

TEACHING FRANCE IN CAMBODIA

Ellen Furlough, University of Kentucky

I think that exercises that ask students to (a) gain a general narrative of events and (b) analyze different ways to interpret those events would be useful and effective. This approach would work in a comparative colonialism/empire unit. It could also be used in a unit focused on European history, in line with new approaches suggesting that colonies were as important for the “making” of the history of the “metropole” as the “metropole” was for the making of the colonies. Finally, a unit on the French presence in Cambodia in particular, and Indochina more broadly, could be useful for teaching the (Second) Vietnamese War in American history. For the latter, there are several film series on America in Vietnam that have the French period as the first installment.

Sources for teaching

Secondary

- The “country studies” for the region from the Library of Congress at <http://countrystudies.us/cambodia/l.htm>
- Pertinent sections from *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, edited by Norman G. Owen (2005)

Primary

- Selected texts from France that have been translated. Most Western Civilization textbooks, for example, have an English translation of Jules Ferry’s 1890 speech on colonialism and industrial growth. One can also be found in David Thomson, *France Empire and Republic, 1850-1940: Historical Documents*, Part IV, Section A, on “Colonial Relations.” A good collection that contains both primary and secondary texts is: Alice L Conklin and Ian Fletcher, *European Imperialism, 1830-1930* (1999) In the Problems in European Civilization series.
- Maps of French Indochina
- Travel accounts: Excerpts from Harry Franck, *East of Siam*(1926) and others such as André Malraux’s *The Royal Way*. There are also a good number of articles on French Indochina in *National Geographic*. These include W. Robert Moore, “Along the Old Mandarin Road of Indo-China” (July 1931). Others can be found in the *Readers Guide* in any academic library. Many university libraries have these older National Geographic magazines bound and sitting on the shelves, and thus they can be easily copied for students