วมสงครามกับฝ่ายญี่ปุ่นเมื่อสงครามเกิดขึ้น ฉะนั้น การเป็นพันธมิตรกับญี่ปุ่นในสมัยสงครามโลกฯ จึงไม่ใช่เป็นความทะเยอทะยานตามแบบอย่างลัทธิฟาสซิสต์ของผู้นำไทย และนั่นก็หมายความด้วยว่ามิใช่เป็นการเลือกข้างนิยมระหว่างเผด็จการกับประชาธิปไตย หากแต่เป็นความจำเป็น และเพื่อความอยู่รอดของตนเอง และประเทศชาติภายใต้สถานการณ์ทางการเมืองระหว่างประเทศในขณะนั้น โดยเฉพาะการแข่งขันอำนาจ และอิทธิพลของสองมหาอำนาจ ระหว่างฝ่ายเดิมนำโดยตะวันตก และฝ่ายใหม่นำโดยญี่ปุ่น

Introduction

Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, popularly known as Phibun (Pibul), was the Thai Prime Minister during the Second World War. His actions during the war still remain both memorable and controversial in modern Thai history. The most prominent question concerns Phibun's decision to become one of Japan's Allies in 1941. Although many scholars have tried to answer this question, they are quite different in both approach and interpretation to that of my own. The main difference is that they have in my opinion explained Phibun's behavior and role in the wrong context.

Scholars of this period may be roughly divided into two schools of thought: one American and the other Thai. On one hand, American works such as those by Edward Thadeus Flood (1967 /and 1967:304-325), William Swan (1987, 1988), and E. Bruce Reynolds (1994, 2005) primarily rely upon Japanese sources and other international factors, especially the Thai - Japanese relationship from the late 1930s through to the Pacific War, to examine Phibun's behavior. On the other hand, Thai works such as those by Thamsook Numnonds (1977), Charivat Santaputra (1985), and Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian (1995) mainly use Thai and Western resources and focus on internal factors, particularly Thai politics and traditional Thai diplomacy, to analyze his behavior. While both views have their own strengths, their weakness is similar when they compare Philbun's behavior to that of a fascist leader, such as Hitler or Mussolini.

In contrast to such an approach, I argue that the best way to understand Phibun's behavior is to consider him as one of the 'new celite' and a local nationalist leader in the Southeast Asian context, which confronted the conflict of world powers - the Western nations and the

Japanese. I believe that comparing, Phibun's behavior and his role in the war with that of the other Southeast Asian leaders is more revealing because those leaders were also members of the new elite and prominent local nationalists who had to deal with both the Western powers and the Japanese influence.

In my comparison, I have applied collective biography or prosopography as the methodology to interpret the modern Thai and Southeast Asian elite. (For an interesting survey of its literature, see Stone, 1971:69-85, and for more updated aspects of this method, see Sorasak, 2005: Chapter 1). Following this, I will first begin with Harry Benda's thesis and the emergence of the modern Southeast Asian elite. I will then analyze the socio-economic backgrounds of Phibun, Dr. Ba Maw, Aung San, Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Manuel Luis Quezon, in order to understand their characteristics and reasoning. Next, I shall focus on their political experience to explain why most of these leaders decided to cooperate with Japan, while the leader of the Philippines distanced himself from them. Finally, I will concentrate on those who collaborated, to examine whether they tried to deal with the Japanese during the occupation in the same way or not and also the reasoning behind their decisions. I hope that by comparing the behavior of other Southeast Asian leaders, that one can better understand Phibun's behavior and his role in modern Thai history.

Benda's Thesis and the Emergence of the Modern Southeast Asian Elite

To understand the emergence of the new elite, Benda's work provides an excellent initial conceptual framework (Benda, 1972:186-204). Benda explicitly models the factors that contribute to the emergence

of these two types of oligarchic elite that he has identified with the 1960's in Southeast Asia. They are "ideal types" a la Weber, and he is careful to qualify both his classifying schemes and the variables with which he produces the two differing groups. His two types of elite are an "intelligentsia elite," which owes its power solely to its Westernstyle education and orientation, and a "modernizing elite," which owes its position to its long-standing social position or "ascriptive" nature.

Nevertheless, Benda is not interested in the politics of these elites, just their sociological origins. He identifies the two variables involved which produced these two different outcomes. First, there are the "pre-modern influences" (whether the states in question were "Indianized," "Sinicized" or "Hispanized") and second, the nature of the colonial rule underlying these structures that affected the outcome: direct as opposed to indirect rule (Benda, 1972:186-204).

The emerging new elites in Thailand and the Philippines, according to Benda's model, can be classified as "modernizing elites". For instance, in the latter case, the Spanish essentially transformed the datus into a privileged, landed class of principles, the major beneficiaries of the new social, economic, and legal order introduced by the Spanish. In the 19th Century, a class of mestizos was able to inter-marry and overtake this group. Benda characterizes the Philippines as a case of the "modernizing elite" because the elite of the 20th Century was drawn on an ascriptive basis from a class structure established in the previous centuries. (Benda, 1972:194).

In contrast, both in Burma and Indonesia the new elites can be classified as "intelligentsia elites". Like Burma, Java was Indianized, which meant that it was a society of basically two classes, a king and his subjects. Typical of this pattern was the fact that all power and control

over land resided with the king and the royal family, and there were no landed classes. When colonial rule was imposed by both the British and the Dutch, the pre-modern elites were essentially destroyed. The elite who eventually wrestled power from the British and the Dutch were not of the ascriptive class but comprised a new unattached elite arising from their Western education and orientation (Benda, 1972:196-200).

Whether one agrees with Benda's model or not, it cannot be denied that the role of education in the creation of the new elite was paramount. (For Benda, the acquisition of education appears to be a key independent variable in his model although he does not identify it as such). However, if we compare the emergence of the new elites in Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, and the Philippines, there appear to be several major variables which led to the creations of the new elites in those four Nations, one of them being education, which seems to be a necessity in them all. (In the case of Thailand, see Warunee, 1981, in the case of Burma, see Christian,1942, in the case of Indonesia, see Niel, 1970, and in the case of the Philippines, see Anderson, 1995:3-47).

Background of Phibun and Other Southeast Asian Leaders

Phibun and his neighboring leaders came from similar backgrounds. All were members of the 'middle class' and also of the new elite. As part of this group, they were also all ardent nationalists who led their respective movements in their own countries. Most of them shared the same feelings towards Japan. They were impressed by Japan's victory over a Western Power and were also interested in Japan's development as an alternative model.

During the 19th Century, states worldwide were growing in their capacities and in the tasks which they undertook. Their growing military and economic strengths required a vast increase in the numbers of bureaucrats and state officials. In order to produce individuals capable of running the state, the colonial powers were forced to introduce education. This trend was also evident in Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, and even in Thailand, an independent state, which introduced its own educational system. (In the case of Thailand, see T. Bunnag, 1977; and Wyatt, 1969)

In the three former cases, the unintentional consequence of the policy to educate a greater number of colonial subjects, however, was as Benda has shown, to produce an elite which came to see itself through a nationalistic framework, as the rightful leaders in their respective countries.

During the emergence of nationalistic movements at the turn of the century, the Filipino, Burmese, Thai and Indonesian leaders had all come from middle-class backgrounds and possessed a Western education and training.

Quezon was born in 1878 in Baler, in the province of Tayabas. His father was a mestizo – a son of a Spanish father and a Filipino mother. Like Sukarno's father, Quezon's was also a village school teacher (Goettel, 1970:15-16). When the Filipinos first fought against the Spanish between 1896-1898, and then later against the Americans, 1899-1902, Quezon offered his services to the Revolutionary Army. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, and later became Aide-de-Camp to General Aguinaldo. (Quirino, 1978:174-184).

Dr. Ba Maw was born in 1893 at Maubin. His father was an official to the courts of Kings Mindon and Thibaw (Ba Maw, 1968:436).

His father was also a Nationalist leader and it was not surprising that Dr.Ba Maw became the Chief Defense Counsellor for Saya San, the Nationalist leader of the 1930 Peasant Rebellion, and for other rebel leaders (Ba Maw, 1968:436, and Steinberg, 1982:31).

Phibun was born in 1897 in Nonthaburi, now a satellite town of Bangkok. His parents were hard-working durian producers. At the age of twelve he was sent to the Military Academy, where he graduated in 1915 (Kobkua, 1995:1-2).

In the same year, Aung San was born into a farming family in Natmauk, a small township in the dry zone of Central Burma. At the age of fifteen, Aung San won a scholarship and a prize for coming first in the Pre-High School Government Examinations held throughout the country in the Buddhist and National Schools (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1984:1-3; and Maung Maung, 1962:3). In 1932, when the Saya San uprising was suppressed and its leaders executed, Aung San first enrolled into a college (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1984:4).

Sukarno was born in 1901 in Surabaya and started his primary education at the school where his father taught in Mojokerto (Kahin, 1963:90). In 1916, Sukarno attended high school at the Hogere Burger Scholl (HBS) in Surabaya, where he lived in Umar Sayed Tjokroaminoto's house. This environment was of crucial importance to Sukarno because Tjokroaminoto was a chairman of the mass nationalist organization, Sareket Islam. In addition, Surabaya was also a central location that figured strongly in Indonesian nationalism at the time, as well as the crucible of nationalist thought and action (Legge, 1972:29).

Hatta was born in 1902 in Bukittinggi, the center of Minangkabau in Sumata. Hatta's family were deeply religious as both his grandfather and father were religious teachers. Hatta himself was very religious

and he was one of the comparatively few Western-trained leaders in Indonesia, who from childhood had been well-known for his devotion and attachment to Islam (Mohammad Hatta, 1981:1-17; and Noer, 1972: 5-6).

Three of them had studied in Europe: Phibun studied Artillery in France from 1924 to 1927 (Kobkua, 1995:2). Dr. Ba Maw studied Law in India, England, and France from 1914 to 1924 (Taylor, 1980:160; Ba Maw, 1968:436). Hatta studied and earned an Economics degree in Holland in 1932 (Mohammad Hatta, 1981:128-134; Hanna, 1964:21). Though Aung San, Quezon, and Sukarno studied in their own countries, their education was strictly along Western lines. Aung San studied Art, English Literature, Modern History, and Political Science at Rangoon University (Maung Maung, 1962:3). Sukarno earned an Engineering degree from the Bandung Technical College (Dahm, 1969:43-44; Legge, 1972:62-64), while Quezon studied Law at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila (Enosawa, 1940:130-131).

Quezon, who became the first President of the Commonwealth, was also the first example of a new elite player in this group. He came from a lower middle-class Spanish mestiza family background. His education was sponsored by Spanish clergymen. He fought for the revolution, spent time in jail but managed to finish with a Law Degree. His election as Governor of Tayabas, where he was a political outsider, arose from a variety of factors: his ties to Spanish elite culture through his family background, his education, and his own individual talent (Cullinane, 1984:59-84). Quezon's case thus confirms the importance of education as the route to power, with Quezon fitting nicely into Benda's 'model of the modernizing elite' - someone from an ascriptive class with a Western-style education and orientation.

Like Quezon, Phibun, Dr. Ba Maw, Aung San, Sukarno, and Hatta would emerge as the new elite in this context - Western education and training.

Upon his return to Thailand in 1927, Phibun was assigned to serve as a major on the Army General Staff and to teach at the Military Academy. He held this post until the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in June 1932, in which he was involved as a leader of a small group of about twenty junior officers within the People's Party. After the revolution of 1932, Phibun was appointed a minister in the first cabinet, which provided him with an opportunity to enter into the political arena (Jiraporn Witayasakpan, 1992:91-95). Dr. Ba Maw was an advocate and became a lawyer-politician during the dyarchy and Burma's constitutional period (Ba Maw, 1968:436; U Maung Maung, 1989:1-18; and Cady, 1964:511-520), while Aung San, Sukarno, and Hatta had first appeared to be part of the new elite when they were students in university. The three later became prominent student-politicians during the intensifying nationalistic campaigns in Burma and Indonesia (U Maung Maung, 1989:1-18; Hanna, 1964:21; and Kahin, 1963:90).

Growing up in the new elite, Phibun and his neighboring Asian leaders also got the feel of the nationalistic ideas from their Western education and the real experience gained in their own countries. They, therefore, were all ardent nationalists who led their respective movements within their own countries. Phibun's period has been seen as the growth of an assertive Thai nationalist movement (Batson, 1980:273). Quezon became the leading advocate of national independence. He led the nationalist movement of the Philippines for seventeen years (McCoy, 1989:116). The key political figures engaged in the nationalist movement of Burma both before and during the Second World War were

Dr.Ba Maw and Aung San, who headed a group of younger radicals of the Thakin and the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) (Steinberg, 1985:279-280; Aung San Suu Kyi, 1984:10-13; and Ba Maw, 1968:51-102). Sukarno and Hatta rose to their own prominence in the nationalist movement of Indonesia before and after the war (Dahm, 1969:211-224; Kahin, 1963:90-94).

Nationalism and Japanese Influence

The spread of nationalism from Europe to the rest of the world has probably been the most influential force in the twentieth century. Nationalism in Southeast Asia was influenced by a number of factors, most notably that of Western education which had opened the minds of the Southeast Asian leaders to the political ideas of the West, including self-government. Also, economic dislocation and distress caused by Western rule was, indeed, crucial for the growth of Southeast Asian nationalism. Knowledge of epoch-making events in neighboring countries in Asia, such as the events in China, India, and Japan also promoted nationalistic sentiments amongst the Southeast Asian people (Desai, 1994:136-137). However, in comparing Phibun with his neighboring Asian leaders, we can see that one of the most prominent factors was Japanese influence.

The Japanese example, according to Dr. Ba Maw's memoirs, dominated the minds of most Southeast Asian nationalist leaders. It worked within the broad spectrum of the radical mind throughout Southeast Asia. In actual fact, it goes back to the most important event in recent Japanese military history, its victory over Russia in 1905. It was the first victory in a very long time by an Asian country over a Western country. The impact of that victory on the Asian subconscious never

really died away. It was further deepened by Japan's subsequent rise as a world power, that was capable of holding its own against Western militarily might and its industrial strength. Japan's victory over Russia was a historical break-through which gave all oppressed races new dreams (Ba Maw, 1968:47).

Whether one agrees with Dr. Ba Maw's argument or not, it cannot be denied that Japanese influence made a deep impression on the Burmese, Thai, and Indonesian leaders' dreams. These leaders recognized that Japan's power could help them achieve their major aim. Thai leaders often looked on Japan as a model of a successful Asian entity against the West (Batson, 1980:273). Moreover, Phibun viewed Japan as a big power that could support the Thai government with both its internal and international policies and against the Western powers (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:56-62). The Burmese and Indonesian leaders also viewed the Japanese in this way. For them, the Japanese could help to overthrow the Western colonial system and to establish a new regime as well as enhancing their own political power. The rise of Japan as the leading Asian power in the world, therefore, was very much welcomed by them. In addition, the idea of the Asian people being emancipated from European colonialism was influential on nationalistic movements in Southeast Asia, especially in Burma and Indonesia (Masao, 1963:51).

By contrast, the Japanese example, particularly the Japanese victory in 1905, was less of a factor in the Philippines. Having fought against the Spanish and Americans between 1896-1902, the Philippines had made it clear that it preferred to rule itself. In addition, the Filipinos directed their cultural and economic nationalism more against the Japanese than towards the Spanish or the Americans.

During the decades of American rule, some Filipinos reacted by admiring the Japanese, inheritors of an ancient culture and the leading Oriental power. Pio Duran, for example, argued that Filipinos should consider being assimilated by Japan (Duran, 1935:152,164). Most educated Filipinos including Quezon, however, preferred to believe the contrary. They tended to seek a social life integrated with those whose Occidental culture they shared. More importantly, when America had promised by constitutional development to evolve another Republic in the Philippines, most Filipinos cooperated, and moderate constitutionalists replaced military nationalists as her leaders (Friend, 1965:37-39).

Phibun and his neighboring Asian leaders were members of the "middle class" and became the new elite, who possessed Western education and training. As the new elite, either the "intelligentsia" or "modernizing", they were all ardent nationalists who led the respective nationalist movements in their countries. Nevertheless, although they appeared to have the same character and thoughts, the new elite and nationalists did not look to the emergence of Oriental power with the same view. While the Japanese example made a deep impression on the Burmese, Thai, and Indonesian leaders, their counterparts in the Philippines still cooperated with their Occidental ruler and therefore maintained its loyalty to the United States. The major factor that made them different was their political experience.

Political Experience

Although Thailand was not colonized by Western powers, the struggle of the Thai leaders was no different from that of the other Southeast Asian nationalist leaders of the time. Thai leaders, particularly after the 1932 revolution, had tried to eliminate Western rule and influence.

In this struggle, it was not surprising to see that the influence of nationalism played a major role in their political effort. Like his neighbors, Phibun was involved in politics because he intended to solve the problems stemming from his concerns over independence and the West. In the fight to solve the national problems, Phibun would eventually get engaged to the Japanese because he recognized that Japan's power could help him achieve his goal. Phibun's experience was similar to that of the leaders of Burma and Indonesia, where the colonial rulers had no intention of granting independence, but it was rather different for Quezon in the Philippines, where American policies had permitted the granting of full sovereignty.

Phibun's involvement in politics began in Paris in 1927, where he became acquainted with Pridi Phanomyong and a select group of students known as the People's Party. The People's Party declared that if they were to attain power, then they would establish absolute national independence (Reynolds, 1994:8-9). After the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932, Phibun became disillusioned with the current political development of his country. He first became the Minister of Defence in 1934. Later, in 1938, when Phahon became the leader of the People's Party and when the second Premier at that time chose to retire, Phibun became the third Premier to take office after the 1932 revolution and was to hold that post until the outbreak of the Second World War in Southeast Asia in 1941 (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:35).

During this period, Japan's importance to Thailand had increased steadily. The leaders of the 1932 revolution, which included Phibun, hoped that eventually Japan, with its anti-Western attitudes, would help them to counter Western influence (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:56). They were all for making use of Japan as the political and

economic lever with which to resist the demands and influences of the Western powers in Thailand.

By 1938, Thailand already appeared to be moving towards Japan and away from its traditional European regional mentors, Britain and France. This was reflected in the consolidation of military rule and the adoption by Phibun, leader of the military, of a quasi-fascist authoritarian State, with a pro-Japanese stance on international issues (Kobkun, 1995:245; Batson, 1980:272-276). The real turning point in Thai - Japanese relations came during the French Indochina War of 1940-1941, when the Thai armed forces were receiving supplies from Japan. Also during that period, Japan had mediated in the Franco-Thai border dispute and they were, of course, heavily biased towards Phibun's government (Kamon Pensrinokun, 1988:136-150).

Although the Thai success in the French Indochina War was of great benefit to the Phibun government, the war had a further effect on the future of Phibun's foreign policy (See Charivat Santaputa, 1985: 192-243). The war was the first major incident that moved Thailand into conflict with the West and it paved the way for future Thai co-operation with Japan. During the war, the Phibun government had sent a number of diplomatic missions to sound out international opinion. Both Great Britain and the United States had made it clear that they preferred the 'status quo' that was already in place in Indochina.

In addition, the United States government had decided to block the delivery of planes, which had been bought by the Phibun government from an American company, and way-laid them in Manila prior to their delivery to Bangkok, due to the deteriorating situation in French Indochina. Japan immediately offered the same number of planes to the Phibun government (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:50-51; Martin, 1963:454-455).

Thus, Phibun became convinced that there was nothing to be gained from any further association with the West. The traditional Francophobic attitude had broadened into a general anti-Western feeling, which now included America.

After the Indochina War, the Bangkok - Tokyo relationship improved immensely and Phibun began to give serious consideration to the Japanese idea of "Asia for the Asiatics" (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:56). In addition to working with the Japanese, Phibun believed that Thailand could stand as an independent and equal partner in overthrowing Western domination in Southeast Asia (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:58).

Like Phibun, both Dr. Ba Maw and Aung San hoped that the Japanese could help them to achieve their goals. The Burmese nationalist movement moved closer to Japanese influence because British policies did not allow full sovereignty. The British were proceeding at a 'snail's pace' with self-government. In 1937, Burma was separated from Britishruled India and its new constitution formed the basis of the Burmese governmental structure, with a Burmese prime minister and cabinet. The essentials of power, however, remained firmly in the hands of the British governor and with Westminster (Cady, 1964:518-520). When the Second World War began in 1939, it stimulated Burma, like India, to demand that Britain grant them immediate independence. The key political figures engaged in the nationalist agitation of this period were Dr.Ba Maw and Aung San (Cady, 1964:520-526).

Dr. Ba Maw and Aung San were involved in politics during intensifying Burmese nationalist campaigns. Dr. Ba Maw's involvement in politics began when he was a leader of the parliamentary wing of GCBA (Anti-Separation League) (Ba Maw, 1968:436). In 1932 - while

Phibun overthrew the absolute monarchical system in Thailand - Dr. Ba Maw won a landslide victory in the 1932 elections. When he became minister of education and public health in 1936, he formed and led the Sinyetha Wunthanu Party (Poor Man's Party) (Ba Maw, 1968:436; Steinberg, 1982:31). In 1936, Dr. Ba Maw won the general elections and formed a coalition - made up of minor parties, minority leaders, and defectors from other parties - to lead the first government of separated Burma (Steinberg, 1985:279-280). Between 1937-1939, while he was Prime Minister, Dr. Ba Maw formed and led the Freedom Bloc together with Aung San.

Aung San's political involvement began when he was a student at Rangoon University. The 1936 Strike, which was an important landmark in the political development of the young nationalists, made Aung San widely known as a student leader (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1984:10). In 1938 he left university to become a member of the "Our Burma Party" (the Dobbama Asi-Ayone) of Thakins (Our Own Master), the only militant and intensely nationalistic political party in the country at the time. He was soon elected general secretary of the party (Maung Maung, 1962:4).

In 1939, after the outbreak of the war in Europe, Aung San helped found the Freedom Bloc, an alliance of Dr. Ba Maw's Sinyetha party, the Dohbama Asi-Ayone, the students, and some individual politicians. Dr. Ba Maw was the president of the Bloc and Aung San was the general secretary. The message of Freedom Bloc to the nation was that the people would support the British war effort only if they were promised independence at the end of the war. If the British Government was not prepared to make such a declaration, then the people should oppose the war effort strenuously (Aung San Suu Kyi,

1984:13; and see Ba Maw, 1968:51-102). The British authorities responded by making large-scale arrests of the nationalists. By the end of 1940, many of the Thakin leaders, including Dr. Ba Maw, who had refused to co-operate with British policies in any way, were sent to prison (Ba Maw, 1968:218-228).

At the same time that Dr. Ba Maw was imprisoned, Aung San went underground and slipped out of the country to search for supporters to provide aid in Burma's struggle for independence. He went to Amoy in China and stayed there for two months, during which time Japanese agents came and arranged for him to go to Tokyo (Maung Maung, 1962:4). After staying in Tokyo for about three months, Aung San returned to Burma early in 1941 to convey the plans given him by the Japanese to his friends, "the Thirty Comrades". He went back to Tokyo soon thereafter, taking with him the first group of young men to be given military training by the Japanese for the purpose of leading an uprising in Burma (See Calvocoressi, 1989:1000-1002).

Similar to Phibun, Sukarno and Hatta also hoped that the Japanese could help them achieve their major aim. The Indonesian nationalist movement moved closer to Japanese influence because the Dutch leaders had no intention of granting independence to their territories (See Friend, 1988:33-49). In the 1920s and 1930s the Dutch provided little leeway for the development of an Indonesian nationalist movement that could bargain for political concessions and increased representation in the manner of the Burmese nationalists. Although the consultative powers of the Volksraad (People's Council), set up in 1918, were minimally expanded in the ensuing years, in the end it could not satisfy Indonesian aspirations (Friend, 1988:34-37). The first mass nationalist movement, the Sarekat Islam, split up in the early 1920s; then between 1926-1927,

the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was crushed as a political force following its abortive revolts (Friend, 1988:37). In an alarmed reaction to what was seen as the threat of communism and political extremism, the Dutch sent key nationalist figures into internal exile in the late 1920s and early 1930s; among these figures were those who were to become the leaders of the Indonesian nationalist movement: Sukarno, Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir (Friend, 1988:38-42).

Sukarno and Hatta, like the Burmese Leaders, were involved in politics during the intensifying nationalist campaigns. Sukarno and Hatta's involvement in politics began when they were university students. While Sukarno had his role in Bandung, Hatta had his in Holland. When Hatta was a student of Economics and President of the Indonesian Students Association, he rose to prominence in the nationalist movement abroad at the same time that Sukarno was rising to prominence in Indonesia (Hanna, 1964:21). In 1927, the Partai National Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party) or PNI was established by the members of the Bandung Study Club under the chairmanship of the young engineer, Sukarno. The PNI's aim was complete economic and political independence for Indonesia, with a government elected by, and responsible to, the Indonesian people. Such independence could only be reached, it held, by total non-compliance with the Dutch (Kahin, 1963:90). In 1932, Hatta returned home and became involved with Sukarno in the nationalistic cause (Hanna, 1964:21).

Sukarno was arrested twice; the first time in 1927 and then in 1933. The Dutch also arrested Hatta and hundred of others, including Sjahrir in 1933. After that, the Dutch consigned Sukarno and Hatta into exile. Sukarno was sent to Endah and then to Sumatra, to the town of Bengkulu or Benculin, where he was confined until released by the

Japanese in 1942 (Hanna, 1964:30). Hatta and Sjagrir, along with numerous others, were sent to Boven Digul and were later relocated to Banda Neira, one of the original "spice islands" of the Moluccas, where they were confined until their release just before the Japanese invaded in early 1942 (Kahin, 1963:93-94).

Sukarno and Hatta, like the Burmese nationalist leaders, felt hopeless in their struggle for independence and their attempt to find foreign aid. Indonesian nationalists looked up to Quezon and, when he visited Java in 1934, they asked how to go about gaining independence. Quezon said "Open all these windows and shutters, then take away your guards. Hold your meetings in the open, and in front of the Dutch themselves...make a hell of a lot of noise! And if you do that long enough, you'll eventually get what you want." (Quirino, 1935:35-36, also see Friend, 1965:170, and Friend, 1988:53).What the Indonesians replied or thought was not recorded. Sukarno had made a hell of a lot of noise and the Dutch banished him to Flores (Friend, 1988:53). For these Indonesian nationalist leaders, therefore, it seems that they were "waiting for Japan" (See Daḥm, 1969:211-224). Sukarno, who had already declared in 1929 that the Pacific War would hasten the coming of freedom, looked forward to the outbreak of the Pacific War by saying that Indonesian "would receive help from other Asian peoples" (Dahm, 1969:216).

Unlike Phibun and other nationalist Asian leaders, Quezon did not need Japanese help to achieve his major aim. The Philippine nationalist movement did not move closer to the Japanese influence because American policies had been initiated to develop self-government and permit Filipinos to gain their independence. When the Americans completed their takeover of the Philippines in 1901, they decided to

promote Filipino political participation towards the distant goal of self-government. President William McKinley, in 1900, asserted that the goal of US policy in the Philippines was to guide the Filipinos to self-government (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987:40). Following this mandate, the first Civil Governor, William Howard Taft, launched a program which highlighted: mass education; expansion of health services; expansion of the civil bureaucracy based on native participation; and Filipino political participation, beginning with local elections (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987:43-44). At this political level, it allowed Quezon to emerge as a major political figure, who had led the nationalist movement and obtained the independence by peaceful means, by persistently and continuously pleading his cause in the halls of the U.S. Congress and the White House.

Quezon's political career had run for twenty-eight years during which he had held the foremost electoral positions that his country could offer (Senate President and President of the Commonwealth) during the crucial years of the movement for national independence. He started out as a provincial fiscal in Mindoro and Tayabas (1903), provincial governor in Tayabas (1905), and an assemblyman (1907). His close relationship with some of the most influential Americans in his area-Philippine Constabulary Chiefs H.H. Bandholtz and James Harbord, Judge Paul Linebarger and James Ross - were a major factor in his rise to prominence. From the assembly, Quezon went on to become resident commissioner in Washington, D.C. (1909-1916), returning to the Philippine political scene in 1916 as senate president until 1934, then becoming the first president of the commonwealth (1935-1944), a position he held even during the tenure of the Government-in-Exile in Washington until he died in 1944 (See Cullinane, 1984:59-84; and McCoy, 1989:114-156).

During his political career, Quezon was one of the most persistent and successful leading advocates for national independence. The route to independence advanced step by step in the early 1930s (See Friend, 1965:95-108). Following the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, a self-governing Filipino government - the Philippine Commonwealth - and Head of State had been installed, even though the Americans still retained ultimate sovereignty. They, however, agreed on a timetable for the transition to full independence by 1946 (Friend, 1965:136-148).

This timetable made the Philippine nationalist movement entirely different from those of Burma and Indonesia. The Filipinos did not need any help from the Japanese. Instead, Japan appeared as a threat to the success of the post-independence Republic of the Philippines (Steinberg, 1967:22-25; Friend, 1965:169-183). In this sense, Quezon still cooperated with Americans and prepared to defend against Japanese attack when Japanese imperialism became more menacing throughout the later 1930s. In 1935, Quezon asked Douglas MacArthur to come to the Philippines to develop a military plan to make the islands secure. MacArthur was appointed military adviser to the Commonwealth government and was basically responsible to Quezon (Steinberg (1967: 20-21). On April 1, 1941, Quezon created the Civilian Emergency Administration (CEA) to prepare civil defense plans for the country. Later in the month, an alien registration law was passed, primarily to check on overseas Japanese (Steinberg (1967:25). During this period, Quezon frequently reiterated that the Philippines would fight with the United States against Japan: "At stake is our own future independence and the assurance that independence may endure" (Morton, 1953:354-355). Not surprisingly, Quezon decided to leave and set up the Government-in-Exile in America when the Pacific War arrived (Quezon, 1946).

Prior to the Pacific War, Phibun and his neighboring Asian leaders intended to solve problems stemming from their concerns over independence and Western powers, and learned how to deal with both the West and Japan in order to maintain and obtain their goals. Phibun intended to co-operate with Japan because he learned that only by collaboration with them could Thailand stand as an independent and equal partner in overthrowing the Western domination of Southeast Asia. Phibun's alternative was similar to that of the leaders in Burma and Indonesia, where nationalists felt hopeless in their struggle for independence, unlike Quezon in the Philippines, where the Japanese appeared as a threat to the success of a full sovereignty. When the war arrived, Phibun's choice was clear. Like his neighbors, Phibun wanted to reach his country's major aim - Independence - so he chose to co-operate with the Japanese. Quezon, on the other hand, had learned that by working with the Americans that they would allow the Philippines to gain her own independence.

Co-operation with Japan

In Asia, as in Europe, many people resisted or collaborated with the occupants. Their reactions ranged from determined armed resistance in China, to general welcome in Indonesia, with many variations in between. When the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Phibun chose to collaborate with the Japanese rather than to resist them because it offered the advancement of Thai interests. The same situation prevailed in both Burma and Indonesia, though not in the Philippines. In the two former countries, the leaders first attempted to assure their own political survival and then to advance the cause of whatever national, factional or communal group they were leading (I have applied this idea from

McCoy's analysis, see McCoy, 1980:5). The ways that Phibun and his neighboring Asian leaders tried to deal with Japan were not too different from one another. They manipulated the Japanese skillfully to further their own political ends and in a manner that left the Japanese military confused or vengeful but rarely in command of the situation. There was also resistance, within their co-operation.

Although the emergence of Japan afforded Thailand an opportunity to satisfy the political needs of the leaders of the 1932 revolution on the one hand and to serve national interests on the other, it would be an exaggeration to say that Phibun was ready to join Japan before the Pacific War started. Unlike Burmese leaders, Phibun decided to co-operate with Japan only when the nation was invaded and there was no prospect of help from the Western powers, especially from Great Britain (See Kamon Pensrinokun, 1988:130-150; and Aldrich, 1988:209-244).

When Japan invaded Thailand on December 8, 1941, Phibun let the Japanese forces pass through his country to attack Burma and Malay. After that, he decided to collaborate with Japan by signing a Treaty of Friendship and Military Co-operation and subsequently declared war on the United States and Great Britain. (On December 21, 1941, a military pact was signed with Tokyo. On January 25, 1942, the Thai government declared war on the United States and Great Britain.). This was the first step taken by Phibun to try to assure his political survival. For instance, Phibun argued that Thailand had to co-operate with Japan militarily in order to prevent the latter from occupying the country (Kobkua, 1995:252-254). Conversely, a failure to co-operate with Japan would turn Thailand into an occupied territory, something Phibun had been working hard to avoid from the early stages of the war. It cannot be denied that this military co-operation was, to Phibun, the best

possible way to save the nation, as well as to strengthen the political power base of his faction, a military group within the People's Party.

On the strength of the Military Pact with the Japanese, Phibun could advance the cause of his faction and nation. By manipulating anti-Japanese attitudes, he could eliminate the civilian faction from his cabinet. Pridi, the leader of the civilians, was appointed a member of the Board of Regents, essentially a non-political function. Three other leading civilian ministers, Direck Chainam, Thawee Bunyaket, and Khuang Aphaiwong, were also eliminated from the cabinet within two weeks following the attack on Pearl Harbor (Charnvit Kasetsiri, 1974:54-55). Phibun now had a free hand to pursue his policy toward the cause of nation.

To advance the cause of the nation, Phibun had tried to accomplish several objectives. One of them was to continue territorial expansion, which he carried out during the second stage of his goal of reclaiming "lost territory". In May 1942, Thai troops marched into the Shan States and occupied the area around Keng Tung in northeastern Burma. This acquisition of the "United Shan States" or "Original Thai States" was confirmed by a treaty with Japan in August 1943, at which time the Japanese also turned over to Thai administration: Perlis, Kedah, Trengganu, and Kelantan - the four Malay States that King Chulalongkorn had transferred to Britain in 1909 (Wyatt, 1982:258).

It should be noted that Phibun's policy to deal with the Japanese was not only a line of co-operation but also a line of resistance. The broad policy line of the nation was well summarized by Phibun when speaking to his Chief of Staff in 1942: "Which side do you think will be defeated in this war? That side is our enemy." (Net Khemayothin, 1957:1) In this sense, Phibun was also prepared for resisting Japan

when the time came. As the war situation changed, Phibun himself made some efforts for the anti-Japanese underground, which was in contact with China. He also planned to improve the roads leading to the northwest to allow ready communication with the Thai forces in the Chiang Mai area and the Shan region. It was in this direction that he anticipated linking up with the Nationalist Chinese in February 1943 for joint operations against the Japanese (Reynolds, 1994:171-172).

In 1943, Phibun also undertook a crash project to relocate the national capital to Phetchabun, some 300 kilometers north of Bangkok. In his Phetchabun strategy, Phibun wanted to relocate his military headquarters to a more secure location and await the right moment to turn against the Japanese (Reynolds, 1994:171). However, his project was denied and his regime fell in 1944 because of an internal political conflict, particularly between his faction and that of Pridi's (See Sorasak, 1991 and 2005). Many civilian factions, including Pridi - the leader of the Underground Free Thai Movement, together with the elected assemblymen, disagreed with Phibun's plan. His government was replaced by a more pro-Allied one, which conducted intense maneuvering to repair Thailand's relationship with the Allies, while maintaining its relationship with Japan (Batson, 1980:282-283).

Burmese leaders, unlike Thai leaders, had already co-operated with the Japanese before the war began. As we have seen, Aung San had joined the Japanese Training Program in early 1941. When the war started, Aung San worked with Colonel Suzuki in Bangkok to establish the Burma Independence Army (BIA) and to prepare for the Japanese invasion of Burma (Becka, 1983:74-75). While Dr. Ba Maw was waiting for the Japanese arrival, Aung San and the BIA left Bangkok to march into Burma on December 31 1941. After Japan's occupation of

Rangoon in March 1942, Dr. Ba Maw escaped from the Moukout jail and contacted the Japanese in May. On August 1, 1942, the Burmese Executive Central Administration, an occupation government, was set up in Rangoon with Dr. Ba Maw as Premier (See Ba Maw, 1968:228-250).

Like Phibun, Dr. Ba Maw and Aung San tried to strengthen their political power and advance their national goal of independence during the occupation. To strengthen their own political power, they attempted to enhance their political power base. Aung San emphasized that the Burmese national liberation movement should rely on its own strength: he thought that the most important task was to build up strong national armed forces (Becka, 1983:105). Thus, he concentrated on strengthening and disciplining the Army (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1984:22). Aung San, as the commander in chief of the BIA, and some Thakins tried to maintain and advance their positions in the Burma Defence Army (BDA). After Burmese Independence was proclaimed in 1943, the BDA was reorganized and renamed Burma National Army (BNA). Another Thakin, Nei Win, became the new commander in chief of the BNA, after Aung San had taken the post of Defence Minister (Becka, 1983:116-118).

Dr. Ba Maw first established his political power base and party in November 1942, when he managed to combine the two main organizations of the defunct Freedom Bloc into a single party - a coalition called the Dou Bama-Hsinyetha, with himself as President (Becka, 1983:104). This party was the only legal party at that time and continued its major role in Burmese politics during the occupation. After Burmese independence was proclaimed in 1943, Dr. Ba Maw launched a new political party known as the Greater Burma Party to displace the Dou

Bama-Hsinyetha Coalition. The professed task of this new party was to contribute to a closer unity of the nationalist ranks and to more effectively mobilize the people for the construction of the "New Order" and the prosecution of the war (Becka, 1983:133).

On August 1, 1943, Burmese independence was proclaimed. The Japanese declared Burma to be an independent and sovereign State, promulgated the new constitution, and formally announced the election of Dr. Ba Maw as Head of State. The Head of State also held the office of the Prime Minister. Some Thakins were also members of the cabinet: Aung San - Minister of National Defence ; U Nu - Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, the majority of the posts in the government of Independent Burma were held by the Dou Bama-Hsinyetha Coalition, similarly to the Burmese Central Executive Administration of 1942 (Cady, 1964:576).

The Burmese leaders' policy to deal with the Japanese was not merely a line of co-operation but a line of resistance as well, like that of Phibun's. After independence was proclaimed, it soon became clear that the independence was only nominal. While Dr. Ba Maw remained in the role of collaborator, Aung San was in favor of launching the anti-Japanese resistance movement by co-operating with the Allies. In July, 1944, Aung San tried to combine the major anti-Japanese movements, the Communist Party of Burma, the People's Revolutionary Party, and the Young Army Resistance Group, establishing a United Anti-Fascist Movement, finally known as Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). Aung San was elected the President of this league. The AFPFL contacted the British Army while still co-operating with the Japanese. By obtaining weapons from both sides, the AFPFL brought its resistance out into the open in March 1945 and continued

its fight until the Japanese surrendered (Becka, 1983:166-174; Taylor, 1980:169-174).

The Indonesian leaders, also like Phibun, decided to co-operate with Japan when the Japanese arrived. On February 14, 1942, the Japanese attacked and quickly overran South Sumatra. Early on March 1, they landed on Java and within 8 days the Dutch forces surrendered on behalf of all the Allied Forces in Java. On March 17, 1942, Sukarno was invited to meet Colonel Fujiyama, the Sumatran Commander. Sukarno decided to accept Fujiyama's offer without any real hesitation (Legge, 1972:151-152). Sukarno believed that Indonesian independence could be achieved in some way or other through the Japanese occupation (Legge, 1972:149). Sukarno quickly contacted Hatta, Sjahrir, and some nationalists in Java. They agreed with Sukarno's decision and discussed future plans to deal with the Japanese (Kahin, 1963:104-105).

The Indonesian leaders' decision to co-operate with the Japanese was no different from that of the Thai and Burmese leaders. Sukarno and Hatta viewed the occupation as offering many opportunities to strengthen their political power and advance their national goals. After their decision to collaborate with the invader, Sukarno and Hatta became the leaders of the Indonesian puppet administration. Working with the Japanese, Sukarno and Hatta attempted to focus and mobilize a mass movement to gain support for their political power and national goals (Dahm, 1969:229-231).

To Sukarno and Hatta the best way of gaining mass support was to awaken, focus and mobilize nationalistic fever. For this reason, they created the Putera movement. On March 9, 1943, Sukarno began this movement, the Poesat Tenaga Rakjat (Center of People's Power), Putera or Poetera as it came to be known (Dahm, 1969:106). For the

Japanese, the Putera was primarily a means for rallying Indonesian support behind their war effort. But to Indonesian nationalist leaders, it was primarily the means for spreading and intensifying nationalistic ideas among the masses and focusing on concessions from the Japanese that would lead towards self-government (Dahm, 1969:107). Certainly, it did arouse Indonesian nationalism and advanced their cause towards independence.

The Indonesian leaders' policy in dealing with the Japanese, like that of the Thai and Burmese leaders, was both visible and invisible. Sukarno and Hatta were to work above ground through the Japanese. They would hold office under the military administration, serving the Japanese and softening the harshness of their rule wherever possible, and also using whatever opportunities that were offered for keeping nationalist hopes alive. Sjahrir would work to develop an underground network capable of organizing resistance against the Japanese authorities. He would listen to the Allied radio stations and maintain contact with Sukarno and Hatta, informing them of the underground's development and helping them to develop their own strategy (Dahm, 1969: 104; Legge, 1972:154). Nevertheless, Sukarno avoided any active resistance until the Japanese surrendered (See Friend, 1988:176-177).

When the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Phibun and his neighboring Asian leaders chose to collaborate with the Japanese because they thought that only in this way could they survive and advance the cause of their political power, factions, and nations. During the war, they manipulated the Japanese adroitly to further their own political ends. It cannot be denied that co-operation with Japan was, to Phibun and the Burmese and Indonesian leaders, the best means to save their countries and to strengthen their personal, political, and national goals.

In addition, it can be seen that although these leaders accomplished progress towards their own personal and political agendas, they also accomplished a nationalistic mission. In this sense, we can see that the Southeast Asian collaborators were nationalists, who were more concerned with maintaining and/or achieving their own cause rather than helping the Japanese expansionists, unlike those who collaborated with the Nazis in Europe. As the war situation turned in favor of the Allies, they swapped sides, without jeopardizing their political integrity because they had learned how to live with world politics. Both Phibun and Aung San illustrated this point.

Conclusion

There is no question that under Phibun, the government made a serious attempt to fashion a state according to the model of a world-conquering totalitarian nation. Fascist ideals and methods were liberally borrowed. But the Thailand of 1938-1944 was but a pale reflection of its Nazi, Fascist, and Japanese counterparts. It is thus a mistake to liken Phibun with Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese military because they played a different role. Phibun's actions showed how to live with world politics in a Southeast Asia context.

Phibun's actions during the Pacific War, therefore, needs reassessment. To better understand his behavior and role during the war, we should consider him as a member of the new elite and local nationalist leader in comparison to the other leaders of this region. Because the actions that Phibun resorted to during the war were, in the main, the only avenue open to Southeast Asian leaders, we can see why Phibun attempted to deal with both the Western and Japanese powers and why it occurred in a similar way to that of most of his neighboring Asian leaders, the exception being the leader of the Philippines.

As a local nationalist leader, Phibun joined forces with Japan because they had a common enemy, namely the Western powers. When the Pacific War arrived, he chose to co-operate with the Japanese. Like the Burmese and Indonesian leaders, Phibun thought that only in this way could he save his interests, people, and nation as well as advancing the cause of his faction and country. Due to its independent status during the war, Thailand was the country least directly affected by the war and the Japanese military action. The entrenched Thai elite survived the war unscathed and with only minor adjustments made to the governmental personnel.

Phibun's actions during the war did not damage his reputation or influence greatly. Although his government fell, Phibun was still the obvious leader of the Thai nation. After the war and as a result of British pressure, Phibun and some other political leaders were arrested and charged with war crimes. But in 1946, the Thai Supreme Court ruled that the 1945 War Criminal Acts were unconstitutional, and the collaboration charges were dropped. In 1948 Phibun once again became the Prime Minister and dominated Thai politics until 1957.

To most local nationalist leaders in Southeast Asia, it seemed that collaboration was the best way by which they could achieve progress towards their own personal, political, and national goals. For example, collaboration was often the only alternative against the Western powers. In addition, collaboration offered the only opportunity to arouse the population's fever and to build a united front, as well as to strengthen native political power. In this sense, it may be worthwhile to compare Phibun with the rest of Southeast Asian leaders, especially the Malaysian and Vietnamese.

Most notably it is not hard to see that collaboration and resistance in Asian and Southeast Asian context are different from those in European contexts. While these European contexts derived from its nation-state history, in prewar Asia, national sovereignty was either completely lacking or severely curtailed by foreign powers. In addition, while the European contexts were the perception of the war's being a political struggle between democracy and fascism, all of Asia had never had a democratic government. (See Conroy, 1972:43-46). Thus, the Western concepts of resistance and collaboration cannot readily be applied to Asia due to the difference between them in terms of the historical background and the context of political struggle. These also pose an array of interesting problems in terms of facts and concepts, whose significances are more appropriate for a different study.

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