Repression and resistance? French colonialism as seen through Vietnamese museums

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Abstract

The paper examines how resistance to colonial rule is officially represented in contemporary Vietnam. It does so by analyzing selected museums - which are all state-controlled - in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Although Hanoi's rich colonial era architectural heritage is slowly being recognized, this reassessment has yet to find a parallel in Vietnam's official museum discourse. The manner in which the imperial legacy is treated or ignored today through the didactic medium of the museum helps us to understand how contemporary national identity is constructed in opposition to empire. Vietnam's imperial history remains shadowy, indicating a continuing post-colonial malaise. The fact that museum representation must cater both to an internal audience of Vietnamese and an external audience of tourists, donors, potential investors and foreign dignitaries helps to explain this lack of clarity.

Full Text:

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Impact of the French. Resistance. Vietnamese Nationalism. Phan Boi Chau. The French are foreigners. They are weak. Colonialism is dying. The white man is finished in Asia. But if the Chinese stay now, they will never go. As for me, I prefer to sniff French shit for five years than to eat Chinese shit for the rest of my life.” Vietnam 1945-1946. The Impact of Korea on Vietnam.

1.) War seen as part of the same strategic theatre
2.) Increase to $133 million in aid
3.) French position weakens in late 1950; defeat. at Cao Bang – Chinese role in helping Vietnamese
4.) French General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, WWII hero, – some success in 1951; appealed for more American

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