



Language

Thailand has suffered frequent intervention by the military in politics since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932. This history has been marked by a series of coups. Popular opposition began to contest this pattern: mass protests led by students in 1973 led to the fall of the existing military dictatorship. But military influence in politics was not at an end.

After a military-dominated government seized power in February 1991, a renewed popular campaign for democracy began in early 1992, which crystallised round the demand that General Suchinda, the Prime Minister, should resign. Nonviolent resistance began in April with a hunger strike by a prominent politician and continued with weeks of demonstrations and public assemblies demanding democracy. When moves to resolve the crisis within parliament failed, hundreds of thousands gathered to protest on May 15. The government violently suppressed the demonstration, killing a minimum of 52 protesters, but General Suchinda was forced to resign and new elections were held in September 1992, leading to a coalition government headed by a civilian.

Boonyarattanasoontorn, Jaturang ; Chutima, Gawin, [Thai NGOs: The Continuing Struggle for Democracy \[1\]](#), Bangkok, Thai NGO Support Project, 1995, pp. 188

Callahan, William A., [Imagining Democracy: Reading 'The Events of May' in Thailand \[2\]](#), Singapore and London, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998, pp. 199

Chaiwat, Satha-Anand, [Imagery in the 1992 nonviolent uprising in Thailand \[3\]](#), In Zunes; Kurtz; Asher, [Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective \[4\]](#) (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [5]), Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 158-173

Hewison, Kevin, [Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation \[6\]](#), London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 301

An overview of society and politics in Thailand. The Introduction briefly discusses the background to May 1992. Andrew Brown, 'Locating Working Class Power' (pp. 163-78), challenges the mainstream interpretation of May 1992 as an expression of the increased power of the middle class and civil society groups, which demonstrated the absence of working class power, suggesting commentators have an over-simplified model of united working class action.

Paisal, Sridharadhanya, [Catalyst for Change: Uprising in May \[7\]](#), Bangkok, Post Publishing, 1992, pp. 116

Paribhatra, Sukhumbhand, [State and society in Thailand: How fragile the democracy? \[8\]](#), Asian Survey, Vol. 33, issue (September), 1993, pp. 879-893

Samudavanija, Chai-Anan, [Thailand \[9\]](#), In , [Student Political Activism: An International Reference Handbook \[10\]](#) Westport CT, Greenwood Press, , 1989, pp. 185-196

Covers student activism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sivaraksa, Sulak, [Loyalty Demands Dissent: Autobiography of a Socially Engaged Buddhist \[11\]](#), Berkeley CA, Parallax Press, 1998, pp. 248



Sivaraska (an 'engaged' Buddhist) is a prominent social critic, who dared to compare the military to 'termites'. Edits the journal Seeds of Peace, which comments on problems in the region.

See also:

Gene Sharp, [Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential](#) [12], ([A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements](#) [13]), pp. 299-314

Kurt Schock, [Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies](#) [14], ([A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements](#) [13]), pp. 125-41.

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