

WHEN LOYALTY DEMANDS DISSENT

*Sulak Sivaraksa and the Charge of
Lese Majeste in Siam*

1991-1993

Among those who trust (merely) in lineage, the King (*ksatriya*) is best; but best among gods and men is he of wise conduct.

Digha Nikaya

A universal monarch, a righteous and just king relays on the Dhamma. Respecting, revering and honoring the Dhamma as his sign and his sovereign, he provides for the proper welfare, ward and protection of his people.

Anguttara Nikaya



Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute
Ashram Wongsanit
Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation
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For Nilchawee Sivaraksa

Drawing on the front cover by Preecha Arajunaka
Photograph at the back cover by Grant A. Olson

Note: Sulak is pictured here after having been made an honorary member of a North American Indian tribe. The tribal chief then shared a peace-pipe with Sulak and asked the great spirit to grant him strenght in his struggle for justice.

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INTRODUCTION TO ROSES AND ROTTEN EGGS

Sulak's trial is political. The actual charges are defaming the King of Thailand and a former general, along with his associates; but there seems little doubt to one who has read the charges and the speech which gave rise to them, that the real issue is that Sulak's attack caused serious damage to the Thai military. For many years, at least since 1947 in Thailand, the military has either been in power, or has been the real power behind a thin veneer of civilian politicians who were, in most cases, former generals anyway. Sulak attacks the base of their influence and must therefore be silenced.

The story starts on 22 August 1991 in Bangkok when Professor Sulak Sivaraksa, Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Southeast Asia representative of Peace Brigades International, patron of the Burma Peace Foundation, founder of a cluster of non-governmental organisations, publisher and internationally-acclaimed author of more than a hundred books, and one of the most reputed theorists of a socially-engaged Buddhism, made a speech at Thammasat University. At the time the country was in the hands of a military junta, the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) which had taken power in a coup six months before.

The speech is a rousing call, 9 months before the May '92 Democracy Movement which brought down the NPKC, for the revitalisation of the students' and people's movement for democracy, and an analysis of the psycho-historical reasons for the suppression of that movement. He develops this into a sustained, forceful, humorous and carefully-crafted critique of hierarchical power as such, the military in general and the NPKC in particular.

He hits the NPKC and the military where it hurts most – in their legitimacy – by discussing the four historical sources of the legitimisation of power in Thailand: Nation, Religion, Monarchy and Constitution. He goes carefully and systematically into these areas, arguing that the military is

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(1) destructive and dismissive of nine-tenths of the people who comprise the nation; (2) insincere and uncomprehending towards religion; (3) disloyal to the King; and (4) anti-Constitutional. He is saying that in fact and in law, the military has no political legitimacy whatsoever, and the sooner it returns to the barracks, the better. This, and the example he might give to others to resist authority, is his crime.

A few weeks later the junta charged him with defaming the King and the coup leaders. The defamation of the generals carries a maximum sentence of 2 years prison, but defaming the King, the charge of *Lese Majeste*, is much more serious, and carries a maximum 15 year jail sentence which for a man of 60 is no light prospect. It is worth noting here that after the junta fell in 1992, following the bloody suppression of the Democracy Movement, those responsible for the killings were given an immediate royal amnesty, and although their decrees were subsequently declared by the courts to be null and void, the charges against Sulak remain. The reasons are not hidden too deeply: the military still retains its political power, although it is nominally back in the barracks, and Sulak's attack is still potent.

This is the context in which the present volume is published. There are cuttings from the Thai and foreign press which indicate the range of global interest in Sulak's case. There are letters and pleas to the Thai authorities, and testimonials and articles in his defence (representing only a fraction of those written) from an astonishing range of people and organisations. They are from diplomats, judges, anthropologists, sociologists, ecologists, Buddhist scholars and political scientists, Nobel Peace Laureates, US Congress members and Buddhist monks, from peace organisations, human rights organisations, children's organisations, the British aristocracy, Bangladeshi tribal leaders, Third World grass-roots and religious organisations, Western and Thai Buddhists and many more. They are from Thailand, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Europe, and from North and South America. They demonstrate a high degree of respect and affection for this man who is the epitome of the loyal opposition: an enthusiast for popular participation who is also a radical, but not uncritical supporter of the Thai monarchy; a devout Buddhist who criticises Buddhist monks, a Thai traditionalist and Buddhist philosopher familiar also with modern Western thought. Someone who is as willing to criticise Western consumerism as Asian asceticism, whose constant theme is the need to keep the human scale in an increasingly soul-less and mechanical world.

Among the testimonials and letters there is one exception to this chorus of enthusiasm. This is the article (pp. 92-103) on Sulak published in the *Executive Intelligence Review* of June 1992, a month or so after the Thai Democracy Movement. According to diplomats, this article was very influential in military circles, and has contributed to the unwillingness to

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drop the charges against Sulak. The *Executive Intelligence Review* is published in the United States by the Lyndon H. LaRouche organisation. Lyndon LaRouche is a former Trotskyite currently serving a 15 year jail sentence for fraud, whose global fantasies identify himself as the leader of a Platonic "humanist" elite battling a centuries-old conspiracy of oligarchs bent on subjugating the planet; they identify Henry Kissinger and Queen Elizabeth II of England as involved in the international narcotics trade. Other targets include the United Nations, the Ford Foundation, environmentalists and, not surprisingly, the "synthetic" Thai Democracy Movement which is seen as having been organised by US AID, the Ford Foundation and other conspirators, whose "point man" was the "Jacobin" Sulak Sivaraksa. Since the article has, apparently, been taken seriously, we include it in the anthology of testimonials. (Those interested in further information of *the Review* and its parent organisation should read Dennis King's *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism* (Doubleday, New York 1989).

We hope that this selection of letters and articles will not only help inform people about Sulak and his trial, but also about some of the vital issues facing today's world, which are in a real sense, focused on this event.

I. Press Cuttings from Bangkok

In a democratic system, the commoners are significant. In the last 40 years, they have been brainwashed into thinking that they are insignificant, stupid and poor, he said.

At present, they have gradually started to realize they are not stupid. They rely more on themselves than on the government for help. They grow rice following the traditional method and enhance their ancestors' wisdom, according to Sulak.

"This is a significant turning point in Thai society which should influence our neighboring countries like Burma," he said.

Asked about the qualifications of an idealistic politician, he said they do not exist. The Palang Dharma Party and its founder Chamlong Srimuang made a mistake in trying to establish an idealistic politician's image.

"Let's look for one who is least evil," he said, adding that it is 'all right' having politicians like Chuan or Deputy Prime Minister Banyat Bantadnan.

Democracy is not idealistic. The idealistic rule is dictatorship, he said, referring to Plato's idea in *The Republic* that the ideal ruler is the philosopher king.

Such an idea, Sulak said, cannot be applied to democracy which upholds the principle of accepting the clash of different opinions and decentralization.

Krissana Chairat

The Nation 21 March 1993

PROFILE : SULAK SIVARAKSA Anglo- Americans' Jacobin in Thailand

Virtually every individual connected to Thailand's synthetic "democracy movement" directs inquiring reporters to "the man behind it all": Sulak Sivaraksa. The movement, created by Anglo-American intelligence for the purpose of weakening or destroying the military, religious, and political institutions of that nation, is composed of hundreds of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), but is run by only a handful of individuals who overlap at these various NGOs. What they all have in common is their funding and direction from the U.S. government and intelligence institutions, and their connection to Sulak.

Sulak is now in exile, living mainly in the United States and Canada, with occasional trips to Europe. He is in a familiar environment, since he spent much of his adult life in the West, and, despite his firmly professed Buddhist faith, confirms that "most of my friends are Anglicans." His international organization, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, was spawned from the American countercultural

swamp left over from the 1960s and '70s in Berkeley, California. He espouses the most wretched forms of the British colonial ideology of the "noble savage," demanding that the Thai people be denied access to even the most primitive kinds of technology, in favor of the "joy" of backwardness and poverty. His hatred of science and technology parallels that of Cambodia's Pol Pot and the Maoists of China's Cultural Revolution.

Like the British-controlled Jacobin terrorists Marat and Danton, who directed the 18th-century French Revolution into mob assaults against science, against progress, so Sulak and his friends have been deployed to wreck the sovereign independence of the Southeast Asian nations, one of the last remaining areas of economic growth on this planet.

British education

Sulak was born to a wealthy Sino-Thai business family. He was educated in the best foreign schools in Bangkok before going to England for college. He spent nine years there, first at St. David's University in Wales, then at Middle Temple in London, where he qualified for the bar in 1960. Asked about his relationship with the British and the Anglican Church, Sulak replied: "This is my identity."

After a year in training as a broadcaster at the BBC, he returned to Thailand. He was set up as editor of the Social Science Association Press of Thailand, and its journal, the *Social Science Review*. The Ford Foundation was actively supporting and expanding the work of the Social Science Foundation throughout the 1960s and 1970s, setting up Social Science Institutes at the universities. Under Sulak's direction, the journal and a bookstore he opened became the focus of radical opposition to the Thai government. As he explained: "I went home in 1961 from Wales with all my Anglicanism. I was supposed to be upperclass, but (my magazine) became a torch in the dark world. All the students looked up to our magazine and they all came to see me and I became a small hero among a small group of people. . . and the demonstrations in 1973 started from my bookshop."

The "joy" of primitivism

The message Sulak delivers to the Thai youth is that of rabid anti-development and iconoclastic attacks on the institutions of state. On the potential for Thailand to emerge as one of the "Little Dragons" (economically powerful states in Asia), Sulak opined: "I, of course, was a very outspoken critic of this. I said that development means human development." This is the typical vocabulary of the International Monetary Fund and the U.N. ecological fascists, who justify the economic backwardness imposed by the IMF under the guise of ecological and "human development" frauds. The peasantry should be "self-reliant," without the benefit of fertilizers or "mechanical stuff," Sulak told an interviewer from

his home in Toronto. "Let's go back to our buffaloes, go back to growing with joy."

Sulak irrationally equates the Thai military with the most hideous forms of fascist and communist dictatorships. Thailand, despite severe problems of corruption, is generally considered to suffer, not from authoritarianism and lawlessness. Still, Sulak says that the Thai military accommodation to the Japanese in World War II (when the British offered no assistance whatsoever to Thailand's defense) shows their inherent fascism, and that the Thai military imitated the Nazis by accusing the Chinese minority in Thailand of being an inferior race, an enemy of the Thai people. "All this is never acknowledged," he says, and traces the military leaders of the postwar period to these imaginary roots. The Thai military, he insists, is on a par with the ex-Soviet and Chinese communist tyrannies.

Sulak's training in the modern form of CIA intelligence operations through NGOs was carried out during the mid-1970s in the United States. He was in the United States to lecture at the Smithsonian Institution, when he learned that he had been arrested *in absentia* in Thailand. He spent the next few years lecturing at the University of California at Berkeley.

At Berkeley, he met up with the myriad institutions that emerged out of the countercultural hey-day in Berkeley. The "New Religion Project" at the Berkeley Divinity School was actively profiling and shaping a wide variety of sects and cults for various purposes, while U.S. intelligence operations for Asia were using Berkeley as a major base for its operation.

One of the groups that emerged was the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, founded in the late 1970s, composed primarily of aging hippies who were "experimenting" with Buddhism. Later, in the 1980s, this group sought out Sulak to head a new international organization, providing him with backing and direction. This organization, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), according to one of its spokesmen, was based on the principle that "the Buddhist practice of wall-gazing was a selfish pursuit, and that Buddhists should become 'engaged'." Their first 'engagements' were efforts to stop nuclear power in Asia, save the whales, and other operations linked to such radical environmentalist groups as Greenpeace.

"Buddhist Socialism"

Sulak had been influenced by a Thai Buddhist sect headed by a monk named Buddhadasa, who was an advocate of "Buddhist socialism" was justified—in fact, necessary—provided only that the dictator was righteous. While this is a point of debate among Sulak's followers, it does not prevent him from denouncing the leaders of the current government as vile dictators, and even declaring that General Suchinda is not a Buddhist—

despite the fact that the ruling council of the Thai Buddhist Sangha visited Suchinda with a pledge of support as the legitimate head of state. Sulak boasts that the rural monks he has helped organize "take no notice of the hierarchy."

Sulak also attacked the king, specifically his involvement in the economic development of the country, claiming that this had "spoiled the monarchy." This earned Sulak the charge of *lese majeste*, which is one of the reasons he is now in exile.

As for the NGOs in Thailand which ran the recent violent revolt, Sulak claims to have instructed virtually all of their leaders, especially those behind the scenes. Fully aware of the source of their funding in the Anglo-American intelligence community (in fact, he is responsible for much of the fund-raising), he brags that they "have now become very much respected... So the people are captured by them... These NGOs have now become the democracy movement. Nobody trusts the government; they trust the NGOs." Sulak boasts, "I have become a hero again".

The following are excerpts from two interviews with Sulak Sivaraksa that were made available to EIR:

On his British identity: I was brought up in an Anglican college, in Wales. In fact, I am to have dinner with the Prime Minister of Canada tonight. This is my identity.

In 1961, having returned from Wales with my Anglican background, I started an intellectual magazine. Before I returned, there was nobody [doing] intellectual publications whatsoever. Anybody who criticized the military government was considered a communist. I did not know that. I went home in 1961 from Wales with all my Anglicanism I was supposed to be upper class. But I became a torch in the dark world. Then of course, all the students looked up to our magazine and they all came to see me and I became a small hero among a small group of people. So I started a coffee club, and that was the place where all the student leaders came, for 10 years, from '63 to '73.

I started a bookshop, and the demonstrations in 1973 started from my bookshop. It started with 11 people, and it ended up just like this time (1992). But this time, it was half a million people. I am supposed to be, you see, the originator of all this.

Founding the NGOs: From 1978 onward, for the last 14, 15, 16 years, I have been very active in founding various non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations have now become very much respected, because they are honest, composed of young people. They hardly get paid properly, and they work for an alternative. So the people are captured by them. I founded the first one 25 years ago. I usually was not the founder; I usually got more respectable persons to be the founders. People know I am behind the scenes.

We sent all this information to the Asia Watch, to the Asia Resources Center, so they came. The Children's Foundation—I am not really in the forefront, but the managing director was my secretary. All three of our organizations—they were all raided. All these organizations, in their opinion, are clandestine and anti-government. But we are working for the people, for justice, truth, and nonviolence. We have them all over the country now. In the north, there is a kind of networking—in the northeast, in the south. That is why this time, unlike October 1976, the demonstrations took place all over the country, not just in Bangkok, because the NGOs are involved everywhere.

The NGOs have been respected very much. In '73,'76 they were labelled communists. But now, in the last elections, The government asked the NGOs to supervise the elections. These NGOs have become the pro-democracy movement.

Nobody trusts the government; they trust the NGOs, partly because they have no power, and partly because they are known for honesty, and that is why the NGOs now command respect. In fact, you see, before Suchinda resigned, the NGOs came out together and set up a committee of seven to oversee all the demonstrations. All seven were ordered to be arrested. And later on there was a declaration of 17 more dangerous persons, and they are not allowed to leave the country, and they are all my friends, you see.

These seventeen people are very well-known, but those who are really working—my young people keep on moving from one office to another. They raided our office, but by that time, we has moved to another. At least our people are very well informed. We can get a great deal more information than the foreign journalists. And we do thorough research. These are the young people we know. Some may say I trained them, but I didn't train them. We work with them. It is good that I have been away for seven months—they don't need a *guru* or anybody.

Rejection of economic development: According to the *Wall Street Journal*, we are a dragon—Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and we are the fifth. I, of course, was a very outspoken critic of this. I said that development means human development, means spiritual, cultural development. Then economic or technology goes, but we must limit our greed. We are very greedy; we have destroyed all our forests and now we have to go into Burma to destroy the environment in Cambodia and Laos. We fish from the Gulf of Siam and we pollute our Gulf of Siam. We fish in the Gulf of Burma and Vietnam.

The World Bank was meeting in Bangkok in October. Everywhere the people demonstrated against the building of the dam to show the bank that we don't want that dam. Only the rich people want the dam. And again, the monks have come out for the people. We stopped many dams. We

stopped cable cars. We stopped high-rise buildings. So that is a good sign.

The noble savage: The poor must feel that they are important, whereas the present norm makes them feel hopeless, makes them feel stupid, foolish. So the Buddhists are now working with the poor to make them feel that they are important, and they can be self-reliant. They can grow for their own consumption, whereas the government tells them to grow for sale. The more they grow for sale, the more they are indebted, the more they have to import chemical fertilizers, they have to use mechanical stuff. Now the monks say: Let's go back to our buffaloes, go back to our growing with joy, the whole community.

In reality, the farmers have been brainwashed to believe the government, and they have seen that in the last 30 years, the more they follow the government line, the more they are in debt, the more their land has been destroyed by chemical stuff, and the more their environment has been destroyed. The only thing they have to do is to limit their greed. That means they shouldn't watch television, or if they watch television, they have to be mindful not to want what they don't really need.

So I think this is working. We are still blessed in our country with rainfall, with easy growing, and if we grow just for our own food and our own stuff, I think we can survive very nicely.

Economic growth is a great danger to our people.

Against the king: The people are not happy with the king.

My proposal was that the monarchy must curb its greed. The monarchy must not get involved with economic development. I feel that all the top institutions must limit their greed. The monarchy is now having one bank, the Siam Commercial Bank which has now gone into Cambodia. We have the Siam Cement company, a crown property. This has spoiled the monarchy in the long run. I said "In the long run, this is not good and the King was not happy with my remarks. I think we must preserve the monarchy, but it is better for the king to be poor"

Against Plato: My lectures in Chicago and at Harvard made very clear that there are two lines of thought, fundamentally. One is the worship of power; it goes right back to Confucianism, that the emperor has the mandate of Heaven; and right back to Platonic thought, of the philosopher king, in the West; it goes back to Hobbes and so on, that power is justified; and back to the Hindu concept, of the *deva raja*, the divine ruler. Whatever they have the "right" to do, they do it. That is not only Tiananmen Square, but also Ne Win, and of course the Thai also follow that line. The Thai have been influenced more by the Hindu concept, and, of course, later on, by the western colonial concept.

The Thai elites never understood the West properly. They only brought the prevailing norm, which is the worship of power, which is strongly advocated by Plato; the worship of money and greed, strongly

advocated by Adam Smith; or the alternative, a few who joined the Marxists, which is another kind of power, full of hatred, destruction. But the beauty of the West you have the real primitive Christianity, going right back to Christ, to Francis of Assisi, to the Mennonites, the Quakers—you even have this in the Roman Church, like Thomas Merton.

Against the Buddhist Sangha: The whole Buddhist concept has been, unfortunately, a compromise all along. The Thai hierarchy has been compromising with feudalism. The Sangha right now is quite feudalistic. But that is alienated from the teaching of the Buddha. We are the only country in the world left with a monarchy. The Sangha has been clinging to feudalism, and now they have come into confrontation with consumerism and capitalism, and they have joined it!

But luckily, in my country, the Sangha at the grass roots is implementing the fundamental teaching inspired by Buddhadasa. So in these recent years, people at the grass roots take no notice of the hierarchy. I can't give the numbers, but in almost every province we have these groups. They are active in alternative development, in looking after the environment. The norm of development is to get the rich richer, and the poor poorer, with the destruction of the environment. But the monks want human development first.

Destroy the Army: Looking at it positively, if the Thai democracy movement is clever, they will start working on the Armed Forces, divide the sheep from the goats, start working with some elements of the Army, and in the long run destroy the Army—if they are clever. But I am afraid that they are not clever. There are some people in the Army who are open to this.

Where does the Air Force stand? The Air Force is now playing a crucial role, but, unfortunately, the people also lump the Army and the Air Force all together. They don't divide the goats from the sheep, and the people have to pay the price for this. This is what I try to tell the people at home.

The Thai military is fascist: In 1939 (when the Japanese occupied Thailand), the military backed the wrong horse. Thailand imitated Hitler and Deutschland. The Deutsch were the Aryans, the superior race. And like the Deutsch, they said that the Chinese were the enemy of the Thais.

We must hate the Chinese even though they were our fathers, and grandfathers. You see, as I said, they were with Hitler and Japan, and they were defeated in the Second World War. But all this is never acknowledged.

On Suchinda: The pact in 1957 was that the Army and the civilians would share the spoils, but that the Army would remain behind the scenes. But in the last three or four years, the politicians got out of control. The politicians felt that the time of the *coup d'etat* was over, so they became

more corrupted and did not share with the Army people. So they became very angry. They kicked the politicians out in 1991, and claimed that they wanted to put the house right, that they wanted a clean, honest government—this was Suchinda. So people did not mind that the *coup* came.

But I gave a press interview at home and said that yes, people would not mind to begin with, but after three months, people would start minding. And it was true enough. So after three months I gave a speech at Thammasat University denouncing Suchinda—that the *coup* was wrong, that he did it for selfish reasons, that our country would suffer. He said that he wanted to save the monarchy. It is not true. He is not a monarchist; he is a Suchindaist. He says he wants to serve Buddhism. I said, this is not true. He is not a Buddhist. Buddhism believes in nonviolence. It preaches against greed; this man is greedy. It preaches against hate; this man is very hateful. Buddhism says to be careful about illusion; this man is an illusionist, because he is very selfish and egocentric. Of course, he was very angry. If he had ignored my speech, no one would have taken me seriously. But he put out an arrest warrant against me, and that's why I had to leave the country. So my speech became like a bible again, you see. I have become a hero again.

The only mistake that Suchinda made is that he wanted to come out into the forefront. The Army is very good at remaining behind the scenes and getting all the benefits. When you go to prostitutes, of all the dollars you pay there, some of it goes to the military man. The same with drug traffic or child labor. That's why these problems are not solved, because the Army is a major beneficiary of the problem.

On Chamlong: There is one guy that I am at a bit of a loss to account for: what he is trying to do, the way he looks at things. And that is this fellow Chamlong. He seems to be well motivated. He is a contradiction in himself. He tries to be very honest, but he still has a dictatorial approach. He has been educated by the military, so that they think the civilians are too liberal, they talk too much. At first he was very popular, but many were alienated by him. At this point, we must regard him as a fellow traveller, until he changes.

Sulak's U.S. support apparatus

From the United States, the entire array of non-governmental organizations founded by Sulak Sivaraksa and his followers receive logistical and conceptual support from a handful of "human rights" organizations. Among those organizations directly aiding Sulak's ventures are:

***Freedom House**, New York City. Chairman of the executive committee is Leo Cherne, a member of President Reagan's Foreign

Intelligence Advisory Board and an advisory board member of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University.

Another key individual in Freedom House was Carl Gershman, now executive director of the National Endowment for Democracy. Freedom House overlaps with the Jay Lovestoneite International Department of the AFL-CIO. Sulak was a featured speaker a Freedom House in May to a room full of reporters and representatives of foundations.

***Democracy in Asia**, Washington, D.C. Its head, Michele Bohana (see interview below), has been squiring Sulak around most recently; Sulak is reportedly on the organization's board. Also on the board is Elsie Walker Bush, who maintains regular political contact with her cousin, President George Bush, according to Bohana.

***Amnesty International**. The U.S. branch of the organization is running support operations for Sulak and company, and claims opposition leader Gen. Chamlong Srimuang as "definitely democracy movement." Amnesty was founded in 1961 and was exposed by its nominal founder as an offspring of British intelligence.

***Asia Watch**. One of a number of "Watches," it maintains close links with Freedom House. One of its operatives in Southeast Asia, Therese Caouette, is in constant touch with Sulak (see interview). Among other actions, Asia Watch is demanding that the United States "actively lobby loans to Thailand." according to a May 21 release.

***Asia Resources Center**. Working with a left cover, the center has close links with the National Council of Churches, and organized a pro-Sulak demonstration at the Thai embassy May 23.

***Lawyers Committee for Human Rights**. Funded by many of the country's most prestigious law firms, the committee is currently working on a project to prove that the amnesty granted by King Bhumibol of Thailand to former Prime Minister Suchinda is against international law. The committee works closely with the Union of Civil Liberties in Bangkok, one of the key NGOs in organizing the "democracy movement." The Union of Civil Liberties also gets direct funding from the Ford Foundation.

From outside Thailand, these organizations direct the NGOs. As one source explained, "In the last months, the NGOs have been particularly crucial in ensuring protection for the students, and providing support and that kind of thing against reprisals. In making declarations, in formulating principles, etc., so that this didn't just become another discontented student uprising kind of thing. NGOs played the role of ensuring in the public's mind what the struggle was about."

Among the NGOs in Thailand receiving direct support from these organizations are: Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Union of Civil Liberties, Coalition for Peace and Development, Project for Ecological

Recovery, People's Plan for the 21st Century, Democratic Doctors, Democracy Heroes' Fund, the Coordinating Group for Religion and Society, the National Institute of Development Administration, the Campaign for Popular Democracy, the Foundation for Children, the Duang Pratheep Foundation, and the Law Society.

Documentation

The following are excerpts from interviews made available to EIR.

Michele Bohana, director, Democracy in Asia

I think half the battle is won, but the other half is trying to firmly root democracy in the political process, when so much of the military is part of the picture, when Suchinda is head of the military.... He's not the entire military. The infrastructure of the military in Thailand is all-pervasive.

...They have got to disengage the military from the political process, if this is going to last more than a month. Otherwise we're going to be right back to square one. That's my feeling. ...So the students are saying two things: Don't give amnesty to Suchinda and the military thugs, and two, get the military out of our process, and those are two very just things that they are asking for. I'm all for holding these murderers accountable according to somebody's international standards. It's like Idi Amin leaving Uganda and going to Saudi Arabia, living in glory. I don't buy that; you don't necessarily hang them, but if we took the Nuremberg Tribunal as one step, that might be a good idea, everyone seems to agree with that. Hold them accountable. What other deterrent is there?

Therese Caouette, Asia Watch

I just talked to Geneva right now : We are now trying to push for the International Committee of the Red Cross to have access to the jails and to the people who are still being detained there and to be able to investigate more specifically what the conditions of their release are, if the charges are still there. What we are trying to push for in Thailand is that there be allowed to be set up some sort of accountability for those who are missing or lost. In the paper today, in the faxes I received from Thailand today, they said there are several groups that are setting up such an office. Now we just have to watch and see that they are not threatened or harassed, because when they did that two days ago, they were forced to close by the military.

(I was there) 10 years. And actually I just returned on Saturday (May 16). I was there all during the prelude to this. I saw it building up. We all knew it was coming. There were supposed to be demonstrations and they were called off a week ago, because Chamlong ended his fast, hoping

they could negotiate..... So we knew that on Sunday there would be demonstrations. When I left on Saturday, by Friday, they had 8,000 military troops already brought into the city. So it was already quite tense. People were quite clear about what would happen next. I think the point is that we encouraged the negotiations, but to say that the question is not quite so simple as just changing the Constitution, we have to take it a bit further.....

Our Washington, D.C. office has been doing some research into the arms trade with the U.S. and Thailand. Officially they are not to be trading at all since the military *coup*. However, there is a loophole where they have been able to it without government assistance...

You really need to look at the corruption of the military and how that is tied into the political system. Mostly because I worked with refugees along the borders, you can see both in heroin trading and also in logging taken wood from the borders, the military is in very, very tight control of the economy and sort of the black market trade. It really needs to be exposed and to encourage a government that's a bit more accountable to the people. I just signed a contract with those who are organizing the demonstration, actually, that they would come here and help work on it back and forth, and we would try to do one this summer, because there has been a lot of very subtle intimidation and people missing in Thailand since the *coup* and others who have been forced to leave the country.

There is one Professor Sulak, have you ever heard of him? He was exiled for speaking out against the military and especially for their deals with the Burmese military. And he has been in exile since October. He's a very, very wise and respected Thai... I have run into him everywhere.....

The royal family is really very, very weak. They're just a showpiece, really. They are very weak. I often wonder, like at this time, what they really have over them. What keeps them so unable to act? I don't really know about this, but they are really concerned. They very rarely do anything. They are very slow to act.

Clarence Dias, International Center for Law in Development, U.N.

Chamlong is not the leader of this movement; or at least he wasn't until three to four weeks ago, because of the fast. See, several people went on fast; some broke the fast. Chamlong was the one person who went through almost to death's door. It was at this point that the movement coopted him as their leader; it was not the other way around.....

It is all interrelated in a uniquely holistic kind of way. The democracy movement is the name being given now, because that is a priority, but it is linked with maintaining the cultural life-styles; namely a society not completely overrun by the mad rush to industrialize; to urbanize; a very strong environmental movement. There isn't a very strong

anti-poverty movement, because there isn't the kind of poverty you find in other Asian countries. It is a movement to prevent poverty from coming as a result of this rapid industrialization.

These things are interrelated. And interestingly enough in the male-dominated society, there is also a strong women's movement.

In Thailand, this is not separate. The people in the human rights movement are the people in the democracy movement, the environmental movement, the women's movement—they are the same people. And often the same organizations. You have a meeting on prostitution in Thailand; and you have some of the leading environmental groups at the forefront of that meeting. There has been a whole kind of social revolution that has been democratic, participatory, human rights sensitive, gender-sensitive, going on. The democracy movement is getting more visibility right now, because that's the immediate struggle.

The environmental movement showed its strength by having won so many battles. They won the imposition of the logging ban all over Thailand; of course the people making money off it then went and began logging in Burma and other places, but still they won that. They won against the construction of a very environmentally damaging dam. The Pak Moon dam project was blocked. They won in the World Bank governors' meeting the blocking of another environmentally damaging dam...

But still you see the environmental movement had made significant gains. The women's movement has made a lot of gains in terms of working mothers' rights, and the whole AIDS issue.

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LESE MAJESTE SULAK AND THE THAI GENERALS

In Thailand a year ago this month the NPKC (National Peace Keeping Council, the military junta which took power in the *coup* of 23 February 1991), was busy trying to suppress the Democracy Movement. This ultimately led to the restoration of civilian rule, by way of an intervention by the King, a royal amnesty for the generals and a climb-down by Prime Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon. The military was clearly unhappy with this outcome, but is no doubt gratified that it still has sufficient power to preserve one of its initiatives while in office, the prosecution of its long-standing critic, Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sulak Sivaraksa, whose trial opens on 2 June.

Widely praised or vilified as a major influence behind the 1992 Democracy Movement, Sulak had delivered a stinging attack on the