



Revolution Interrupted: Farmers, Students, Law, and Violence in Northern Thailand (New Perspectives in Se Asian Studies)

Tyrell Haberkorn

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In October 1973 a mass movement forced Thailand's prime minister to step down and leave the country, ending nearly forty years of dictatorship. Three years later, in a brutal reassertion of authoritarian rule, Thai state and para-state forces quashed a demonstration at Thammasat University in Bangkok. In *Revolution Interrupted*, Tyrell Haberkorn focuses on this period when political activism briefly opened up the possibility for meaningful social change. Tenant farmers and their student allies fomented revolution, she shows, not by picking up guns but by invoking laws—laws that the Thai state ultimately proved unwilling to enforce.

In choosing the law as their tool to fight unjust tenancy practices, farmers and students departed from the tactics of their ancestors and from the insurgent methods of the Communist Party of Thailand. To first imagine and then create a more just future, they drew on their own lived experience and the writings of Thai Marxian radicals of an earlier generation, as well as New Left, socialist, and other progressive thinkers from around the world. Yet their efforts were quickly met with harassment, intimidation, and assassinations of farmer leaders. More than thirty years later, the assassins remain unnamed.

Drawing on hundreds of newspaper articles, cremation volumes, activist and state documents, and oral histories, Haberkorn reveals the ways in which the established order was undone and then reconsolidated. Examining this turbulent period through a new optic—interrupted revolution—she shows how the still unnameable violence continues to constrict political opportunity and to silence dissent in present-day Thailand.

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