

Myanmar's Revolutionary Situation & Political Theory



Synopsis

Since a coup of February 2021 armed groups in Myanmar and their political affiliates have been competing for sovereign power over the whole country. Although civil war and high stakes political contestation of military rule are nothing new there, this time things are different. This is fully a revolutionary situation, in the sense that Mona El-Ghobashy (2021), following Charles Tilly, has written of Egypt; one in which coalitions of contenders are advancing claims against the state that are endorsed by very significant parts of the citizenry in conditions in which rulers are unable to suppress them. It is an historically significant situation not only for Myanmar's peoples but also for scholarly understandings of revolution in this century. Confronted by those facts, I ask what possibilities Myanmar's revolutionary situation holds for collaborative political theorizing that, rather than rolling out general propositions to be tested once more in a specific case, proceeds from situated interpretations of how revolution happens so as to address the question not of why people revolt, but of what it means that they do, in the ways that they do.



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