



VIOLENCE AND THE COUP D'ETAT, 6 OCTOBER 1976

The aims and the brutalities

1. On Wednesday October 6th 1976, at about 7:30 a.m., Thai police, on the order of the government of Seni Pramoj invaded Thammasat University, using terrible war weapons and shooting indiscriminately. The police were aided and abetted by the forces of the "Red Gaur," the "Neighbourhood Scouts" and the "Nawapol." Some of these went into the University, with the police; others surrounded the University in order to attack those who fled outside. Those who were killed were left to die; those who were hurt were left unattended or killed; those who tried to escape, some already hit, ran the risk of utter brutality. Some were hanged; others were soaked in oil and burned alive; a great number of students were savagely attacked. Official news gave the number of the dead as 40; many observers estimated more than a hundred dead, and several hundred wounded.

Several thousand unarmed people surrendered peacefully: they were the students from various universities and colleges,

many were ordinary citizens; a number of University officials and faculty members on duty to look after the property of the University were also arrested with the rest.

When those arrested were taken to the police stations and other places of detention, they were further subject to physical and mental attacks. Some were tortured to reveal the names of their teachers, friends and companions.

2. Many groups of people have always wanted to destroy the forces of those students and citizens who wanted democracy. In October 1973, during the carnage that eventually resulted in the change of regime, some people remarked that if twenty or thirty thousand students were killed then, Thailand would be peaceful. Some people still hold this idea today. In the general election of April 1976, some political parties proclaimed that "Every kind of Socialism is Communism."

And a "Nawapol" monk, Kittivudho, stated in a press interview that it is not a sin to kill a communist. Even in September/October 1976, well-known people are reported to have said that it might be a cheap investment to kill some 30,000 of those who rallied against the return of Field Marshal Thanom.

3. Those who had lost political power in October 1973 were military and police officers, and officials of the Ministry of the Interior, particularly governors and district officers. Those who are afraid of losing their economic and financial power in a democratic system are industrialists, bankers, big traders, landowners. There are others who do not want Thailand to have democracy at any price. These groups of people have tried continually to destroy their opponents through various means: radio, television, the press, hand bills, anonymous letters, threatening letters, rumours, etc. They have organized as their tools various units which will be described in paragraph 20 and

subsequent paragraphs.

These various groups used, and are still using, the bogey of Communism for their purpose. Anybody who is in their way would be called a Communist, even Prime Ministers Kukrit or Seni, or high ranking Buddhist monks. At the same time, they claim for themselves alone, love and loyalty for the nation, religion and crown. All their political opponents are condemned for betraying these three institutions.

4. In September/October 1976, when F.M. Thanom returned to Thailand, he used the Buddhist religion to protect him against public opinion by becoming a monk. The attack and slaughter in Thammasat University were done under the pretext of protecting the monarchy.

The Hanging

5. F.M. Thanom re-entered Thailand on September 19th 1976, against protests from students, labourers, farmers, M.P.s and the general public. But this time, the protests followed a different course from earlier ones, including the recent return of F.M. Praphas. The protesters now said that they would give time and opportunity for the democratically elected government to solve the problem either by sending Thanom back or by arresting him and suing him for the crime he committed in 1973 and earlier. Meanwhile, posters were put up in public places denouncing Thanom, and rallies took place from time to time (until October 4th).

These actions met with violent retaliation from the anti-student groups. Two Thammasat students and one Chulalongkorn student putting up posters were attacked by thugs, the latter student seriously injured. At Nakorn Pathom, 60 km. from

Bangkok, two officials of the Electricity Authority went out one night to paste posters against Thanom's return. They were killed and hanged in a public place. Subsequently the government admitted that the assassins were members of the local police force.

6. In the demonstration against F.M. Thanom, "the October 14th 1973 heroes" joined in. These were the people who survived the military attack on students and the general population in 1973, but who were crippled and otherwise incapacitated as a result, and the relatives of those who died. These "heroes" fasted in protest outside the Government House for a few days, when they were subject to interference and ill treatment by the police and Government House officials.

On Sunday October 3rd, those heroes were brought into Thammasat University by the students to continue their fast. They were installed at the famous Bo Tree Court. The University authorities, foreseeing that big crowds would gather there, which would interfere with the scheduled examinations, on Monday the 4th wrote urgently to the Prime Minister and to the Minister in charge of University Affairs, asking them to provide an alternative safe place for the protesters.

7. At midday on Monday October 4th, the crowd gathered at Bo Tree Court as expected, about 500 strong from various universities and the general public. Two topics were raised at this meeting: (1) F.M. Thanom, and (2) the assassination of the two men at Nakorn Pathom. A parody of the hanging in Nakorn Pathom was enacted by two students, one of whom is Apinand, a second-year liberal arts student and a member of the dramatic society.

From the report of several teachers who went to look at the rally, the students acted well. No teacher or student reported

that he or she was struck by the resemblance of Apinand to the Crown Prince; nobody noticed any dressing up. Everyone understood that the parody was directed towards the hanging in Nakorn Pathom.

8. Next day, most newspapers published the news of the rally and the photos of the "hanging." From press photographs in general, one can now detect certain resemblance between Apinand and the Crown Prince; but not an absolute or intentional resemblance. In the photo published by *Dao Siam* ("The Star of Siam," long-time opponent of the students) however, there was a striking resemblance, so much so that it was thought that the photo in *Dao Siam* must have been retouched.

The Armoured Division Radio (also enemy of the students, famous for leading the attack on Thammasat University by bombing and arson in August 1975) took the matter up. They emphasized that the Student Centre was Communist, bent on destroying the monarchy, and that the students in fact dressed up Apinand to look like the Crown Prince whom they wanted to hang. *In their broadcast, they urged people to kill all the students assembled in Thammasat.* This broadcast was repeatedly made from 6 p.m. on Tuesday October 5th till the morning of Wednesday the 6th.

The Demonstration of October 4th 1976

9. The National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT) organized a rally at Sanam Luang (public green by the Grand Palace and in front of Thammasat University) on Friday October 1st, demanding that (1) the government deal with F.M. Thanom and (2) punish the Nakorn Pathom assassins. According to the students, this rally was in fact a test of public opinion.

During the weekend of October 2nd and 3rd, no rally was held in order to allow the weekend open-air market to take place. The next demonstration was fixed for the afternoon of Monday October 4th.

Some student leaders indicated that they fixed such demonstration at the beginning of October, because during this period, important posts among the military changed stands. Some commanders retired on September 30th. The NSCT learned that because some changes had caused dissatisfaction among the generals, there might be a coup d'état. If student power were thus demonstrated, it might prevent a coup d'état, according to the students. At the same time, the theme of the protest was as above described.

The Labour Council promised to cooperate by staging a one-hour strike on Friday October 8th, as a beginning.

When the NSCT rallied at Sanam Luang on Friday the 1st, several reporters asked M.R. Seni Pramroj the Prime Minister what he would think if the demonstration moved into Thammasat University. The Prime Minister replied that that would be very good. (Asked by reporters subsequently on this point, the Rector of Thammasat replied that that would not be good at all.)

10. The demonstration on October 4th took the same course as that in August against F.M. Praphas, i.e. when it rained, the crowd forced their way into Thammasat University at about 8 p.m.

The University authorities, according to the rule, reported the incident to the local police station which sent some 40 policemen to supervise the demonstration from a distance, at Wat Mahathat, together with the Deputy Rector for Student Affairs. With the crowd estimated at 25,000 - 40,000 people,

those 40 policemen would not be able to do much, unless they were prepared to use arms to prevent the crowd coming into the University. If they used arms, there would be a riot which nobody, least of all the government, wished to see. It was therefore a situation which had to be accepted. Besides, the demonstration was peaceful, in accordance with the law and democratic principles.

The Red Gaurs and Nawapol, students' opponents, gathered at another corner of Wat Mahathat. Because they were only a handful in number, they did not do anything then.

The NSCT crowd, reinforced by other citizens, spent that night and the following day and night at Thammasat. On Wednesday morning the slaughter began.

11. On that Monday evening, when the crowd broke into Thammasat, the Rector immediately telephoned the Chairman of the University Council, Dr. Prakob Hutasingh, who is also a Privy Councilor, and with his approval, declared the University closed in order to prevent any risk to other students, teachers and officials who happened to come into the University for other purposes. (On the occasion of the return of F.M. Praphas, the University was not declared closed until the shooting and bombing resulted in two deaths). The Rector also consulted and got the approval of the Minister in charge of University Affairs. He then reported in writing to the Prime Minister and to the Minister.

Mob Mobilization and Mob Rule

12. The Armoured Division Radio and other stations allied to it then embarked upon a campaign urging listeners to hate the students and people in Thammasat and continued to do so

for several days and nights. The main allegation was that these people wanted to destroy the monarchy. No mention was made about F.M. Thanom, except to excuse him. The Red Gaur, Nawapol and the Neighbourhood Scouts were told to do two things: (1) to kill the "Communists" in Thammasat; (2) to protest to the government for having left two right-wing former ministers out of the Cabinet (Samak Sunthornvej and Somboon Sirithorn).

For the first task, the Red Gaur and other hooligans were commanded to fire into the University from midnight October 5th until the morning of October 6th. From Thammasat, the defenders fired a few shots from time to time.

13. The insistence of the Armoured Division Radio was successful with the government. M.R. Seni Pramoj called an emergency cabinet meeting late at night on Tuesday the 5th, and decided to bring student leaders and Apinand in for investigation.

Early in the morning of the 6th Sutham Saengpratum, Secretary-General of the NSCT and a number of student leaders together with Apinand, in an effort to declare their innocence of any attack on the monarchy, went to see the Prime Minister at his house. But the Prime Minister had left for the Government House. He then telephoned the police chief and told him to detain the student leaders for investigation. At the time of writing, the result of this investigation has not been revealed.

14. The slaughter at Thammasat ("battle" is a wrong word, because it was mostly one-sided) by the police, with the approval of the Prime Minister, was exclusively a decision of the government. The Rector was not consulted; although he talked on the telephone with the Prime Minister at 11 p.m. on Tuesday, no mention of the plan was made by the Prime Minister. If the latter wanted only to call student leaders for investi-

gation, he had only to say so to the Rector, and the student leaders would have come peacefully. Violence would have been avoided; the use of force beyond government control, far in excess of necessity, would have been avoided.

15. The attack on the crowd in Thammasat University which was started by the Red Gaur, was followed at about 3 a.m. by deploying police forces all around the University. Heavy firing by the police started at 6 a.m. and continued in spite of the surrender signs posted by those inside. Requests for a temporary cease-fire to allow women out were similarly ignored by the police.

Arms in Thammasat?

16. The Armoured Division Radio and the Red Gaur all the time made out that there were heavy war weapons such as machine guns in Thammasat. That was one reason why in the morning of October 6th, the police forces, nervous as they were, became more and more ruthless.

This allegation of heavy arms in Thammasat dates back to 1974; but there were frequent occasions when this allegation was disproved. When the Red Gaur burned Thammasat in August 1975, or when the police went in to clear the areas after the Praphas demonstration in August 1976, there were no arms found inside at all.

Even this time, all the authorities could show as arms captured in Thammasat were two rifles, several pistols, some ammunition and some grenades. Nothing like machine guns or heavier artillery. It was just lies.

Ever since late 1974, politicians and student leaders found it necessary to be armed for self-defence, because the Red Gaur,

the police, the armed forces and their assassins began then to murder labour leaders, farmer leaders, student leaders and politicians and in none of these cases were the killers ever found. In general, there was some justification for being armed as self-defence.

It is regrettable that the police at mass demonstrations like the October one did not prevent armed violence by setting up road blocks to search for arms among the crowd. It is also well known that the police have always turned a blind eye when the Red Gaur appeared in public carrying machine guns and grenades and explosives.

In any case, this writer believes that all gatherings, political or otherwise, should be done in a peaceful manner and without any kind of arms.

17. Another allegation by the police and the armed forces was that Thammasat University had many secret tunnels which were used for illegal and subversive purposes. This was mentioned by Uthis Nagsawat in his t.v. talks, and published by several newspapers. It turned out to be outright lies. Mr. Damrong Cholvicharn, Director-General of Public Works, and Chairman of the appointed committee to study the damage to the University, stated in mid-October that there was no tunnel in Thammasat, that the allegation was only rumoured.

Uthis and many other spokesmen and spokeswomen of the Army Radio and Television and most newspapers also made many wild allegations regarding the University and their other adversaries. Lies are the order of the day.

The Destruction of Democracy by Mob Rule

18. Another demand by the Armoured Division Radio and the people behind it was to reinstate Samak and Somboon as

Ministers of the Interior and to purge three “left-wing” Democrat Ministers, i.e. Surin Masdit, Chuan Leekphai, and Damrong Lathapipat. This, in fact, was a sore point with the Armoured Division Radio.

In September, when Seni Pramoj resigned as a result of his party’s attack on his government’s indecision regarding F.M. Thanom, the Armoured Division Radio hired a large number of “citizens” to go on the air to voice “public opinion.” Those hirelings were prompted to say, many rather haltingly, that they wanted Seni to be returned as Prime Minister, and that bad members of the Cabinet ought to be purged. The people purged turned out to be Samak and Somboon, friends of the military, and the three “left-wing” Ministers were reinstated. So their propaganda backfired on them.

19. On Wednesday October 6th, then, the Armoured Division Radio succeeded in mobilizing the Neighbourhood Scouts, the Nawapol and the Red Gaur, and several other groups of the same family to gather in thousands in the Square outside Parliament in order to demand that the Prime Minister reconsider this cabinet formation. When the slaughter at Thammasat was done, the number of these groups increased and they continued their rally until the Prime Minister could not resist anymore. He promised to reorganize the cabinet in the afternoon.

About an hour later, a group of the Armed Forces seized power, at about 6 p.m.

20. It should be noted that, since October 14th 1973, the opponents of the students, labourers and farmers have kept on accusing the latter of using the method of “mob mobilization” and “mob rule” to undermine law and order and have condemned them for it. The activities of the Armoured Division Radio, the Red Gaur, Nawapol, the Neighbourhood Scouts and other

similar groups can be nothing, if not mob mobilization and mob rule. What should be condemned is the incitement to kill, and the use of arms to terrorize and undermine peaceful demonstration and the law.

And this did not just begin in 1976. Their activities started in 1974. The Red Gaurs were established by the Armed Forces, gathering hooligans from vocational students, ex-students, drop-out students and others in order to undermine student power, even while we were busy drafting the Constitution. The Foreign Press frequently made reports on them and mentioned Colonel Sudsai Hasdin as the organizer. There has never been any denial. The "Internal Security Operation Command" (ISOC) not only founded them, it also trained them in the use of arms, armed them and paid them out of its secret budget fund.

Since the middle of 1974, the Red Gaurs were able to carry guns, machine guns, and explosives in the open, immune from Police or Military arrest. Every peaceful rally by the NSCT was countered by them, using arms and explosives to kill or terrorize: in 1974 at a protest against certain provisions in the Constitution; at the 1974/1975 protests against American bases; at the protests against the return of Praphas and Thanom. In August 1975, they attacked Thammasat University. In most instances, there were a number of people killed as a result; even press photographers attempting to take pictures of the armed hooligans were assaulted. In the General Election of April 1976, the Red Gaurs were rampant, often attacking with guns, grenades and explosives the candidates that they labelled "left wing."

21. A few words on the Internal Security Operation Command. Apart from organizing the Red Gaurs, the ISOC was

responsible for the creation and guidance of a few other groups and units which worked for the military and the elements in the Ministry of the Interior. One such group was Nawapol.

The ISOC was originally called the "Communist Suppression Command" which became "The Communist Suppression Directorate." Later, when the Government decided to contact China, it dropped its anti-communist name and became ISOC. This organization was originally commanded by Field Marshal Praphas using the Armed Forces of which he was the C-in-C, and the Ministry of Interior (Governors and District Officers) of which he was the Minister.

The achievement of this organization can be summed up in terms. At its creation, more than ten years ago, its budget allocation was 13 million Baht and three provinces in the North East were declared a sensitive (Communist-operated) area. In 1976, its budget amounted to more than 800 million baht and the total sensitive area covered more than thirty (out of some 72) provinces.

The operations of the ISOC were all secret. Much of their funds were also secret, i.e. not subject to auditing. They may have killed some Communists; but they also killed and maimed non-Communists from the outset. Innocent villagers refusing to submit themselves to the local armed forces or local administrators were reported as Communists and killed. The infamous "Red Containers of Pattalung" in which villagers were burned to death was only one instance of their brutality and false accusation. In the "sensitive" provinces, villagers suffered and are suffering in all ways at their hands. Those who could escape went into the jungle and joined up with the Communists against the Government.

During the period of freedom, in 1974, 1975 and 1976,

Parliament attempted every year to reform the appropriation of the ISOC. Some members wanted to cut it out altogether; others wanted to make the appropriate subject to normal scrutiny and audit. But the ISOC remains intact and has been able to use public funds to destroy democracy.

22. Nawapol also came from the ISOC, which uses it as a weapon of psychological warfare, in conjunction with the armed Red Gaur. This organization works with landowners, business people, and monks, who want to keep the status quo in society, against students, labourers and farmers. The main theme is the threat to the wealth and profits of the rich, well-to-do and middle-income, should there be changes brought by the democratic system. Their activities consist in meetings, rallies, press publicity, writings and counter-demonstration. Their organizer, Wattana Keovimol, was introduced to the ISOC by General Saiyud Kerdpol from America. There were a number of people who thought Nawapol was going to help change society for the better and who were disillusioned, e.g. Mr. Sod Kuramarohit, a well-known enthusiastic "Robert Owen."

Nawapol, under the banner of a New Society, in fact works for the good old days of corrupt generals and capitalists.

23. The Neighbourhood Scouts, known also as Village Scouts, were organized from the model of South-Vietnamese grassroot defence against communists. They pretended to be non-political; but in reality, they again served and are serving capitalists and generals. In the General Election of April 1976, the Neighbourhood Scouts were able to influence the results in many provinces. In Vietnam, their American advisors met with failure; in Thailand the Scouts were successful because lies here have been more effective, and their slogan here is more effective. For the Nation, for the Religion and the King. The

Ministry of the Interior is responsible for this organization, usually inviting richer citizens to be chief-scouts and to pay for the rallies. The political rally of October 6th 1976 of the Neighbourhood Scouts provided a clear indication of their objective.

24. Apart from these three groups, ISOC and the Ministry of the Interior organized several other groups, similar in purposes. Some of the groups were just the Red Gaurs or Nawapol under new names, e.g. the Thai Bats, the Housewives Group, the Patriotic Front. The activities included distributing hand bills, anonymous letters, anonymous circulars, poison letters and intimidating telephone calls.

25. Political assassinations dated from mid 1974. Farmer leaders and trade union leaders were gradually eliminated. Next came student leaders, such as Amaret of Mahidol University and politicians, like Boonsanong Boonyotayarn of the Socialist Party of Thailand. In all these cases, the police have never been able to make any arrest. Suspicion grew that perhaps the police had an active role. When police killed police or when there was a rare attempt on the life of a right-wing politician, the culprits were soon identified.

26. During the government of M.r. Kukrit Pramoj in 1975, the mass media including t.v. and radio stations which belong to the government or to the Army began to be manipulated. General Pramarn Adireksarn, the Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Chart Thai Party, was responsible. Broadcasters and commentators must belong to the "right" wing and they must attack students, labourers, farmers and university teachers. The regulars among them were Dusit Siriwan, Prayad S. Nakanat, Thanin Kraivichien, Uthis Nagsawat, Tomayanti, Akom Makaranond and Utharn Snidvong. The control of the mass media persists today.

27. Most of the students are well-intentioned; they want freedom and democracy; they wish to help the under-dogs; they have set about correcting social injustice; they are not communists. Student power in this context is essential for parliamentary democracy. Hence those who want to destroy democracy have the NSCT for target, and false accusations are their chief weapon.

However, in the face of organized opposition as emerged in 1974 and 1975, the NSCT carried on their activities just as in 1973. At the height of their success in 1973, those in power and other politicians flattered them. Whatever they wanted, they were given. They were encouraged to go out in the rural areas to "teach democracy" as if democracy could be taught in such a way, let alone taught by young students to older villagers. The University student leaders then became overconfident, arrogant and created too many enemies among officials, landowners, businessmen. The NSCT thought their popularity would be enough to fight ISOC, the Ministry of the Interior and their allies. They protested on so many issues that people became indifferent, if not hostile. Most of their rallies attacked the government, elected or not. The subject of American withdrawal was taken up again and again, despite the promise of the government. Many of their exhibitions concentrated on extolling communist nations, none to counter-balance. Thammasat University was their favourite play ground, without the slightest regard to the University authorities. Thammasat then became the sole target of the "right wing." Spreading out the risk was beyond the imagination of NSCT. The strategy and tactics of the students remained predictable to the enemy, because they were the same all through. Their popularity also waned and although, still a force, the student power became weaker.

The criticism of the students, after they have sacrificed

and lost so much, may seem harsh and heartless. But I have often expressed this opinion to the students themselves and now it may serve as a lesson to be learnt for the future. I still think that the student movement has been law-abiding and peaceful on the whole and that the stand they have taken is morally right even if the tactics may have been counter-productive.

The Coup d'État

28. The people who seized power on October 6th 1976 called themselves the "National Administrative Reform Council" (NARC) to sound different from the "revolutions" of F.M. Sarit and F.M. Thanom, because those "revolutions" have become tiresome to the populace. In fact, there is no difference. All the ingredients were there: abolition of the constitution, abolition of the National Assembly, dismissal of the Cabinet, coercion, legislation by decrees and mass political arrests.

29. Clear evidence suggests that apart from this successful group, there are at least two other groups aspiring to seize power and abrogate parliamentary democracy. This may have been a preemptive coup, and because it took place before others, other aspirants were left helpless. Soon, we saw General Chalard Hirsansiri, coup expert and ally to the Chart Thai party, become a monk at Wat Bovornnives, the very temple where monk Thanom sought refuge. (Wat Bovornnives is now unrecognizable.) He was dismissed from the Army for failing to report to the new regime. Another general, Vitoon Yasawasdi, of CIA fame, who double-crossed Thanom in 1973, was told to go and supervise students in Tokyo.

In any case, this was a coup d'état—not an administrative reform by any stretch of imagination.

30. It has been the practice of all Thailand's coups d'état of the last twenty years to pay lip service to Democracy. In order to prepare for Democracy, the country would evolve in three stages:

- A. Stage One : Immediately after the coup, the leader assumes absolute power. Constitution, Parliament, Cabinet are all done away with. The leader issues decrees and orders which become the law of the land. He appoints his deputies, assistants, council, advisers. Permanent civil servants act as ministers. Political enemies and others are arrested.
- B. Stage Two : An interim constitution is declared. A cabinet is formed by the leader. A parliament is appointed by the leader to legislate according to the pleasure of the leader. Dictatorial power is still vested in the leader.
- C. Stage Three : The Parliament appointed in Stage Two has now completed the "permanent" Constitution. There is to be a general election of Members of Parliament. The leader of the revolution then prepares to influence the election.

Each stage is controlled by the leader. The duration of each stage varies according to the wish of the leader. In F.M. Sarit's coup, the dictator made it known that Stage Two would take at

least ten years and should not terminate while he lived. He succeeded in dying before the ten years were completed.

The arrests of political opponents and other dictatorial measures can take place any time, at any stage, thanks to the Anti-Communist Decree, the provision (usually Article 17) of the interim or permanent constitution, giving arbitrary powers to the revolutionary leader or the prime minister, as the case may be.

31. In the present coup, phase one lasted from October 6th to October 22nd. At this moment, we are in phase two. However, Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien has fixed the duration of phase two as four years. Phase three, according to him, will last eight years: in the first four years, he will still reserve some of his dictatorial power "in order to give time to the people to learn how to use their democratic rights."

32. The present course of the coup differs from previous coups in three main respects:

1) The revolutionary leader has not assumed premiership but appointed a civilian prime minister, and announced it fourteen days in advance;

2) According to the interim constitution promulgated on October 22nd, the prime minister and his cabinet enjoy less autonomy in administration than in the past: they are still controlled by the Advisory Council (all military); and

3) Untruths are more rife than in previous coups.

33. In every coup d'état in Thailand in the past, the leader was an army man. This time, the declared leader is from the Navy, and the deputy leader from the Air Force. It is generally speculated that Admiral Sangad Chaloryu perhaps was just a titular leader, because his temperament and control of the forces would not be such as to bring about the coup. The puzzle grew when a civilian prime minister was named, instead of the

Admiral himself. If the rumours are true, then who is behind the coup? It may have been planned before; but the way it was hurriedly executed after the Thammasat massacre, leaves one wondering.

34. The October 22nd constitution gives wide power to the prime minister. According to Article 21, which resembles Article 17 in previous constitutions, the prime minister can punish anybody in any manner he pleases. But this time, his pleasure is subject to that of the Advisory Council as well as that of his Cabinet, the key posts of which are appointed by the military (Article 18 and 21). The Advisory Council in fact is the October 6th NARC, i.e. 24 military and one police general.

35. Article 8 of the Constitution deals with individual freedom and rights. It has only one sentence: "The individual enjoys rights and freedom according to the law." We can guess who enacts the law.

Furthermore, the citizen has no access to truthful, impartial information. What he is fed with is the government's "facts." NARC has set up two committees dealing with information from the press. The first committee is to screen the newspapers and issue licences; the second to censor those that are licensed. In this way, about fifteen newspapers were not permitted to appear. The members of both committees mostly come from the "right-wing" newspapers. They are expert in lies.

The "right-wing" newspapers themselves are also experts in lies.

One example only. The "Star of Siam" published the news that Mr. Khamsingh Srinauk, a member of the Socialist Party was wanted by the Police and that his home at Korat was searched. They produced a group photograph seized at Khamsingh's house and said that the people in that photograph were plotting against

the nation. A European-looking man in the photo was identified as a Russian from the K.G.B. In Fact, the man is an American quaker and the group photograph was in fact taken at a seminar on the resettlement of people moved to make way for a dam, which several government officials attended.

This is typical of the lies which have existed since 1974. TV and radio are even worse because they fall under complete control of the "right-wing." One of the first actions taken by NARC to please the Armoured Division Radio was to sack five senior officials of the government-controlled Thai t.v. and radio for daring to be objective regarding the demonstration in Thammasat, refusing the allegations of the Armoured Division and the "Star of Siam."

The Cabinet of October 22nd 1976

36. Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien, is beyond reproach as far as his judicial duties are concerned. He often appeared on TV and radio programmes, speaking against Communism, and the NSCT. He is well-known as "extreme right."

He was educated in London, and on returning to Thailand some twenty-five years ago, he wrote prolifically on the need to change our society, so much so that he was reported to Sarit as being a dangerous Communist. Since then, he has been more cautious and has gone to the other extreme.

Thanin is intelligent and he knows that he is intelligent and efficient. The question is how he, an honest man, can tolerate being controlled by the Advisory Council, especially as some of the members of the Advisory Council are known to be the opposite of honest.

37. Within the Cabinet, the Military reserved three seats :

a deputy prime minister, the minister and deputy minister of defence.

There are eight cabinet posts filled by middle-rank civil servants: the second deputy prime minister, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Justice, Education, Health, and University Affairs. Several of these are Thanin's personal friends.

The Minister of Finance is a retired auditor, Agriculture goes to a seventy-seven year old pensioned official, Industry to a retired air-force officer, Communication to a woman who formally ran the White Bus Company in Bangkok.

The Minister of the Interior is suitable for the sobriquet of his portfolio: "the Mafia Ministry."

The Minister for the Cabinet Office, in charge of mass media among other things, is a liar and has been rewarded for his lies.

38. Those not yet thus rewarded are Professor Dr. Uthis Nagsawat, Akom Mokaranond, Utharn Snidvong, Wattana Keovimol, Tomayanti, Prayad S. Nakanat and their friends in the press, radio and t.v. (Latest news: the last three names have been appointed members of the National Reform Assembly.)

The Consequence

39. This writer recently, in an interview with the weekly *Chaturat*, (which was quoted in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*) stated that in the event of a coup d'état in Thailand, a number of teachers, students, labourers and farmers would take to the jungle to join forces with the Communists (without being Communists themselves). The news after the coup seems to confirm this statement. Furthermore, the violence in Thammasat

which caused great bitterness in students and other citizens, would tend to increase the number of refugees.

40. What is most regrettable is the fact that young people now have no third choice. If they cannot conform to the government, they must run away. Those interested in peaceful means to bring about freedom and democracy must restart from square one.

41. Within the Armed Forces, there is no unity. Defeated factions will renew their attempt to seize power. Numerous rumors of new coups persist. Perhaps Thanom will now emerge as the unifying factor, as in so many instances in our history when strong men came out of monkhood to unify the country? and what about Praphas? and what about Narong?

42. Whichever way the wind blows, the twelve-year plan for democracy announced by Thanin seems to be remote from the reality. There are too many factors working against this regime. But one thing is certain: basic human rights and freedom will be destroyed; the right of the betterment for labourers and farmers will be ignored; the people who will suffer most will be the common people.

43. When labourers cannot bargain with employers, when rural development is branded Communist, when land reform is Socialist therefore Communist, when the price of rice has to be kept down, when there is no representative of the people in Parliament, when the governing group is capitalist and military, the economic and social development will remain as before 1973. There will be more acute economic and social problems: the wealth and income gap will grow wide, the rural areas and urban slums will be neglected. The wealthy in Bangkok and other big cities will indulge in more luxury. Corruption in public life will prevail.

Educational reform, health service to rural areas, the decentralization of administration, all those endeavours begun during the free period, will be stopped and reversed.

44. The United States' influence in Thailand will increase, they will still expect Thailand to be in the front line in their anti-Communist strategy. For that matter, all the other ASEAN participants should be delighted: Thailand now joins the Dictators' Club as well as serving as the buffer Domino.

The new Thai Government will not be very friendly with their communist neighbours. NARC lost no time in sacking two or three senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for having "misled" the previous ministers into cordial negotiations with Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. This policy was attacked by the generals. The Vietnamese refugees, and the descendents of Vietnamese immigrants are the scapegoats. There are border problems in all three directions and any small incident could grow in such an atmosphere into a bigger armed conflict. Will such conflicts, if and when they happen, grow even wider?

45. This account and assessment seems to be gloomy and depressing.

Where is the light to come from?

*(Reproduced from the original Thai version
written on October 28th 1976.)*