

12. THE PEOPLE'S PARTY AND THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION OF 24 JUNE (1982)

Respectful greetings to the Thai people who love nation and democracy and who are fair-minded.

Khun Sawet Piamphongsan, chairman of the organizing committee of the celebration of Half a Century of Democracy, has notified me that since 24 June 1982 is the fiftieth anniversary of democracy in Thailand, various private organizations and groups in the country have joined together to organize a celebration of Half a Century of Democracy at Chulalongkorn University on 24–27 June 1982 with the objectives:

1. to commemorate the great work of those who dedicated themselves to establish the democratic system in Thailand;
2. to reflect on the problems of developing the democratic system in Thailand;
3. to disseminate democratic principles and promote political participation among the people;
4. to propose ideas for developing the democratic system of the government and relevant people;
5. to create harmony among democracy groups.

Let me express my gratitude to the chairman and members of the organizing committee, private organizations, and various people for recalling those who dedicated themselves to promote democracy, and for having the desire to help the Thai nation achieve full democracy following these aims.

Moreover, the chairman informed me that the committee, seeing I had a part in establishing the democratic system of government in Thailand, would like a speech from me to present to the Thai people on the occasion of the opening ceremony. I am happy to accord with the wish of you all.

Now to the subject of my speech. I think all of you, and the Thai people who love the nation and democracy and are fair-minded, see that the People's Party dedicated itself to serve the nation by founding democracy. Yet

there are still a number of people who set themselves up as enemies, and who through their own actions and through their underlings, vilify the People's Party in various ways which are opposite to your aims. When the news that you had initiated the celebration of Half a Century of Democracy had spread widely, these opponents increased their vilification of the People's Party. This reached a peak recently when someone wrote and distributed an article with the title "The first age of dictatorship" (*phadetkan yuk raek*), which began as follows:

The first age of dictatorship was born in the democratic system which the People's Party established on 24 June 1932. The first dictator was none other than an important person in the People's Party. After the victory over the Boworadej revolt in October 1933, he gradually extended his "shadow" until within less than seven years he totally commanded the power of dictatorship, and the whole country was in fear.

To the question why the People's Party should have destroyed democratic ideology so quickly, contemporaries of the People's Party might not give a clear answer, especially the members of the People's Party themselves, because the situation outside and inside the People's Party encouraged everyone to believe it necessary to entrust the central power to Luang Phibunsongkhram alone . . .

This article vilifies all members of the People's Party to damage their reputation and make them appear loathsome. Yet in truth many members of the People's Party dedicated themselves to opposing Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram when he acted against democratic principles, causing him to resign from the post of prime minister. On many other occasions, those who opposed him were imprisoned or had to flee overseas. The members whose reputations are damaged, or their heirs, have the right to ask the courts to investigate these slanderers. The above article goes against the aims of your committee.

However, so that my speech complies with the objectives of your committee, let me present on "The People's Party and the Democratic Revolution of 24 June".

In order to relieve me from having to speak in my old age, I have asked the chairman of the Thai Students Association in France to read my text. As for the summary at the end, I will deliver that myself.

THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

The situation for founding political parties in the absolutist period

Certain academics who set themselves up as opponents of the People's Party have scoured up many reasons to attack the People's Party. One such reason which they and their group have taught their disciples is that those who promoted the change of government of 24 June called themselves the "People's Party" without the people's consent. This is to persuade their disciples not to recognize the existence of the People's Party from its foundation. Thus let me ask those still living who can remember the absolutist period to please think back, and those born after that time to please study the situation for founding political groups in the absolutist period, and the proper analysis as follows.

In the absolutist period, people did not have the right to join together to form a political party. Hence founding a political party had to be done secretly, and in the case of a political party with the aim of overthrowing the absolute monarchy, very secretly indeed. It was not possible to call many people openly to join with a political party. Hence it is not possible to take the Kuomintang under the leadership of Sun Yat Sen as a model for Thai politics under the absolute monarchy because the Kuomintang used the concession zones which the Chinese government granted to foreign countries to call on large numbers of Chinese to join.

The seven people who initiated the foundation of the People's Party in Paris were full Thai citizens. Later they acted in secret, as was appropriate to that time, along with more than a hundred other Thai people who joined the People's Party as type-1 members who were the vanguard. Later there were many people of type 2 and type 3 who supported and joined with this vanguard. This all shows clearly that a considerable number of Thai people were of similar mind about changing the system of government on 24 June. However, they were not like those who want to act according to the Chinese strategy of countryside surrounding city, which requires millions of people to be of similar mind and to fight against the government, with many casualties.

Let me ask academics who are fair-minded to check whether there are political science texts of any country which teach that if you are going to found a political party whose name translates as "people", you must first present your case to a certain number of people of similar mind beforehand.

Suppose an academic states there is such a text. In the time since Thai governments have allowed the establishment of political parties, people have established parties called People's Party, Citizens Party, and Thai People's Party (led by Field Marshal Thanom) [*phak ratsadon/prachachon/sahaprachathai*]. Please judge whether any doctor or academic protested that

these parties used these names without the people or the citizens or the Thai people giving their consent.

The regent in charge of the capital and King Prajadhipok, the head of state of the Thai people, recognized the name of the People's Party from 24 June 1932

Genuine government documents show clearly that when the People's Party revealed itself to the people on the morning of 24 June 1932, the regent in charge of the capital and King Prajadhipok, who was the head of state of the Thai people, recognized the name of the People's Party from then onwards.

Before 24 June 1932 King Prajadhipok had travelled to Hua Hin and appointed Somdet Chaofa Boriphath, Kromphra Nakhonsawan to the post of regent in charge of the capital, with power in lieu of the king. On the morning of 24 June 1932, the People's Party invited him to the Ananta Samakhom throne hall. He made an announcement which indicates recognition of the People's Party, as follows:

Announcement

of the regent in charge of the capital

As the People's Party has seized the power of government of the country with the major intention that Siam should have a constitution, I ask soldiers, officials, and all people to help maintain peace and prevent Thais spilling one another's blood needlessly.

(signed) Boriphath

At 16.00 hours on 24 June 1932 Phraya Phahon Phonphayuhasena, military governor of the capital, invited the ministers and under-secretaries of various ministries to a meeting with the People's Party in the Ananta Samakhom throne hall to come to an agreement with the People's Party on the procedures ministries should follow, which was agreed as follows:

Agreement on the procedures for ministries to follow

Ananta Samakhom throne hall

24 June 1932

Today at 16.00 hours, the ministers and under-secretaries of the various ministries have agreed with the People's Party on the conduct of official business that:

1. For any ordinary matter for which there is a procedure already in use, continue as before.
2. For any matter previously forwarded to the king, bring the matter to the military commander of the capital.

3. In the case of conflict or doubt, bring the matter to the military commander of the capital.
4. Each ministry must inform its departments that now the military commander of the capital holds the provisional power of government. As for their responsibilities, the conduct of official business will proceed as before. Do not be excited.

Supphayok (Phraongchao)
Thani (Phraongchao)
Phichaiyat (Chaophraya)
Sithammathibet (Chaophraya)
Rachanikun (Phraya)
Phiphitasombat (Phraya)
Wimwathit (Momchao)
Mahosotsiphiphat (Phraya)
Withayaprichamat (Phraya)
Prasoetsongkhram (Phraya)

King Prajadhipok returned to Bangkok by special train leaving Hua Hin at 19.45 hours on 25 June, disembarking at Chitlada station at 0.33 hours on 26 June, and proceeding to Sukhothai Palace. He granted an audience to the People's Party at Sukhothai Palace at 11.00 hours on that 26 June.

Representatives of the People's Party attended the audience and took along a draft royal decree of amnesty for the change of government of 1932 for the king to sign in approval.

At that time there was no national constitution limiting the royal power. King Prajadhipok still had the absolute royal power to do anything on behalf of the people of Siam without anyone representing the people of Siam having to countersign the royal command.

King Prajadhipok graciously signed the royal decree whose content indicates recognition that the People's Party had a proper legal status, as follows:

**Royal decree of amnesty for the change in government of the country,
1932**

The People's Party is a party which has a strong desire to remove some rotten aspects of the Siamese government and Thai nation, and to develop the Siamese government and Thai nation to prosper, progress, and strengthen to equality with other countries and nations in the future. Hence it has seized the power of governing the country with the major aim of having a constitution, and has called on us to remain as king of Siam under

the constitution. Hence even though this action conflicts with the wishes of some members of the royal family and offends some of the members of the previous government, such events are common and unavoidable in all countries, no matter how advanced. Nevertheless, this is the first occurrence in the history of the world that such an event has taken place peacefully and without violence.

Although they invited high-ranking members of the royal family and some officials to come and remain in the Ananta Samakhom throne hall, that was only for the safety of the party and to ensure a smooth operation. No harm or contempt was inflicted on them, nor was there any such intention. All were treated considerately and according to due dignity.

In fact, we have already contemplated government by constitution. What the People's Party has done is correct, is in line with our views, and truly demonstrates good intentions towards the nation and people. They did nothing wrong nor did they have bad intentions.

For this reason a royal decree is issued as follows.

- Clause 1. This decree is entitled "Royal Decree of Amnesty for the Change of Government, 1932".
- Clause 2. This decree is in force from the time when the royal signature is affixed.
- Clause 3. If any action committed in this affair by anyone in the People's Party was against the law, let it not be held as against the law.

Promulgated on 26 June 1932
(signed) Prajadhipok

Besides the fact that Somdet Chaofa Boriphath, regent of the capital, and King Prajadhipok recognized the People's Party and held that it acted on behalf of the people, a large number of Thai people recognized the People's Party directly as well.

When the People's Party revealed itself to the people from 24 June onwards, a large number of those who knew about the matter accepted and approved the People's Party's action. The exceptions were only the minority who approved of absolutism even more than the king—the *ultra-royalists*.

The People's Party and the People's Party government invited the Sangha, which most of the people respect, to request every *wat* in the kingdom to explain to their adherents that King Prajadhipok, who is the supreme head of the Buddhist order, had graciously conferred the system of democratic government under the provisional constitution of 27 June 1932, which the People's Party requested in the name of the people. Later when the permanent constitution of 10 December 1932 replaced the provisional

constitution of 27 June, the People's Party and the People's Party government invited the Sangha to request every *wat* to explain to their worshippers in the same way. In addition, the Ministry of Education asked the Islamic head to explain to the Thai Muslims, and the head of the Christian church to explain to Thai Christians all over the kingdom in the same way. The Ministry of Education reported that the Buddhist, Thai Muslim, and Thai Christian adherents approved of the action of the People's Party, and also supported the People's Party and its government to implement the party's six principles. The ministry also confirmed that schools throughout the kingdom at that time taught students to understand the democratic system of government and the six principles of the People's Party. The Ministry of the Interior also confirmed that its officials arranged for staff at provincial, amphoe, and village levels to call meetings to let the people know and understand the administration which the king had granted at the request of the People's Party, and the six principles of the People's Party. The outcome was that the vast majority of people (with the exception of the minority mentioned above) approved what the People's Party had done for the people.

In addition, in over thirteen years that the People's Party was responsible for administering the country and overseeing the work of the bureaucracy, the People's Party and its governments arranged for regular annual celebration of the constitution (except in some years when there was war or emergency) both in Bangkok and every province. This demonstrated to the people that the People's Party governments acted according to the democratic system and the six principles. Nobody appeared to protest that the People's Party established the People's Party without the people's consent.

Why the promoter group was called the "People's Party"

Before people thought of promoting a change in government, and before many people and groups united together, each group had its own reputation and some had no name. But when those who wanted to change the government joined together, they used the name "People's Party", as I proposed in the meeting to establish the People's Party in Paris in February 1927. Subsequently, those who joined in the promotion of a change in government, both overseas and in Siam, used the name "People's Party" as it appeared in the announcement of the People's Party on 24 June 1932, when the regent of the capital and King Prajadhipok, the head of state of the Thai people, and the Thai people recognized the name of the People's Party as noted above. The promoters of a change in the system of government who became members of the Assembly took an oath in the meeting of the Assembly on 28 June to be loyal to the People's Party and securely uphold the party's six principles. In addition, the first cabinet and many subsequent cabinets

announced to the Assembly that they took the six principles of the People's Party as the policy of their governments (those interested can research this in official documents).

The reasons I used the name "People's Party" (khana ratsadon)

The origins of the Thai words "khana" and "phak"

The people who thought of joining together to change the system of government from absolutism to constitutional democracy—which at that time was called the system of government in which the king is under the constitution—had to establish an organization or political association, as called in English a "political party" or in short, a "party".

Before 1932, the word *phak* was not used to describe a political grouping or party either in the dictionary of the Education Ministry or in official usage. The navy used the word *phak* to mean various units of the navy, which was divided into three major units namely: 1. *phak klin* meaning the unit of regular ship's engineers; 2. *phak nawikayothin* (marine corps) meaning the regular land-based fighting unit; and 3. *phak nawin* (sailors) meaning the regular fighting unit.

At that time, academics used the work *khana* to translate the English word "party" which is reduced from the old phrase "political party". For instance, the phrase "Conservative Party" was translated as "*khana khonsoerwetif*", "Socialist Party" as "*khana sochialit*" and "Chinese Nationalist Party" or the Chinese Kuomintang as "*khana chat chin*" or "*chin khana chat*". The Kuomintang is still popularly called *chin khana chat* to this day rather than "*phak chat chin*" or "*chin phak chat*".

The organization or political association which was formed in Ro. So. 130 [1912] to overthrow absolutism in Thailand used the word "*khana*" as "*khana ro. so. 130*".

Let me ask those of you who are interested in the history of the Thai language to look at the true documentary sources. You will easily find that after King Prajadhipok granted the provisional constitution of 27 June 1932, a group of people set up an organization or political association with conservative aims under the name "*khana chat*" (national party), with Luang Wichitwathakan as general secretary. He had studied for a *parian* [the exam certificate given to a graduate of Buddhist theology], and knew Pali and Thai as well as English and French. But as the Thai dictionaries did not yet use the word "*phak*" for a political grouping or association, Luang Wichit used the word "*khana*" for his political organization or association.

Around 1937, H.R.H. Krommun Narathip, at the time he held the title Momchao Wanwaitayakon, proposed using the Thai term "*khana phak*" to translate the English "political party" or in short "party".

Officially the term "*khana phak*" was recognized to describe political

organizations and associations from the time that the constitution of 9 May 1946, clause 14 included the passage: "people have the freedom . . . to establish political parties (*khana phak kan muang*)".

Later the constitution of 24 March 1949, clause 39 changed the term "*khana phak kan muang*" of the 1946 constitution into "*phak kan muang*", that is, the word "*khana*" which came ahead of "*phak*" was dropped. The phrase "*phak kan muang*" began to be used officially only from 1949.

Remarks

According to this history of the Thai words "*khana*" and "*phak*", the name of the People's Party was established at a time when the dictionary of the Education Ministry and the Thai constitution had not yet used the word "*phak*". English-language documents from that period called it the "People's Party".

The Chinese encyclopaedia called *su chia chu su nian chian* which translates as "world knowledge annual", and the Chinese encyclopaedia called *su chia chu su* which translates as "world knowledge", printed in Beijing for many years running, called political groupings or parties in Chinese as "*tang*" as in "*sian lo kong chan tang*" and "*tai kua kong chan tang*". Later after the Second World War, "*sian lo kong chan tang*" was translated as "*phak kommiunit haeng sayam*" [Communist Party of Siam]. It was claimed to have been founded in Siam from 1930. And "*tai kua kong chan tang*", which was claimed to have been founded in Siam from 1942, was translated as "*phak kommiunit haeng prathet Thai*" [Communist Party of Thailand]. Hence there is a problem because, as I noted above, leaders only used the Thai word "*phak*" to describe political parties several years after these two organizations were claimed to have been established in Siam or Thailand. Hence did these two organizations translate their names into Thai using transliteration of the Chinese "*tang*" or did they use some Thai word?

Why the word "people" was used as the name of the party

I proposed the party should name the party as "People's Party" because all the promoters were true Thai people, and the members of the People's Party dedicated themselves and their efforts to the people to achieve democracy. As all democrats know, President Lincoln summed up the word democracy appropriately as "government of the people, by the people, for the people".

The word "promoter"

I proposed to the founding meeting that in founding a party or political association there must be *phu ko kan* which in English are called "*promoters*" who form the vanguard of the people. We thus agreed to divide the members of the People's Party into three types:

type 1: people who should be invited to join as members of the People's Party before the day of the attempted seizure of power;

type 2: those who should be invited after the attempted seizure of power had been launched;

type 3: those who should be invited on the day of seizure of power after there was a prospect of success rather than failure.

I explained in the book *Some Aspects of the Establishment of the People's Party and Democracy*, printed for the first time in 1972, as follows:

The People's Party called type-1 members "promoters of change in the system of government" or for short, "promoters". This indicated that people of this type were just the vanguard of the mass of the people who wanted more freedom and equality than under the absolute monarchy.

The monopolization of a political party's name appeared at a meeting of the Communist International after the death of Stalin. The Soviet Communist Party had re-established friendship with the Communist League of Yugoslavia which had also been invited to the meeting. Wu Siew Chuan, central committee member of the Chinese Communist Party, objected that the Communist League of Yugoslavia was not communist but had stolen the word "communist" to use in its party name. This shows that these central committee members of the Chinese Communist Party monopolized the use of the word "communist" only for their coterie.

AIMS OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

The aims of the People's Party were: 1. to change the government from the absolute monarchy to monarchy under a democratic constitution; 2. to develop the Thai nation according to the six principles.

To change the government from the absolute monarchy to monarchy under a democratic constitution

First, remember that the absolutist government had no law to limit the power of government. The king was above the law, and had absolute power to govern the country according to the royal will.

Hence on 24 June 1932 the People's Party seized the power of the state to change the government from the absolute monarchy to a monarchy under a democratic constitution by stages, as follows.

On 26 June the People's Party sent representatives to present the

“constitution for governing the country drafted by the People’s Party” for the king to consider.

On the 27th, while King Prajadhipok still had the absolute power to act on behalf of the people of Siam, he graciously agreed to affix his signature and confer the above-mentioned constitution. He added the word “provisional” to the title “constitution for governing the country”. He told the People’s Party to use this constitution temporarily and proposed that the Assembly set up a sub-committee to draft a permanent constitution for subsequent use.

Remarks

The provisional constitution of 27 June 1932 was drawn up totally in conformity with law and practice according to legal principle. This differs from many constitutions which are invalid.

The constitution of 27 June established the system of monarchy under a democratic constitution as the transition between the absolute monarchy which had governed Siam for several thousand years and the democratic system which had just begun (see the details in that constitution).

On the morning of the 28th, the Assembly established under the provisional constitution of 27 June held its first meeting. Among the many agenda items in the report of this meeting 1/1932 of the Assembly, there was one important item, namely to establish a sub-committee to complete a draft of the new constitution. The report of the meeting runs:

9. Chaophraya Thammasakmontri (speaker of the Assembly) stated that the next item was the establishment of a sub-committee to complete a draft of the new constitution.

Luang Pradimanutham announced that this constitution is provisional because we created it in a time of emergency, and hence there may be some errors. So a sub-committee of people with knowledge and expertise in this matter should thoroughly check, amend, and expand to a complete new draft.

Chaophraya Thammasakmontri stated that, if this is the case, let a sub-committee be chosen and entrusted with drafting an amended constitution.

The meeting selected:

Phraya Manopakon Nitithada
 Phraya Thepwithunphahun Sarutabodi
 Phraya Manwaratchasewi
 Phraya Nitisatphaisan
 Phraya Pridanarubet

Luang Praditmanutham
Luang Sinatyotharak
as the seven members of the sub-committee.

Later the Assembly resolved to add two members, namely Vice-Admiral Phraya Ratchawangsan and Phraya Sriwisanwacha.

Those who teach and study the history of the Thai constitution using authentic documents rather than gossip (or what the British law of evidence calls hearsay) should give justice to the People's Party that among the nine names on the constitution sub-committee, only one was a member of the People's Party, namely "Luang Praditmanutham". The other eight were highly qualified persons who were not members of the People's Party. Some teachers have taught their students to misunderstand that the constitution later known as the "constitution of the kingdom of Thailand" (1932) was drafted according to the wish of Luang Praditmanutham (Pridi Banomyong). This is teaching falsehoods. The first point is that, in practice, Luang Praditmanutham alone could not force or influence the eight other highly qualified persons to agree to his views alone. The second point is that, Phraya Manopakon, the chairman of the drafting committee, announced to the Assembly on Friday 25 November 1932 that the constitution, hereafter called the 1932 constitution, was communicated to King Rama VII, as appeared in the report of the meeting of the Assembly on 25 November 1932, as follows:

In addition let me (Phraya Mano) advise that in drafting this constitution, the sub-committee communicated with the king throughout, to the point where it could be said that it was a joint process throughout. The draft proposed here has been submitted for royal approval on every point, and been approved. And to say the king approved does not mean merely that he approved the content presented to him. It was more than that. The king was very pleased with the draft. On this point, let me take this occasion to speak to certain points of the constitution as points to lead your thinking when considering and debating in the days ahead.

Those who teach about and study the constitution of 10 December 1932 will find that clause 16, which has been an enduring article of that constitution, provides that: "the Assembly is composed of members elected by the people". This shows that this enduring clause of the constitution follows the democratic system, in that the members of the Assembly were elected by the people, not appointed.

The parliament under this constitution consisted of the Assembly as a single chamber with no Senate.

The chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution of 10 December 1932, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Assembly on 25 November 1932, explained as follows.

Section 7 is temporary. The provisional constitution laid down three time periods. These temporary sections will be in force only before the third and final period. The importance of this section lies in clause 65, which establishes that the Assembly has type-1 members elected by the people and type-2 members appointed by the king. The reason for having two types of member is that we have only just had a constitution, and familiarity of working with a constitution is not yet widespread. That is the reason for including as members people who are familiar with the work and who can help the process, along with type-1 members elected by the people.

If we read other new constitutions, such practice is always found. When in future the members elected by the people can work on their own, we will proceed like that from that time on.

In addition, before speaking in the Assembly, Phraya Mano informed the cabinet that the king approved the inclusion of this temporary item, saying that changing the government from absolutism to constitutional monarchy was "an important change of basic principle" in the system of government, and hence required sufficient time for the new system to supersede it smoothly.

Clause 65 of the provisional section of the constitution of 10 December 1932 runs as follows.

Clause 65. As long as the people who have the right to elect members of the Assembly according to the provisions of this constitution still include more who have not completed primary education than those who have, but not exceeding ten years counted from the inauguration of the provisional constitution of Siam, 1932, the Assembly shall consist of members of two types in equal numbers:

1. type-1 members elected by the people according to conditions laid down in clauses 16 and 17;
2. type-2 members appointed by the king according to the Act on the Election of Members of the Assembly for the Duration of the Provisional Section of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Siam, 1932.

On 15 August 1940, Khun Buratsakankitti Khadi, MP (type-1) for Ubon Ratchathani, with the support of not less than one-in-four of all type-1 MPs, proposed to amend the [term of the] provisional clauses of the constitution

from ten years to twenty years, citing many reasons concerning national security.

The government of the time (Field Marshal Phibun was premier) saw that a major war had begun in Europe since 1939, and the Japanese war on China had penetrated to Indochina and was expanding towards Thailand. Hence the government agreed with the amendment proposed by this type-1 MP.

The meeting of the Assembly passed a resolution on the principle of amending the constitution by a majority of at least three-quarters of all members. Then according to the procedure for amending the constitution as provided in clause 63, it debated and passed the new law on 19 September 1940.

After the temporary section had been in force for fourteen years, it was abolished, as noted in the preface of the constitution of the kingdom of Thailand of 1946 as follows:

Then Nai Pridi Banomyong, currently holding the post of regent, advised Nai Khuang Aphaiwong, the prime minister, that the king had granted the constitution to the Thai people now for fourteen years. Although the democratic constitutional government had brought progress to the country in many different ways, and the people were truly grateful for the benefits of this system of government, public affairs had changed considerably. Hence it was time to abolish the temporary section of the constitution, and to amend the constitution. The prime minister took this matter for consultation with type-2 MPs and the promoters of the constitution. When agreement was reached, on 29 July 1945 the government of Nai Khuang Aphaiwong proposed to the Assembly a motion to establish a special commission to examine whether and in what ways the constitution should be amended to be appropriate to the situation of the country and to make the democratic system of government more complete.

The Assembly established a special commission to examine the constitution according to this proposal. This commission worked all through the governments of Nai Khuang Aphaiwong, Nai Thawi Bunyaket, and M.R. Seni Pramoj.

Subsequently M.R. Seni Pramoj's government established a committee to collect opinions and draw up the provisions of a draft constitution. When this committee had finished, the cabinet deliberated and amended the draft further, and then proposed it to the regent. The regent met and consulted with type-2 MPs and the promoters of the constitution. The meeting set up a committee which studied and made amendments. Then a type-2 MP proposed the motion to the Assembly to amend the constitution. The Assembly deliberated, accepted the principle, and appointed a special commission.

The Assembly's special commission deliberated, made amendments to the constitution, and introduced the matter to the Assembly. The Assembly deliberated and then submitted the matter for royal assent. The king studied the matter and considered that his people had achieved the qualifications for looking after state policy and were capable of developing the country to progress towards international civilization (*sakon arayatham haeng lok*).

Hence there is a royal command, according to the advice and approval of the Assembly, to promulgate this constitution from 10 May 1946 onwards for use in place of the constitution of 1932, the constitution amended with the name of the country of 1939 [i.e. from Siam to Thailand], the constitution amended with provisional clauses of 1940, and the constitution amended on elections of 1943.

The constitution of 9 May 1946 provided for a parliament consisting of a Senate and Assembly.

Members of both Assembly and Senate were elected by the people, not appointed, and hence were the full representatives of the mass of the people in considering resolutions in the Assembly and upper house. Hence the constitution of 1946 was a democratic constitution which fits the definition of "full democracy" according to the Royal Institute dictionary's definition of "democracy" as "the system of government which holds that the will of the people is paramount".

Clause 24 of the 1946 constitution laid down that from then on:

The Senate is composed of members elected by the people, with eighty members in total.

Members of the Senate must not be serving officials.

Election of members of the Senate shall be indirect and secret.

Notes

Apart from stipulating that senators be representatives elected by the people, the constitution of 1946 also laid down that "members of the Senate must not be serving officials" to prevent the government ordering officials under its own authority to stand for the Senate. This would have given the government, which is the executive, power over senators, who are the legislature, which would violate the principle of democracy.

The number of senators was limited to eighty persons, which was less than half the number of 178 MPs elected under the rules of clause 91 of the 1946 constitution.

The 1949 constitution, which was the model for the 1974 constitution, which people have proclaimed was the most democratic of any Thai

constitution, provided that senators would be appointed, not elected by the people.

Even so, it still stipulated that the number of senators would be a hundred. This meant that, at the onset of the 1949 constitution, senators outnumbered MPs by one as the provisional section of the 1949 charter had ninety-nine MPs (elected by the rules of the provisional constitution of 9 November 1947 which the “8 November Coup Group” established and which is known as the under-the-water-jar constitution) and they remained as MPs under the constitution of 1949 as well. Subsequently additional MPs were elected under the rules of that constitution, but the number was only twenty-one, which when added together with the ninety-nine transferred from the under-the-water-jar charter, brought the total number of MPs under the 1949 charter to 120, only twenty more than the number of senators.

After the promulgation of the full democracy constitution of 9 May 1946, which the People’s Party held fulfilled the duty announced to the people on 24 June 1932, the People’s Party dissolved itself. The promoters and People’s Party members parted company to undertake their own activities. One group went into personal businesses not connected with politics. Another group, who preferred to serve the nation through politics, entered various political parties in accordance with each person’s vision. For instance, Nai Khuang Aphaiwong and friends entered the Democrat Party; Rear-Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat and friends entered the Constitutionalist Party; Nai Sanguan Tularak and friends entered the Sahachip (unionist) Party; and so on. I entered no party.

Remarks

The democratic system of the 1946 constitution was in force for only one year, five months, and thirty days. Then a group of people called the “Coup Party” (*khana ratthaprahan*) seized the power of the state and demolished the democratic system set up by the 1946 constitution.

Subsequently many other people and groups, who were not the People’s Party, governed the country by systems different to that of the People’s Party. These parties and people went by many different names, for instance

1. The Coup Party (8 November 1947)
2. The Provisional National Executive Party (29 November 1951)
3. The Military Party (16 September 1957)
4. The Revolutionary Party (20 October 1958)
5. The Revolutionary Party (17 November 1971)
6. The National Forum (10 December 1973)
7. The National Reform Party (6 October 1976)
8. The Revolutionary Party (20 October 1977)

9. Governments established under various systems other than a democratic constitution.

The six principles of the People's Party, which were announced to the people on 24 June 1932 and which the People's Party fulfilled before dissolving itself on 9 November 1946, were as follows

Principle 1. To maintain the independence of the country in all forms including political, judicial, economic, etc.

Let those interested please recall the status of Siam or Thailand before 24 June 1932. At that time Thailand had no independence or full sovereignty because it had had to make unequal treaties with several modern capitalist countries under what is known as "imperialism". These countries had special rights over Thailand. For instance, the Thai courts had no power to try and convict people under the jurisdiction of foreign countries who committed crimes on Thai soil. The government had to send these criminals to the foreign consular court. Later, however, some countries such as Britain and France allowed the formation of foreign courts where cases concerning those under the jurisdiction of these two countries were heard and decided jointly by Thai judges and European legal advisers. Yet the treaties laid down that if the views of the Thai judges and the European legal advisers conflicted, those of the European legal advisers would prevail over those of the Thai judges with no accounting whether the Thai judges outnumbered the European advisers. Even further, the treaties laid down that the British consul had the power to withdraw cases from the foreign court and transfer them to the consular court. Several countries' consulates had courts and jails specially for people under their jurisdiction. There were other special rights which in the language of international law are called "extraterritoriality".

On the economic side, those imperialist countries had special rights under the unequal treaties. Originally Thailand was forced under the treaties to collect import duty at only 3 percent ad valorem. Although the absolutist government amended the treaties to increase its rights, the customs duty was still limited in many ways. Further, several imperialist countries had special rights of forest, mining, and shipping concessions, and had power and political influence over the country.

In 1937 the government in which Phraya Phahon, head of the People's Party, was prime minister abrogated the unequal treaties with several imperialist countries, and negotiated new treaties which gave Thailand independence and full sovereignty.

Later during the Second World War when Thailand was invaded by the Japanese army, many members of the People's Party participated in the Seri Thai movement which joined with the Allies to fight the Japanese invaders.

This caused the Allies to recognize the independence of the Thai nation, as is shown by several documents which I printed in the book *Letters from Pridi Banomyong to Phra Phisan Sukhumwit about the records of the Seri Thai concerning actions in Kandy, New Delhi, and USA*.

Principle 2. To maintain public safety within the country and greatly reduce crime.

I hope that those of you who are fair-minded can compare the statistics of crime before 24 June 1932 and after, and see how much the numbers were reduced after 24 June. And compare the statistics of crime from 8 November 1947, the day of the demolition of the democratic system of the constitution of 9 May 1946, to the present, and see how much they have increased.

Principle 3. To improve the economic well-being of the people by the new government finding employment for all, and drawing up a national economic plan, not leaving the people to go hungry.

I hope many people already know that I, on behalf of the majority of members of the People's Party, proposed an outline national economic plan according to the third principle. But obstacles arose which prevented implementation of the plan I proposed. Even so, the People's Party attempted to improve the economic well-being of the Thai people by finding employment for large numbers of people, thus not leaving the people to go hungry. Let those of you who have good will please study the statistics of theft resulting from hunger from before 24 June 1932, after 24 June 1932, and since 8 November 1947.

Principle 4. To provide the people with equal rights.

Please study the history of inequality among Thai people. You will find that before 24 June 1932, royal family members from Momchao upwards had many rights superior to those of commoners. For instance, if these people were accused in a criminal case, they did not have to appear before the criminal court but before the specially established court of the Ministry of the Palace. And so on.

Later, the provisional constitution of Siam of 27 June 1932 established the equal rights of all Thai people. This was the model for the constitutions of 10 December 1932 and 9 May 1946.

Principle 5. To provide the people with liberty and freedom as long as this freedom does not conflict with the above four points.

I hope those of you who are fair-minded can compare the extent of the freedom enjoyed by people before 24 June 1932, after 24 June 1932, and after the coup of 8 November 1947, the day of the demolition of the demo-

cratic system under the 1946 constitution. Even though the rights and freedoms of the people have been written down, in practice they have been evaded by declaring emergencies and declaring martial law beyond the call of necessity.

Principle 6. To provide the people with full education.

I hope those of you who are fair-minded can compare how education was limited before 24 June 1932, how people had full rights to education after 24 June 1932, and how people were limited in education from 8 November 1947 to the present.

THE CAUSES OF THE ERRORS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION OF 24 JUNE

The causes of the errors of the democratic revolution of 24 June fall into two types: 1. causes of errors similar to those of all political movements; 2. causes of errors specific to the People's Party.

Causes of errors similar to those of all political movements, namely conflict within the movement

Every political party which competes in a parliamentary system has conflict within the party. Even though a party may have the power of government, conflict inside the party may still persist. Hence many parties break into parts or dissolve completely.

As for parties or movements in armed struggle, conflict and division is evident in the same way.

The history of the feudal age displays examples of groups of people successfully using armed struggle against those in command of the state. Inside such groups there were people with greed and jealousy founded on massive egoism, who destroyed people in the same party to ensure they alone became the centre of the affair (*egocentrism*).

History displays an example in which a party or movement changed an absolute monarchy into a bourgeois democracy—namely the great revolution in France in 1789. After the movement was victorious over the old system, conflict arose inside the movement between progressives and reactionaries.

In China in 1850, the Taiping movement was able to triumph over the Manchu court in the southern region of China. It established its capital at Nanking and soon Hong Siw Chuan [Hong Xiuquan], the leader of the Taiping movement, established himself as the new emperor of China and appointed his deputies as lords of descending rank. As a result, mutual

conflict arose within the movement. In the end, the Manchu court returned to triumph over the Taipings. Later in 1911, the revolution under the leadership of Sun Yat Sen triumphed over and successfully demolished Chinese absolutism. Inside the movement, conflict arose and the movement broke into many parts.

Subsequently the Chinese people's liberation movement under the leadership of the Communist Party triumphed over the Kuomintang on the Chinese mainland and established the People's Republic of China in 1949. Conflict arose inside the Chinese people's movement and the Chinese Communist Party. The party was purged of those who followed the capitalist line and the groups which strayed outside the communist line.

In the Soviet Union and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, there has been evidence of violent conflict inside parties to the extent that people were purged for following far right or far left lines.

Conflict also arose within counter-revolutionary parties which triumphed over revolutions. For example, the French royalist faction made a successful counter-revolution but then conflict arose over the royal succession.

The Italian fascist and German nazi movements made victorious counter-revolutions over democracy, but internal conflict arose resulting in purges of people whose vision differed from that of the leaders.

Every party, every movement, calls on its members to be united and harmonious, but there is no evidence of any movement whose members have been united and harmonious throughout. This follows the natural law of conflict within human groups and societies, which is a long-standing and profound issue which deserves study.

Within parties or organizations which aim to change an old system of society into a new progressive system, conflicts have the following major causes.

1. These parties or movements are born in the old society before the new social system has come into being. The newborn party or revolutionary movement represents a new society which does not yet exist. A philosopher expressed the gist of this as: "The birth of a revolution is like a human before life who must first be born in the mother's womb". The old society is the birthplace of the revolution for a new society.

2. The party or revolutionary movement to establish a new society is thus comprised of people who were born in the old society. They form a progressive element, who forsake their standing in the old system and devote their lives to establish a progressive new society.

But as this progressive element is born and lives in the old society, they carry the residual vision and habits of the old society embedded within themselves. There are differences in the degree to which different people can abandon these old traces. These differences can be categorized as follows.

Those of the first type forsake the vision and habits of the old society significantly and permanently, and help the newly established society to develop and progress to achieve fuller democracy. Those of the second type forsake just enough to establish the new social system and no more. Those of the third type likewise forsake just enough until the new society is established. Then they revive the vision of dictatorship, slavery, and feudalism until it becomes a counter-revolution against the revolution to which they themselves had once devoted their lives by joining the party or movement. These are the people who come into conflict with the revolutionary element inside the party or movement.

Causes of errors specific to the People's Party

Point 1. Lack of study of the law of conflict inside political movements and of the historical examples mentioned above made the majority of members unheedful that some would revive the vision of dictatorship, slavery, and feudalism as a counter-revolution against the revolution to which they themselves had devoted their lives.

Point 2. Members focused on achieving victory through the tactics of seizing the power of the state without thinking carefully about how to sustain victory and avoid a counter-revolution which would cause the nation to walk backwards into a *khlong* [i.e. to regress].

Point 3. Because three of the People's Party leaders, namely Phraya Phahon Phonphayahasena, Phraya Songsuradet, and Phraya Ritthiakhane, had military knowledge and expertise, they were able to lead the party to success in seizing the power of the state. Many members had theoretical knowledge about establishing a country, but lacked practical expertise and lacked expertise in communicating with the people on a broad basis.

Point 4. Old bureaucrats were invited to join the government. I had hoped they would be more progressive than they acted. This created violent conflict within the revolutionary movement to the point where the parliament was closed and the permanent constitution of 10 December 1932 was abrogated.

SUMMARY

Let me present "The People's Party and the Democratic Revolution of 24 June" as I have outlined above, and let me confirm that the People's Party as a whole had the ideal and pure desire for full democracy, but its actions in pursuit of this ideal and desire had errors which delayed the establishment of the democratic constitution until 9 May 1946.

Although during the process the People's Party as a whole had to face

counter-revolution both inside and outside the party, the People's Party as a whole successfully developed the Thai nation according to the six principles, as I outlined above.

Please observe that in over thirty-five years—from the coup of 8 November 1947, which demolished government by the fully democratic constitution of 9 May 1946, up to 24 June 1982—democracy is still facing many setbacks.

Some learned academics who claim to be progressive have not helped the new generation to understand the true causes of the obstacles to the development of democracy. Rather they have been intent upon digging up the dissolved People's Party so they can fight against it. They have hunted down hearsay and used that hearsay as an academic basis to malign the People's Party, as I explained already. They accused the People's Party of failing to make the people understand the democratic constitution, such that some understood that "constitution' is Phraya Phahon's son". Those who have intellectual capacity must have noticed the symbol of the constitution with a pedestal as the base. That symbol was created since the time when the People's Party had the duty of governing or overseeing the government of the country. Thus the Thai people should not misunderstand that the "constitution' is Phraya Phahon's son". Some groups of academics should not show contempt for the Sangha for having been invited by the People's Party government to order every *wat* to explain to the people the essence of the constitution. They should not show contempt for the Islamic head, Christian head, officials of province, amphoe, and village who had enough intellectual capacity to explain to the people the essence of the democratic constitution.

I thus request the Thai people who love the nation, love democracy, and have a fair mind, to study the aims and correct methods to bring forth full democracy in Thailand within a time span no longer than the time the People's Party served the nation and the people.

Before ending this speech, let me thank the chairman and all the committee members of the celebration of Half a Century of Democracy again for the good intentions of your five objectives. And let me wish that all of you, including the Thai people who love nation and democracy and are fair-minded, be blessed with long life, good status, good health, and physical strength to achieve success in serving the nation and people to achieve full democracy in every detail.

Paris suburbs
24 June 1982