STATES OF TRANSGRESSION:
POLITICS, VIOLENCE, AND AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN NORTHERN THAILAND

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Tyrell Caroline Haberkorn

August 2007

© 2007 Tyrell Caroline Haberkorn

STATES OF TRANSGRESSION: POLITICS, VIOLENCE, AND AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN NORTHERN THAILAND

Tyrell Caroline Haberkorn, Ph.D.
Cornell University 2007

This dissertation is about progressive alliances across boundaries of class and space, state and para-state repression, and the meanings of politics in Thailand. Taking the social and historiographic silences surrounding the period between the 14 October 1973 movement for democracy and the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup as a point of departure, I locate my analysis of the struggle for hegemony in rural contention in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces in northern Thailand. Employing a comparative frame with Gramscian and subaltern studies of South Asia and Latin America, I foreground farmers as central political and historical actors. I draw on oral histories, fieldnotes, newspaper accounts, and state and activist archival documents to illustrate conflict, contention, and collaboration among state actors, progressive farmer and student activists, and landowners.

I argue that the unprecedented collaboration between farmers and students around land rent struggles between 1973 and 1976 was marked by two kinds of transgression – those of class position and space. I analyze a string of public, brutal assassinations of leaders of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT). Thirty years later, the assassins of the FFT leaders have not been identified or prosecuted, although speculation by surviving activists identifies a combination of state, para-state, and elite landowning forces as those behind the assassinations. I argue that this continuing inability to name the assassins has created a persistent climate of fear for those who challenge both state and private hegemonic forces in Thailand. By considering the

varied Thai state responses of denial, inaction, and occasional solidarity following the assassinations of the farmers, I argue that states are necessarily heterogeneous. I trace this heterogeneity to its limit by examining a seemingly bizarre series of police protests following the assassinations of farmer leaders. I conclude by offering the first critical analysis of arbitrary detention and re-education of activists following the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup. By taking the illumination of repression that has been hidden as a methodological imperative, I also contribute to understanding how silence and denial are constitutive of the historical record across time and space.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tyrell Caroline Haberkorn received a B.A. in Cultural Studies and Creative Writing from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1999. She received an M.A. in Sociocultural Anthropology from Cornell University in 2003, and a Ph.D. in 2007. In August 2007, she will begin teaching in the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at Colgate University.

for my mother, who taught me to love knowledge

for my father, who believes in doing the right thing

"To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never, to forget."

– Arundhati Roy

"Sometimes we drug ourselves with dreams of new ideas. The head will save us. The brain alone will set us free. But there are no new ideas still waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within ourselves – along with the renewed courage to try them out. And we must constantly encourage ourselves and each other to attempt the heretical ideas that our dreams imply, and so many of our old ideas disparage."

– Audre Lorde

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I want to thank my special committee at Cornell University. My chair, Andrew Willford offered advice, critique, and joy at every moment of imagining, researching, and writing this dissertation. His generosity, as a scholar, teacher, and person is unparalleled. Over the last seven years, through email and real-time conversations about Thai politics, Ajarn Thak Chaloemtiarana has taught me how to speak truth to power. He also meticulously edited every Thai translation and proofread every Thai footnote in this dissertation, saving me from errors both grave and careless. Shelley Feldman introduced me to the work of Philip Abrams, which animates much of this dissertation. Her rigor and commitment as a scholar is inspiring, and her advice to hold the writing close to me especially when it was hard carried me through many long days and nights. Tamara Loos' enthusiasm about my academic and activist work has been life-giving. She challenged me to cultivate compassion for everyone I wrote about, not only those to whose politics I felt closest. Finally, Viranjini Munasinghe pushed me to ask broad questions, even as I tried very hard to write an area studies monograph.

While I was conducting dissertation research between 2003 and 2005, I was affiliated with the Department of History in the Faculty of Humanities at Chiang Mai University. During that time, Ajarn Attachak Sattayanurak was a very generous advisor. He wrote me countless letters of introduction, listened to my incoherent ramblings about the recent Thai past, and gave me indispensable advice.

The National Research Council of Thailand granted me permission to conduct research and helped me gain access to the National Archives in Bangkok as well as the Chiang Mai branch. The Thai-U.S. Educational Foundation (Fulbright), especially P'Siriporn Sornsiri, supported my research and helped me with many administrative concerns.

My dissertation research was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant, an International Research Travel Grant from the Cornell University Graduate School, and an Alice Hanson Cook Award from the Department of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Cornell University. In addition, support for predissertation research in 2001 and 2002 came from the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University, while the Southeast Asia Program gave me funding for a follow-up research trip during fall 2006.

In addition to my dissertation committee, I was fortunate to have many teachers and unofficial advisors throughout this process. My first academic home in Thailand was the Chiang Mai University Women's Studies Center, where I was a Fulbright fellow in 1999-2000. Ajarn Virada Somswasdi welcomed me into the work of the center then and again when I returned to Chiang Mai to conduct dissertation research. Ajarn Kasian Tejapira allowed me to join his class on the cultural politics of the 1970s at Thammasat University during June-August 2002. Ajarn Ngampit Jagacinski was first my Thai-language professor, and then later became my friend. Her support and encouragement has been crucial to the completion of my dissertation. Ajarn Kanoksak Kaewthep, Ajarn Thanet Aphornsuvan, Ajarn Chalong Soontravanich, Coeli Barry, Michael Montesano, John Dennis, Anna Marie Smith, Peter Vandergeest, and Peter Bell have all offered comments and criticism at different points.

The librarians at the Chiang Mai University Library, the Thai Information Center at Chulalongkorn University, the National Archives, and the Thammasat University Archives were unfailingly helpful as I tried to locate materials which were and were not present. When I returned to Cornell in August 2005, first Ajarn David Wyatt and then Gregory Green helped me locate materials in Kroch Library.

Nij Tontisirin at Cornell University made the two beautiful maps of Thailand included in this dissertation.

I presented portions of my dissertation-in-progress at the meetings of the International Association for the Study of the Commons in Oaxaca, the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore, the Risk and Breakdown conference at Duke University, a workshop hosted by the Challenges of Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia project in Toronto, the American Anthropological Association meetings, the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, SUNY-Purchase, and the History Seminar Series at Chulalongkorn University. Audiences in each of these places gave me invaluable feedback and criticism.

Throughout the last seven years, Cornell's Southeast Asia Program has given me an unparalleled intellectual community. I wrote the bulk of this dissertation in my office at the Kahin Center, surrounded by Nina Hien, Jane Ferguson, Doreen Lee, and Rick Ruth as fellow dissertation writers. Jon Perry made life in the Kahin Center seamless, even when I tried to take down the Northeast power grid one late December evening.

Nancy Loncto and Wendy Treat in SEAP in Uris Hall, Barb Donnell, Margaret Rolfe, and Donna Duncan in the Department of Anthropology in McGraw Hall made all bureaucratic difficulties disappear. Sarah Hale in the Graduate School at Cornell resolved all Fulbright-Hays difficulties. Sarah Demo made all interactions with the Cornell Institutional Review Board smooth and educational.

In Chiang Mai, P'Po, Jane Real, Pranom Somwong, Jackie Pollock, Judy Pasimio, and Jere Locke kept me anchored in fighting against injustices occurring in the present. Jane Ferguson shared research stories and Oot with me. Jim Glassman and Thitiya Phaobtong told me about the most delicious sai oua in Chiang Mai and have urged me to keep struggling throughout this process. Patrick Pierce's excitement about each phase of my research kept me going and his own work for justice inspired me to take comfort in each part of the fight of being an academic/activist. Ginger

Norwood let me help her build her earth house in Mae Rim, met me for reflexology and ice cream and asked hard questions. She and Ouyporn Khunkaew gave me a place to come to recharge in Mae Rim.

Ajarn David Wyatt and Alene Wyatt offered support and encouragement in both Ithaca and Chiang Mai. Ajarn Wyatt's interest in re-education following 6 October 1976 and the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai catalyzed me to pursue its histories. For the first year that I was writing in Ithaca, I went to eat noodles and share stories with Ajarn Wyatt and P'Kamala Tiyavanich every few weeks. Ajarn Wyatt pushed me to keep writing, without hesitation, because history matters. I wish that I had been able to finish and share this dissertation with him before his death in November 2006.

In Ithaca, Erick White has shared his love of poetry with me, as well as asked me unanswerable and brilliant questions. In Ithaca and Bangkok, Alex Denes, Pong Tantinipankul, and Aran Tantinipankul shared many meals, urgency at writing about Thailand, and much laughter. Tracy Johnson's careful and lyric ethnography made me want to be an anthropologist and her probing questions keep me on the path. Gayatri Menon, Lindsey Todd, elin slavick, and Marion Traub-Werner have offered support and critical examples through their own lives and work. Pornpen Khongkachonkiet and Nick Cheesman show me how knowledge can, and must, be put to use for justice in an unjust world.

There are three women who have witnessed every step and misstep I have made along the way. I met Parissara (Gai) Liewkeat at the CMU Women's Studies Center in November 1999. Since then, she has been both my fiercest critic and my strongest supporter. She has read everything I have written and listened to every idea I have articulated, or tried to articulate. Her family in Chiang Mai, especially her aunt, Pa Lor, opened their doors to me and included me in every holiday they celebrated.

Doreen Lee was the first person I met in Ithaca. Over the last seven years, she has been my constant comrade throughout graduate school life and has helped me weather many difficulties which far exceed the walls of the university. Her poetic way of seeing the world challenges me to look again, and again. Jennifer Solomon has heard it all, quite literally. As a writer and a friend, she pushes me to first articulate, and then live, what I want and what I mean.

I met Tze May Loo as I was studying for my comprehensive exams. Since then, sharing life with her has brought incredible joy into my life. She gave me my first pair of running shoes and lives the idea that thought is material.

My family -- Sheila and William Haberkorn; Susan, Kurt, Christine, and Andrew Snyder; B.J. Haberkorn and Karen Bender; and Liz Haberkorn, Steve Plust, and Michael Plust -- have always unfailingly believed in my dreams and financially and emotionally supported me so that I could pursue them. Even though they wished that I was studying something other than state violence, my parents asked me for short descriptions of what I was working on so that they could tell everyone in their lives. My siblings gave me the two computers which I used to write this dissertation. Late night conversations with my sister Susan Snyder helped me find happiness in the struggle and the gummy frogs and fish she sent me fueled my writing, literally. Kurt Snyder asked fantastic questions and sent super-encouraging emails. B.J. Haberkorn and Karen Bender took me to see hundreds of eagles in Seattle and then endured my radical political history tour of Bangkok. Liz Haberkorn's fierceness is inspiring. Steve Plust sent me delicious bread filled with tahini, cannoli for forty-eight, and incredible balsamic vinegar. My niece and nephews -- Christine Snyder, Andrew Snyder, and Michael Plust – remind me of how important it is to love and care for other people. My aunt Kathy Kelleher finished her dissertation a year before I finished this one, and cheered me on throughout.

Finally, without the people who shared their stories of struggle with me, this dissertation would not exist. I was invited to commemorations and reunions, where I listened and listened. Many of those people are not mentioned by name here or in the body of the dissertation so that their anonymity will be protected. It is a great pleasure therefore to name those who can be named here. Pa Wi at Suan Anya and Sinsawat Yodbangtoey at the Pridi Banomyong Institute shared their recollections of Ajarn Angun Malik with me and introduced me to others who did the same. Chompunoot Tosinthiti shared her recollections of the 1970s in Chiang Mai, and introduced me to many other people. Most of all, she believed that it was important that I write this story.

While I was writing this dissertation, I listened to stories of solidarity and struggle which made me feel as though another world was possible. I also listened to stories of violence and sorrow which chilled me to the bone. In the pages that follow, I have tried to honor these stories, while never forgetting that they are not my own. The responsibility for the errors and omissions which remain is mine alone.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH iii

DEDICATION iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS xii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS. xv

NOTE ON LANGUAGE, TRANSLATION, AND DATES . . . xvi

INTRODUCTION: POLITICS AND TRANSGRESSION . . . 1

Recasting politics 7
Subjects of transgression 12
Danger and the methodology of anonymity 19
Chronology and map 23

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY AND ITS MARGINS

Eleven days in Bangkok: 14 October 1973 35
The rupture of violence: 6 October 1976 in Bangkok . . 36
Explicating event 38
The shifting subjects of history: telling 14 October in Chiang Mai . 43
Traversing the city: student mobilization in Chiang Mai . . 46
Recording official boundaries: professorial concerns. . . 51
Ambivalent reporting: journalism as more than observation . . 57
Averting a massacre: 6 October 1976 in Chiang Mai. . . 62
The methodology of individual lives 63
Remembering *Phii* Nisit 65
Ajarn Angun Malik and the gendering of politics . . . 72
Dwelling in dissonance and lacunae 84

CHAPTER TWO: BREAKING THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION . 87

Foregrounding land rent control 89
The hunger of politics. 97
Definitions, Of backbones and farmers 101
Riding expensive bicycles: hunger and democracy against contempt. 110
Missing letters and archival oversights 120
Undecidability: excesses of communism 123

Classification and historiographic quandaries: defining claims to legitimacy 126
Postscript: dissenting dictionaries 128

CHAPTER THREE: FROM THE RICE FIELDS TO THE CITY . . 129

Demonstrations and the accusation of chaos 132
Fears of liberation and the establishment of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand 143
Foregrounding land tenancy 150
Beyond the edge of hope in Chiang Mai 153
Legal debates in the streets 160
Possible justice between two Acts 167
Threatening language 172

CHAPTER FOUR: FROM THE CLASSROOMS TO THE RICE FIELDS. 175

The politics of education: new roles for students after 14 October 1973 181
Leaving the city: return, politics, and personal change. . . 188
Contained tensions: the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly . 191
A narrow conception of politics: the Return to Rural Areas Program 198
The pedagogy of solidarity: farmers and students teaching and learning against the grain 202

CHAPTER FIVE: VIOLENCE AND ITS DENIALS . . . 217

Immediate tensions of implementation 221
May 1975: warning signs and communist dominos . . . 226
Theorizing assassination (when the killers remain unnameable) . 229
State (in)actions: ignorance, indifference, and incompetence . 238
Intha Sribunruang's struggle for justice 242
Tensions of investigation 251
Who is named, and who is unnameable? 260

CHAPTER SIX: A DISINTEGRATING STATE 264

A critical theory and practice against the state 266
The Arrests 273
The Protests 281
The Release 287
The Counter-protests 289
The Police Demonstrations 293
Sacking the Prime Minister's House 297
The Meanings of Law 299

CHAPTER SEVEN: UNWRAPPING AN(OTHER) BUNDLE OF SILENCES 302

Known dangers: arbitrary detention and its nullifications . . 307
At the margin's of the state's compassion: arbitrary detention in Chiang Mai 321
Four narratives of arbitrary detention 329
The path of justice 330
Documenting history 335
Education for the people 338
The broken hearts of counterinsurgency . . . 344
Nullification and lingering concerns 349

CONCLUSION: WHAT REMAINS UNSPEAKABLE . . . 352

"Is the recorder off?" 361
Resurgent assassination 366
We are only Communists 376

APPENDIX A: MAP OF CHIANG MAI, THAILAND, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA 385

APPENDIX B: CHIANG MAI CITY STREET MAP . . . 386

APPENDIX C: FARMERS' FEDERATION OF THAILAND (FFT) LEADERS VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENCE, 1974- 1979 . . 387

WORKS CITED 393

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHRC	Asian Human Rights Commission
CGRS	Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (กลุ่มประสานงานศาสนาเพื่อสังคม)
CMU	Chiang Mai University (มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่)
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand (พรรคคอมมิวนิสต์แห่งประเทศไทย)
CSOC	Communist Suppression Operations Command (กองอำนวยการป้องกันและปราบปรามคอมมิวนิสต์)
FFT	Farmers' Federation of Thailand (สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย)
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command (กองอำนวยการรักษาความมั่นคงภายใน)
NARC	National Administrative Reform Council (คณะปฏิรูปการปกครองแผ่นดิน)
NFF	Northern Farmers' Federation (สหพันธ์เกษตรกรภาคเหนือ)
NSC	Northern Student Center (ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาภาคเหนือ)
NSCT	National Student Center of Thailand (ศูนย์กลางนิสิตนักศึกษาแห่งประเทศไทย)
SPT	Socialist Party of Thailand (พรรคสังคมนิยมแห่งประเทศไทย)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ชุมนุมอาสาพัฒนา)
VDA	Volunteer Development Assembly

NOTE ON LANGUAGE, TRANSLATION, AND DATES

All translations in this dissertation are mine unless stated. While this may make the layout more cumbersome, I have included the original Thai text in footnotes for each quoted translation into English. I decided to do this because I am using many sources which have not yet been used in published works, either in Thai or in English. My hope is that extracts from these sources may be useful even for those who do not find my analysis in this dissertation compelling. In addition, I include the original Thai bibliographic information, as well as English translations, for Thai-language works used in my bibliography. The usual practice in English-language works about Thailand is to transliterate the names of Thai books and authors into Roman letters. Given that there is not one standard transliteration style, as a researcher I have sometimes found it difficult to locate the name of an author I read cited in someone else's English-language work. By including the full bibliographic information in Thai I intend to avoid replicating this problem in my own work. Finally, in Thailand, dates are calculated in terms of the Buddhist Era (B.E.), which is Christian Era (C.E.) plus 543 years. This means, for example, that 1973 C.E. is 2516 B.E. Although I use C.E. dates in the main body of my text, when citing Thai-language sources, I first specify the B.E. publication date, and then include the C.E. date in brackets immediately following.

INTRODUCTION
POLITICS AND TRANSGRESSION

On 14 October 1973, thousands of citizens took to the streets in Thailand in unprecedented protests that ended nearly forty years of dictatorship. In so doing, they simultaneously inaugurated a three-year period of incredible political possibility and change, one not matched before or since. Over the next three years, groups whose political action had been restricted under the dictatorship, particularly students, workers, and farmers, organized and protested in unprecedented numbers. Progressive activists in and outside the streets imagined, wrote about, and worked toward a different, more just future Thai society. Yet, growing polarization into “right” and “left” in Thai society as well as fears that Thailand would follow its neighbors in transitioning to Communism led to a violent backlash from both state and para-state actors. Throughout 1975 and 1976, progressive activists were subjected to growing harassment, intimidation, threats, and ultimately assassination. This violence culminated in a coup and massacre of students at Thammasat University in Bangkok on 6 October 1976.

Thirty years later, this period of political possibility, and the imagination of a different, more just future for the mass of Thai society, and the demise of this possibility remain unresolved and understudied. Existing analysis primarily addresses students and their organizing in Bangkok around the two apocryphal dates of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976. As Thongchai Winichakul (2002) has argued, the massacre of unarmed students at Thammasat University by right-wing state and para-state forces on the morning of 6 October 1976 is an event that continues to be characterized by silence, ambivalence, and ambiguity, for those who survived the event as well as present-day Thai society. Yet much of the 1973-1976 period remains

shrouded in silence, because there is not even the minimal circulation of information needed to produce ambivalence.

Underscoring this point, during a lecture at Cornell University in March 2002, Thongchai Winichakul asked a room full of Thai and Southeast Asian Studies scholars if they had ever heard of the Phlappachai massacre. Much remains unknown about the massacre, which began near the Phlappachai police station in Yaowarat, Bangkok's ethnically Chinese district, on 4 July 1974. Unrest between working-class residents and the police reportedly began after a police officer attempted to arrest a man for parking his taxi illegally. Over the next three days, riots ensued between relatively unarmed male residents of Yaowarat and police armed with guns and other automatic weapons. Rather than using tear gas or nightsticks, the police chose to use deadly force. A state of emergency was declared and the government announced that "the rioters would be treated as 'Communist terrorists'" (*New York Times* 5 July 1974: A3). Although students were demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Thailand in protests on 4 July, their protests were reportedly not connected to the violence in Yaowarat. Various sources cited ethnic tensions, inflation, and frustration about labor issues as the reasons behind the riots. By nightfall on 7 July 1974, twenty-eight residents of Yaowarat were dead, and 124 had been injured (*New York Times* 6 July 1974: A2; *New York Times* 7 July 1974: A2; *Prachachaat Weekly* 1.35 [18 July 2517 (1974)]: 7-18; *Prachachaat Weekly* 1.36 [25 July 2517 (1974)]: 10-11; *Washington Post* 6 July 1974: A11; *Washington Post* 7 July 1974: A13).

Even though I was already in the early stages of graduate work on protest, resistance, and violence in twentieth-century Thailand, I had never heard of the massacre. The silence and blank stares that greeted *Ajarn* (Professor) Thongchai's question indicated that I was not alone in my ignorance. I initially thought that perhaps no one knew about the Phlappachai massacre because details of it had been

expunged from the historical record. I quickly learned that this was not the case. My discomfort at my own ignorance led me to the library, where I quickly found many Thai and foreign newspaper articles about the massacre, some of which I cited in my description above. Then I began to wonder what other histories – stories of struggle, experiences of repression, and dreams for the future – of the 1973-1976 period remained marginalized.

As I looked towards my dissertation field research, I proposed that by focusing on the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 as they unfolded in Bangkok, scholars have further marginalized the actors, struggles, and violence existing outside these Bangkok dates.[1] At the beginning, my strategy of writing against this marginalization seemed clear. In contrast to the Bangkok-centered accounts of student activism, I would place farmers and rural struggle at the center of my analysis. Despite the lengthy proposals I wrote, the initial question I wished to answer was simple: *what happened in the northern province of Chiang Mai between October 1973 and October 1976?*

Chiang Mai, in what is now known as northern Thailand, was established as the capital of the Lanna kingdom on the banks of the Ping River by King Mengrai in 1292 C.E. (Wyatt 1984). Although the Lanna kingdom was annexed by Siam in 1892, Chiang Mai city has remained a significant regional center up to the present. Chiang Mai province is located 750 kilometers north of Bangkok, in the Ping River basin. The area of Chiang Mai province is 20,107 square kilometers and comprises 3.92% of Thailand's total area. Chiang Mai is comprised primarily of very fertile high-producing, and thus valuable, rice paddy land. Within Chiang Mai province, there are nineteen districts, including the urban district of Muang, which includes Chiang Mai

[1] I discuss this further in Chapter One, but here I note that if one were to read Klima (2002), for example, one might think that Bangkok was the only place where there were protests on 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976.

city. These nineteen districts are comprised of 179 sub-districts, which are further subdivided into 1462 villages (National Statistical Office 1981: 5). In 1976, the total population of Chiang Mai province was 1,100,325; the population of Muang district was 104,519 (National Statistical Office 1981: 62).

Since the time of the Lanna kingdom, the (few) wealthy, landowning and (many) laboring residents of Chiang Mai and neighboring Lamphun and Lampang provinces have been tied together in a variety of intimate patron-client relationships. For many years, this relationship was one of lord and serf, and then later, landlord and tenant farmer. While sometimes smooth, rebellions and other forms of noncompliance by northern peasants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries marked a significant challenge to what may have appeared to be the seamless power of the lords (Anan 1984, Tanabe 1984, Bowie 1988). The relationship between Bangkok and Chiang Mai has likewise been relatively fraught with tension. Even after the colonization of the Lanna kingdom by Siam, the relationship has not been a simple one of a periphery (Chiang Mai) defined by a center (Bangkok). Instead, at different moments, the center of Bangkok has been destabilized by uncontrollable, and unknown, dissent in the periphery of Chiang Mai.

In December 2003, I arrived in Chiang Mai to begin research about progressive activism and the state and para-state responses to it during the 1973-1976 period. Immediately, activist farmers, as well as the alliances that developed between farmers and students, emerged as significant and intriguing subjects signaling transformation. Once I began addressing my initial question of *what happened*, a new set of questions about the alliances between farmers and students and the forms of state repression began to unfold. Simultaneously, concerns about evidence, politics, and history – and how these categories are constituted – became unavoidable. Rather than detracting from my work, the questioning of these categories has become an integral part of my

project. Although I began by planning to address the October 1973-October 1976 period, I quickly realized that in order to understand the incredible possibility felt by progressive activists, and the violence from conservative quarters with which it was met, one had to look backward, as well as forward in time.

As I examined farmers' struggles in Chiang Mai in the second half of the twentieth century, the struggle for land rent control emerged as the most contentious and full of possibility. Land rent refers to the practice by which a tenant farmers plants, grows, and harvests the rice on land owned by a landlord in exchange for a share of the rice. By the second half of the twentieth-century, the demand for arable rice-growing land and land rental rates were both increasing in northern Thailand. In both the 1950s and the 1970s, farmers organized to challenge what they perceived as unjust practices which forced them to often give more than half the yearly rice harvest to the landlords from whom they rented land. In the 1950s and again in the 1970s, tenant farmers attempted to secure land rent relief through legal reform. While they were unsuccessful in the 1950s, in the changed context following 14 October 1973, the farmers' movement was particularly strong and drew on a long history of experiences of injustice in their struggle. In my analysis of the land rent control struggles in 1951, in which tenant farmers were unsuccessful in securing relief, I show how tenancy struggles brought farmers, landlords, and state officials into intimate conflict with one another. Landlords fought fiercely to defend their share of the rice, as well as their position and image in a crumbling patron-client system.

One of the most significant results of the transformations wrought by the events of 14 October 1973 was that students, farmers, and workers allied themselves in solidarity with one another, both in what was known as the "three links" (สามประสาน), as well as in many other contingent alliances. In Chiang Mai, students from Chiang Mai University (CMU), Teachers' College, and other area schools organized into a

student solidarity group called the Farmer Project. The students of the Farmer Project joined with the farmers of the fledgling Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) to work for land rent relief. Together, they worked to pass and then implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act.

While landowners were able to use their influence to override farmers' demands in 1951, the opponents of farmer and student action resorted to the far more violent strategies of harassment, intimidation and assassination in 1974-1975. I analyze a string of public, brutal assassinations of farmer leaders in northern Thailand in 1975. Thirty years later, the assassins of the farmers have not been identified or prosecuted, although speculation by surviving activists identifies a combination of state, para-state, and elite landowning forces as those behind the assassinations. I argue that the continuing inability to name the assassins has created a persistent climate of fear for those who challenge both state and private hegemonic forces in Thailand. By considering the varied Thai state responses of denial, inaction, and occasional solidarity following the assassinations of the farmers, I argue that states are necessarily heterogeneous. I trace this heterogeneity to its limit by examining a seemingly bizarre series of police protests following public outcry at state inaction at the height of the assassinations of farmer leaders. Insisting that they only wanted the return of the rule of law, the police protests resulted in the vandalism of the prime minister's residence by uniformed police officers. I conclude by opening another silence and offering the first critical analysis, in English or in Thai, of arbitrary detention and re-education of farmers, teachers, and other progressive activists following the 6 October 1976 coup.

Throughout this dissertation, I take the social and historiographic silences surrounding the period between the 14 October 1973 movement for democracy and the 6 October 1976 coup as the context to my research in Thailand as well as a key

methodological imperative. As I realized while conducting research and then writing about what I learned, interrogating silences is a constantly ongoing process. One never finishes. Here I begin with an analysis of land rent struggles in order to intervene in interdisciplinary debates about state and para-state repression, the form of law, and progressive alliances across boundaries of class and space. There are many other places I might have begun – and where I hope others will begin, again. In the remainder of this introduction I offer a few guidelines for the broader contexts of politics, transgression, and evidence in which my work gathers meaning.

Recasting politics

There is a rich body of work in the field of political anthropology, addressing topics as diverse as the everyday experiences of genocide and transitional justice in Guatemala (Sanford 2003), the forms of ideology and intellectual practice under socialism in Romania (Verdery 1991), and how structural adjustment is experienced in Bolivian shantytowns (Gill 2000). Through my examination of the farmer and student movements, and state and para-state violence in Thailand in the mid-1970s, I contribute to the field by questioning what counts as politics, and what kinds of subjects populate the field(s) of politics. The absence of the many of the stories I relay here from most accounts of Thai activist history and politics forces us – as Thai and foreign scholars, critics, and activists – to develop new categories and strategies of analysis. While this argument is one that I develop throughout this dissertation, I offer a few preliminary guidelines here. In short, I first call for a radical opening of studies of politics to include subjects, actions, and sources not always considered to be within its realm. Then I draw on Gramscian ideas of hegemony to propose a broad frame in which these various forms of politics become significant. Finally, I elaborate the form of relations among the subjects who populate the fields of politics.

In the most recent edition of the Royal Institute Dictionary , which is positioned as the official lexicon of the Thai language, *politics* (การเมือง) is defined as:

> Work related to the state or the nation, for example, the study of politics consists of the study of the state, the organization of the state, and the workings of the state; (2) Administration of the nation, particularly related to the policy of administration, for example, international politics consists of the workings of international policy; (3) Management or supervision of civil administration, for example, political positions have the duty of management (Cabinet) or the supervision (Parliament) of the national administration. (Spoken) To have a hidden point, for actions to have a hidden motive, for example, to pretend to be sick (Royal Institute 2542: 116).[2]

Many, but not all, scholars have adhered to a similar idea of politics in their academic work.[3]

While my ultimate goal is to fully challenge this definition of politics, here I want to suggest that the study of provincial administration or international politics, for example, is more complicated than the idea indicated by the Royal Institute definition. In the Royal Institute definition, only *states* and the bureaucrats who populate them are written as actors. In her groundbreaking feminist critiques of international relations, Cynthia Enloe (1990, 1993, 2000, 2004), has repeatedly urged scholars to examine the voices and experiences *behind* the broad relationships and conflicts which

---

[2] "น. (๑) งานที่เกี่ยวกับรัฐหรือแผ่นดิน เช่น วิชาการเมือง ได้แก่วิชาด้วยรัฐ การจัดส่วนแห่งรัฐ และดำเนินการแห่งรัฐ. (๒) การบริหารประเทศเฉพาะที่เกี่ยวกับนโยบายในการบริหารประเทศ เช่น การเมืองระหว่างประเทศ ได้แก่การดำเนินนโยบายระหว่างประเทศ. (๓) กิจการอำนวยหรือควบคุมการบริหารราชการแผ่นดิน เช่น ตำแหน่งการเมือง ได้แก่ตำแหน่งซึ่งมีหน้าที่อำนวย (คณะรัฐมนตรี) หรือควบคุม (สภาผู้แทนราษฎร) การบริหารแผ่นดิน. (ปาก) ว. มีเงื่อนงำ, มีการกระทำอันมีเจตนาอื่นแอบแฝงอยู่, เช่น ป่วยการเมือง" (*พจนานุกรมฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน,* พ.ศ.๒๕๔๒, น.๑๑๖)

[3] This idea was prevalent in many of the early, foundational works on Thai politics, including Riggs (1966) and Wilson (1967), and state-focused work, such as Kullada (2004), remains important. My intention here is not to devalue this work, but instead to insist that work on Thai politics must go further. Across the fields of history, anthropology, and political science, many scholars have written on other forms and modalities of Thai politics, including Attachak Sattayanurak's (2549 [2006]) work on the discourse of the "third hand," in Thai political life, Katherine Bowie's (1997) work on the right-wing Village Scouts, and Michael Kelly Connors' (2003) work on the cultural politics of democracy.

define global politics. In her most recent book, *The Curious Feminist: searching for women in a new age of empire*, Enloe critiques the failure of international relations scholars to engage those who populate "margins, silences, and bottom rungs," and why and how they remain located as such (2004: 23). At the core of her analysis is the question of power, and the failure of such analyses to comprehend "the actual amount and the amazing variety of power that are required to keep the voices on the margins from having the right language and enough volume to be heard at the center in ways that might send shivers up and down the ladder" (Enloe 2004: 23). By accounting for the voices and experiences which have been made marginal, scholars are instead able to understand the layers of power, negotiation and contention which comprise what may appear to be the seamless workings of diplomacy and international relations.

While Enloe's critiques were written in the context of international relations scholarship, they are broadly relevant to all studies of something called *politics*. Yet it is not only important to broaden our conception of the actors of politics to include people located on the margins. Even if we understand politics as the rule (or the appearance of rule) by a state and the various forms of resistance to it, I propose that we operate with an idea that the actions which comprise rule and resistance far exceed state administration and protests in the streets. *Politics* is both of those things, but it is also the actions off the streets which make those in the streets possible. *Politics* is also the desire and will to imagine a different, more just society, and the courage to take the risks necessary to do so.[4] For example, I argue that the collective actions taken by the farmers and students who animate my analysis in this dissertation represented the imagination of a different future. The risks taken to imagine this future

[4] In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldua writes "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (1987: 109). My development of this idea of politics was greatly aided by Parissara Liewkeat's comments.

and the deadly costs which were exacted for its attempted implementation were explicitly political.

I suggest that the various forms of politics which I discuss here become meaningful, and therefore consequential, as struggles for hegemony. In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci explains hegemony in the following terms:

> A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to "liquidate", or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise "leadership" before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to "lead" as well (1971: 57-58).

Gramsci is clear that the resistant group's struggle is not only to wrest hegemony from the dominant group, but to produce it as well.

In the chapters that follow, I track these struggles as they develop between progressive activists and the Thai state, and between farmers and landowners in Chiang Mai. In each moment of contention between these groups, the struggle is never only about the specific demand at issue, but is simultaneously about determining the very terms on which that demand is made and answered. For example, the struggles for land rent relief in Chiang Mai province were at once about the amount of rice that tenant farmers paid as land rent to landowners, as well as about who had the right to name and enforce the terms of land rental. As farmers began to educate one another about their legal rights, and urge landowners to follow the new Land Rent Control Act in 1974 and 1975, landowners lost rice (in comparison to prior years) but they also lost their position as those who *decided* how much rice would be paid by farmers. Raymond Williams elaborates Gramsci's idea of hegemony in terms of how

one formulates the world and one and others' positions within it. He writes that hegemony

> is not limited to matters of direct political control but seeks to describe a more general predominance which includes, as one of its key features, a particular way of seeing the world and human nature and relationships. It is different in this sense from the notion of 'world-view', in that the ways of seeing the world and ourselves and others are not just intellectual but political facts, expressed over a range from institutions to relationships and consciousness (1976: 145).

As I will show, how landowners and farmers came to perceive one another became deadly political by late 1975.

If the ruling class no longer leads, but dominates through coercion, then what emerges is a "crisis of authority," or what Gramsci also refers to as a "crisis of hegemony" (1971: 276, 210). In a crisis of authority, he argues that

> the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that *the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear* (Gramsci 1971: 276, emphasis is added).

I propose that we understand the period of assassinations of FFT leaders in 1975 as a crisis of hegemony. Within the new context of increased participation and activism following 14 October 1973, northern farmers were no longer willing to submit to the previous terms of land rental, or to inhabit their old positions as compliant or quietly dissenting subjects. By going out into the streets to protest, organizing with allied students, and becoming legal educators of one another, they directly challenged the ruling class – in the form of conservative landowning interests and their state allies. Similar challenges were launched by workers, teachers, students and other progressive groups. Their challenges to the old system and their robust imagination of a different Thai future were met with a violent backlash from conservative forces. The morbid symptoms which appeared were harassment, intimidation, and assassination of

progressive activists. These actions signaled the importance of the progressive transformation being wrought, as they simultaneously attempted to stop its advance.

I privilege these morbid symptoms as indicative of the unstable and shifting forms of Thai rural relations, urban-rural relations, and the Thai state. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue that for Gramsci, "'hegemony' becomes the key concept in understanding the very unity in a concrete social formation" (1985: 7). Within their formulation, total unity in a social formation is impossible, and the hegemonic struggle is constituted by the (failed) attempt to achieve it. In various theoretical formulations, the failed attempt to fix unity is marked by instability (Butler 1993), antagonism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), and violence (Abrams 1988). By privileging these moments the constituent fragility of the social formation in question is revealed.

I read the state and para-state backlash against the farmer-student alliances, the 6 October 1976 massacre, and the imposition of "order" that followed as a failed attempt by the Thai state to eliminate dissent and retain hegemony. Within this hegemonic struggle, farmers, students, state actors, para-state actors and others are locked together as subjects contending and acting upon one another. To be clear, I am not arguing that Thai state actors, conservative forces and dissenting subjects are analogous to one another. On the contrary, as I explicate below, their positions are grossly differentiated and unequal. However, in conceptualizing activists, landowners, and the state as directly engaged with one another, I am able to closely analyze repressive forces as well as demonstrate their constituent fragility.

Subjects of transgression

In what I read as a call for a critical anthropology of violence, Veena Das writes

> Being able to draw a boundary itself raises the issue of the experience of limit. Then how should we see the violence of the events that frame the ethnography – should we regard the violence as that which exceeded the boundaries of the world, as it was known? These are complicated pictures of what it is to make and remake a world, bringing into question the pictures of totalities, parts, fragments, and boundaries that we may have. These pictures are tied up with questions of what it is to write an ethnography of violence – one that is not seen as bearing an objective witness to events as much as trying to locate the subject through the experience of such limits (2007: 4-5).

As I explained in the previous section, I argue that *politics* is the terrain on which farmers, students, landowners, and state officials meet one another as subjects. Inspired by Das, I propose that these subjects are each constituted in relation to the violence born of exceeding boundaries, and in relation to one another. Yet I am not only writing an ethnography of violence, I am also writing an ethnography of the tremendous social and political transformation both preceding and signaled by the emergent violence. In what follows, I contend that *transgression* was at the heart of both the transformation catalyzed by the farmers' and students' actions and the myriad forms of violent backlash to it.

To transgress is to violate a limit or boundary. For Bataille, transgression exists as constitutive of what is forbidden, in the sense that "there is no prohibition that cannot be transgressed" (1962: 63). Drawing largely on Bakhtin's (1968) analysis of Rabelais and the carnivalesque, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White elaborate transgression as comprised of practices that stand in contradiction, inversion, or as alternatives to the status quo (1986: 17-18). What makes the concept of transgression productive for my work is that it immediately raises the questions both of who maintains boundaries, and who crosses them. At the most basic level, I read the actions of farmers and students as crossing boundaries, and their opponents' criticism and backlash as an attempt to maintain (or perhaps draw even sharper) boundaries. I contend that through these processes of crossing, maintaining, and rebuilding

boundaries, farmers, students, landowners, and state officials transformed themselves as subjects.

In the chapters that follow, I trace the operations and effects of transgression in three registers. First, I trace how students and farmers transgressed their origins in order to become politicized subjects and work together. Second, I argue that the combined organizing actions of farmers and students amounted to a transgression of existing rural relations of power that ordered interactions among farmers, landowners, and state officials. Paradoxically, by working *within* the terms of the system, farmers and students launched a challenge more destabilizing than an attempt to smash the system directly. Finally, I trace the forms of violence which greeted farmer-student organizing as transgressions that at once exposed the transformations which had taken place, while simultaneously making return to the status quo impossible.

The collaboration between farmers and students at this time was marked by two kinds of transgression – those of class position and space. My conception of class is informed by Marxian and feminist analyses of capitalism as a process, rather than a totality (Gibson-Graham 1996; Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff 2000; Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff 2001). By focusing on capitalism as a process, rather than a closed structure, they argue that class becomes unfixed as well. This therefore creates "the possibility of energetic and unconfined class identities, where the compelling question is not 'What is my class belonging?' but 'What is my class becoming?'" (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff 2000: 11). In turn, given that class is an identity that is continually produced (and re-produced), class then "becomes legible as a potential effect of politics, rather than merely its origin or ground. Commonality and community may be seen as produced, not simple expressed, through political mobilization" (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff 2001: 18-19). Rather

than privilege class as the primary marker of identity, I examine how it articulates with other aspects of identity, namely geographic location.[5]

As I consider how farmers and students transgressed the boundaries between rural and urban spaces, or the village and the city, I begin by questioning these categories and the "seemingly unproblematic division of space" behind them (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 33-34). Rather than take the categories as fixed and natural, I am mindful that the division of space is constantly made and remade. Within this context, I cast the movement of farmers into city streets and students into villages as actions that challenges the existing divisions and relations between rural and urban spaces. News reports about farmer protests in the streets of Bangkok and Chiang Mai starkly reflected the anxieties produced by these crossings.

Paradoxically, even as my discussion of transgression necessitates the recognition of boundaries, I want to be clear that as I understand and deploy them here, the categories of class and space are porous, fluid, and filled with diversity. In the analysis that follows, I am at pains to retain the range of class positions experienced by farmers. Similarly, I want to be clear that not all students were middle or upper-class. Many were, but many were not. Instead, resonant with J.K. Gibson-Graham's analysis, due to their access to higher education students possessed the possibility of a middle or upper-class future, no matter their class origins.

[5] "We understand class processes as overdetermined, or constituted, by every other aspect of social life. By this we mean that we "think" the existence of class and of particular class processes by initially presuming overdetermination rather than by positing a necessary or privileged association between exploitation and some set of social processes (such as control over the labor process or consciousness or struggle or ownership, to rename the familiar few). In this initial presumption, class is constituted at the intersection of all social dimensions or processes – economic, political, cultural, natural – and class processes themselves participate in constituting these other dimensions of social existence. This mutual constitution of social processes generates an unending sequence of surprises or contradictions. As the term "process" is intended to suggest, class and other aspects of society are seen as existing in change and as continually undergoing novel and contradictory transformations" (J.K. Gibson-Graham 1996: 55).

While the individual actions of dissenting farmers and students caused anxiety and panic for many of their state, landholding, right-wing, and other opponents, the possible sum total of farmer and student actions were far more terrifying than the individual acts. The short-term effect of the farmers' struggle to first pass and then implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act was that the landowners' share of the yearly rice harvest diminished. Yet behind this concrete, material loss was a much deeper transformation that was a result of the farmers' decision to wage their struggle in the realm of law. Instead of trying to smash the existing practices of land rental, in 1951 and 1974 farmers attempted to transform the practices by calling for their legal regulation.

In 1951, landowners were able to prevent the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai province by contradicting the farmers' claims to hunger and impoverishment. By 1974, however, landowners could not silence the farmers' call for land rent relief. Against the backdrop of the failure of farmers to launch a similar transformation in 1951, the farmers' success in 1974 challenged land rent practices as well as landowners' positions as elites and decision-makers in rural northern life.

In 1951, the farmers were subject to laws, but were unable to affect their contents or implementation. By 1974, they presented themselves as subjects who should be part of drafting laws, as well as active agents of their implementation. By using the *law*, which had previously been the province of the landowners, the farmers' actions amounted to a transgression of existing rural relations of power. Transgression does not destroy, but instead, as Mary Beth Tierney-Tello writes in her analysis of experimental fiction written by women living under Latin American dictatorships, transgression "can be seen as part of the quest to disarticulate dominant conventions and authoritarian modes (1996: 213). By arguing that the previously informal,

unregulated landlord-tenant relationships needed to be subject to legal regulation, farmers exposed what they viewed as the unjust status quo. By choosing the law as their weapon of disarticulation, their attack on landowners was particularly acute.

Katherine Bowie (1988) presents compelling evidence suggesting that the idea of peasants and lords co-existing happily in nineteenth-century Lanna was a myth.[6] Yet even in the 1950s and 1970s, the landlords, who were the descendants of the lords (figuratively if not always literally), believed this myth. They believed that they were like the fathers and older brothers of the farmers. They viewed themselves as kind patrons who took care of the farmers. This is not to say that landlords did not appreciate the benefits they accrued, but that they believed that they acted in a just, and even generous, manner towards the farmers. Many farmers disagreed. The landlords were greatly destabilized by the outward expression of the farmers' disagreement, i.e., their movement to pass and then implement land rent control measures. In order to understand how landlords might become destabilized, let us consider the relationship between farmers and landlords as a dialectical one, one in which each was constituted in relation to one another. The landlords retained their

---

[6] Katherine Bowie frames her dissertation, Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century: Implications for the Understanding of Peasant Political Expression, with a critique of the inaccuracies and gaps in much earlier academic work about nineteenth-century northern Thai history. She argues that many analyses falsely stress the self-sufficiency economy of the peasants, the kindnesses of the lords, and the relative hegemony operative in the Chiang Mai kingdom. Her research shows these descriptions to be at once erroneous representations of peasant life and a dangerous mode of historiography. Bowie explains that when scholars have not found, or have missed, signs of "overt peasant political unrest," they have taken this to mean that peasants were content (1988: 16). The unquestioned idea of comfortable peasants who participate in a subsistence economy "has a political content. The characterization encourages a view of the past as idyllic, harmonious, and happy" (Bowie 1988: 75). In contrast to these representations, Bowie draws on extensive oral history and archival research to offer a different picture of peasant-lord relations as dynamic and fraught with struggle. Bowie argues against a subsistence economy by tracing rice shortages, hardship, famine, begging, and the differential economic positions of peasants in nineteenth-century Chiang Mai in the Lannathai kingdom. Peasants were not satisfied with the relations that left their bellies empty and lords' full. Bowie further notes that "peasants were not content with lordly extraction, nor did the ruling lords have much legitimacy in their eyes" (1988: 21). Not only did the peasants view the lords as illegitimate, but Bowie's oral histories revealed that they perceived them as "arbitrary, capricious, petty, greedy, and even cruel figures of power and potential torment" (1988: 71).

power and position in no small part due to the rice and other support they received from tenant farmers. If the rice was withdrawn, and even more significant, if the farmers ceased to recognize the landlords as those with the power to determine the terms of tenancy relationships, then who were the landlords? Even more significant, if the farmers claimed that they were not beneficently provided for by the landlords, could the landlords continue to perceive themselves this way? The farmers' actions constituted a withdrawal from their once interdependent relationship, while simultaneously calling into question its truly interdependent status.[7] For a brief time, farmers and landlords seemed to be on a path towards becoming equal in the eyes of the law, each a partner in a contractual relationship outlined by the state.

There is a final, speculative note I wish to make about transgression and violence. Had the farmers called for the destruction of the entire land rental system – and simply refused to pay rent – the landowners could have discounted their actions, and then used their relationships with state officials to force the farmers to pay. Instead, the farmers' legal activism transgressed the existing system of rural relations of power by exposing it. Their organizing was met with tremendous public harassment and violence, culminating in a series of assassinations of FFT leaders. Although thirty years have passed, no one has been accountable for the assassinations of the farmers. Surviving farmer and student activists believe that elite right-wing and

[7] Judith Butler's (1997) interpretation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic may be instructive here. Butler writes: "To disavow one's body, to render it 'Other' and then to establish the 'Other' as an effect of autonomy, is to produce one's body in such a way that the activity of its production – and its essential relation to the lord – is denied. This trick or ruse involves a double disavowal and an imperative that the 'Other' become complicit with this disavowal. In order not to be the body that the lord presumably is, and in order to have the bondsman posture as if the body that he is belongs to himself – and not be the orchestrated projection of the lord – there must be a certain kind of exchange, a bargain or deal, in which ruses are enacted and transacted. In effect, the imperative to the bondsman consists in the following formulation: you be my body for me, but do not let me know that the body you are is my body. An injunction and contract are here performed in such a way that the moves which guarantee the fulfillment of the injunction and contract are here performed in such a way that the moves which guarantee the fulfillment of the injunction and the contract are immediately covered over and forgotten" (35). The farmers' organizing around land rent issues and the responses it provoked from landlords exposed the ruse.

landholding forces were behind the assassinations. While I cannot prove, and therefore do not allege, that the landlords were behind the killings of the farmers, it would not have been impossible. If the landowners were behind the killings of the farmers, however, it would represent a final, complete transgression of their own perceived role as beneficent patrons.

Danger and the methodology of anonymity

This dissertation is based on field research that I carried out in Chiang Mai and Bangkok between 2001 and 2006, as well as extensive research in Kroch Library at Cornell University.[8] I draw on a wide range of sources, including oral histories, notes from events I attended, cremation volumes, newspapers and other published material, and documents from provincial and national government archives, university archives, and activist archives. Each kind of source demanded various methodological considerations. The contentious, unresolved nature of the histories of progressive activism and state and para-state violence in Thailand necessarily complicated these considerations. Here I discuss the analytic and ethical concerns behind these considerations. In so doing, I offer the reader a logic for understanding the practices of citation and sources deployed.

First, as I will explain in further detail in Chapter Seven, the possession of progressive or leftist documents was grounds for arrest following the 6 October 1976 massacre. By 9 October 1976, it was reported that over 1 million books and documents had been seized from bookstores and university campuses in Bangkok alone (*Bangkok Post* 9 October 1976: 3). Nearly every former activist I met remembered the books and periodicals they once possessed, but were forced to

[8] I made four trips to Thailand, comprising a total of twenty-five months (May 2001, June-August 2002, December 2003-August 2005, and September-October 2006).

discard, burn or otherwise destroy. S., a former CMU student and Farmer Project activist, told me about how she buried her copies of the Thai translations of a book of Maxim Gorky's stories (Gorky 2518 [1975]) and a book of Vietnamese short stories (Jit 2519 [1976]) along with other items behind her parent's house following 6 October. S. then spent five years in the jungle with the CPT. By the time she returned, the cumulative yearly flooding had saturated the ground so many times that she could not locate the books she buried years earlier. Likewise, the offices of the Northern Student Center and the Farmers' Federation of Thailand were destroyed in October 1976; today, there are no surviving public copies of *Thai Farmer*, the FFT's newspaper. This does not mean that *nothing* written from a progressive perspective survived. Much did survive and can now be found in various libraries as well as in many private collections – but it does mean that what survived is a fraction of what once existed.

In the introduction to the second edition of *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra*, Ann Stoler explains that lacking archival documents written from a peasant perspective about the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia, she intended "to write a history from the bottom up by reading upper class sources upside down" (1995: viii). Similarly, the relative lack of sources from a farmer or student perspective meant that I read between and against the lines of conservative newspapers, government periodicals, and government archival documents to aid in my reconstruction of farmer-student solidarity.[9] Given the anxiety that farmer-student solidarity provoked among

[9] In my initial request for a foreign researcher permit, I asked for access to the National Archives, the archives of the Ministry of Interior, and the archives of the Metropolitan Police Bureau. My application was returned to me, with the admonition that my request for access to the Ministry of Interior and Metropolitan Police Bureau records from 1969–1979 was *inappropriate* as the records dealt with matters of national security. While I made my request as a foreign researcher, not a citizen, the tone of response suggests the anxiety and concern surrounding the nondisclosure of records. Once my revised request was approved, I was not surprised to learn that the index to public records in the Chiang Mai provincial archives abruptly stops in October 1976. When I asked about more recent records, the archival administrator cited the slowness of her subordinates in cataloguing information. Whether it was

landholding and other elements in Chiang Mai, it is not surprising that conservative papers, such as *Thai Niu* and *Thin Thai*, meticulously documented the actions of farmer and student organizations. In addition, I read personal recollections, Thai and international human rights documents, and Thai news accounts "upside down" in order to learn about detention and re-education under Order 22 following the 6 October 1976 massacre. To be clear, I do not position conservative, state, or the available printed sources from a progressive perspective, such as *Athipat*, the newspaper of the National Student Center of Thailand, as unquestioned sources of information. Instead, I attend to the dissonance often present among various sources, and question what the discrepancies in accounts may tell us about how social change is understood by different actors.

Conducting interviews with former activists, detainees, and other people challenged me to think about methodology, responsibility, and dissonance in another way. In every interview, I was forced to confront what is at stake, and for whom, in tracing the histories included in this dissertation. While I cannot eliminate the stakes involved in making these histories public, I can limit the risks for the individuals involved. During the process of research and at the moment of this writing, I have taken specific steps to protect those involved. I did not audio record any of the interviews I conducted, but immediately and copiously took notes following each conversation. Additionally, I guaranteed anonymity to each person I interviewed. In the dissertation that follows, I do not identify anyone I spoke with by name or their current occupation. Instead, I identify people with a Roman alphabet letter, such as M., and by describing what they were doing between 1973 and 1976. When using

---

the speed of the cataloguers or a more specious anxiety which prevented the release of the recent documents, they were not available.

published sources or referring to people who are no longer alive, I use their real names.

I waited until the end of my period of field research to ask people for individual interviews. Many of the people I interviewed I knew well by the time we sat down for a formal conversation. Leading up to that point I was vetted (and continue to be!) many times and through multiple channels. Before anyone spoke with me, s/he wanted to ascertain that in fact I was who I claimed to be, and not an agent of the U.S. government or another malevolent force.[10] Each interview conversation was predicated, from the beginning, on my not-recording the conversation and not using the interviewee's name. Even with these precautions, more than one conversation was carried out in whispers or in a secluded place. Many people spoke of the actions that they suffered pain for taking, and for which they worry they could suffer further. Others are still actively engaged in opposing the state or private capital, and are under direct threat today. I do not doubt that many of the people I interviewed would have refused to speak to me if I had wanted to record our conversations.

Yet the decision to purposefully provide a double-layered anonymity, in which names and current occupations are left unspecified, matters in another, perhaps less individual, register of political responsibility. In the prefatory note to her memoir, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi describes the extensive lengths she went to mask the identities of the women students who populated her underground literature course. This was to protect them from persecution at the hands of the Iranian state, "but also from those who read such narratives to discover who's who and who did what to whom, thriving on and filling their own emptiness through others' secrets"

[10] At times laced with humor, but often deadly serious, upon learning that I was from the U.S., many people asked me directly if I worked for the Central Intelligence Agency or the National Security Agency. When I said no, the question of my political and class background arose. Often my frankness about my middle-class family background and my own history of activism satisfied most queries. Due to the history of U.S. involvement in Thailand, the question was not an unreasonable one.

(Nafisi 2003: *ix*). It is nearly impossible to have a discussion today about the recent radical past without someone bemoaning the former student activists who have become politicians, successful businesspeople, or who have taken up other occupations the speaker deems to contradict the activist's radical youth. While I think the expression of the sentiment is not insignificant, it has no place in my dissertation. First, it simply falls outside the realm of my project. Second, and to my mind, far more important, is that I think the activity verges on the contemptuous. I listened to people's stories and here attempt to transmit them. But they are not mine to literally record and name: that right belongs to those who lived them.

Chronology and map

As will be clear from the following guide to chapters, I am primarily writing about a very short period of time in Thai history: 1973 until 1976. There are threads extending back to 1950 and to moments following 6 October 1976 until the present. When thinking about different ways of organizing my dissertation, I was initially very resistant to adhering to a chronology. I worried that in so doing I would necessarily impose linearity on a story which I think is anything but linear. However, by largely adhering to a chronology, I aim to facilitate my analysis of contention, contradiction, and other critical themes.

I begin in Chapter One with a methodological intervention calling for an analysis critical of events and cognizant of the roles of individuals in making social change. At the center of this chapter is a concern with how *history* is constituted, or how certain stories of events and change come to stand in as the *only* stories. In particular, I examine how the oft-repeated accounts of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 in Bangkok elide other geographies and chronologies of progressive struggle in Thailand. Drawing on interviews, as well as various newspapers and student

publications, I first examine the dominant stories of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 in Bangkok. Then I turn to multiple perspectives on the two events as they unfolded in Chiang Mai. By placing these accounts side-by-side, I aim to illustrate the ways in which they bear on one another. What happened in Bangkok during the October events is inexplicable without knowing what was happening in Chiang Mai (and elsewhere) at the same time, and vice versa. In considering the October events in Bangkok and Chiang Mai together, I am able to raise questions about how the *local* and *national* are constituted politically and historiographically (Appadurai 1996, Pandey 2001). Next I trace the life stories of two individuals, Nisit Jirasophon and Ajarn Angun Malik, who were catalysts of progressive change in Chiang Mai. Nisit was a student activist at Chiang Mai University (CMU) and a journalist in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was assassinated under unclear circumstances in April 1975. *Ajarn* Angun was a maverick professor who taught in the Faculty of Humanities at CMU from the late 1960s until 1976. By presenting the lives of Ajarn Angun Malik and Nisit Jirasophon in tandem with my analysis of the October events, I advance the claim that our understanding of the period marked by the two October events is grossly distorted without the stories of their lives.

Then in Chapter Two, I foreground the issue of land rent control in the north. I draw on provincial archival records to trace the contention over the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai as a precursor to the movement for land rent relief in 1974. My analysis does not only historicize the struggles and violence which I discuss in the next chapters, but also contributes to creating an interpretive framework within which the contention in the 1970s becomes meaningful. Grasping the significance of the farmers' actions around land rent control demands an analysis of farmers as a specific kind of political subject. By developing an optic which accounts for this farmer political subject, I extend and challenge earlier work about agrarian life and resistance

(Guha 1988, Scott 1985). Yet the case of land tenancy does not only demand an idea of farmers as complex, political subjects, but a similarly nuanced conception of landowners as well. Therefore, while Chapter One constituted an intervention into how to analytically assign significance to events and individuals who make political change, in this chapter I recast this intervention within the context of late twentieth-century land tenancy in northern Thailand. In addition, I question the connections between Bangkok and Chiang Mai by showing how the actions of the farmers to decree the 1950 Land Rent Control Act incited concerns at the highest levels of state administration and public life. The margin of Chiang Mai was significant precisely because it was so far from the presumed center of Bangkok. Rather than functioning to make Chiang Mai irrelevant, the distance magnified the potential for uncontained, and uncontainable, problems.

In Chapter Three, I turn to the 1970s and trace both the establishment of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) and the revitalization of the struggle for land rent control in Chiang Mai in 1974. I contend that by joining with one another and bringing their protests from the countryside into the city streets, farmers fundamentally transformed themselves into a new kind of dissenting political subject. Of particular concern to me is how farmers addressed various parts of the Thai state, and how farmers in turn were perceived by state actors as well as by their supporters and critics. Drawing on a range of newspapers and commemorative accounts, I begin by tracing the string of protests leading up to the establishment of the FFT in November 1974. Then I turn to the land rent situation in Chiang Mai in late 1974. While some farmers from Chiang Mai and the neighboring provinces traveled to Bangkok to join the protests there, many remained in Chiang Mai and firmly demanded land rent relief. In 1974, farmers revived the call for the decree of the 1950 Act (whose non-decree I traced in Chapter Two). For various reasons, the government

instead decided to promulgate a new Land Rent Control Act at the end of 1974. I conclude with a close reading of the two different Acts.

In Chapter Four, I examine how the lives and fates of farmers and students came to be intertwined. I analyze the emergence of student-farmer solidarity in Chiang Mai following the 14 October 1973 movement. Adapting a formulation of Paulo Freire's (1970), I use the term *pedagogy of solidarity* to refer to the knowledge built through the farmers' and students' shared struggle and its implications. I first provide a context for the development of the pedagogy of solidarity in Chiang Mai by examining how education and progressive politics were imbricated in one another in 1970s Thailand. Then I examine two predecessors to farmer-student solidarity: the Volunteer Development Assembly, a student volunteer development program at CMU active from the late 1960s, and the official Return to Rural Areas Program supported by the PM Sanya Thammasak government in 1974. I argue that these programs, and other similar ones, created a foundation for student solidarity with farmers. Then I turn to the Farmer Project, which was a student group that worked in alliance with farmers in Chiang Mai and neighboring Lampang and Lamphun provinces, and the other organizing work students and farmers engaged in together in late 1974 and 1975.

Chapter Five is concerned with the violent backlash which greeted student and farmer actions. The sum total of the individual and collection actions around land rent control and other issues in the north in 1974 and 1975 effected a transformation at once personal and political, and at once material and social. I examine the backlash of criticism, harassment, intimidation and ultimately assassination with which the farmer and student organizing was greeted. I first examine two stories of noncompliance by landlords that occurred shortly following the passage of the Land Rent Control Act on 16 December 1974. I then trace the fears that Thailand was going to be the next Communist domino to fall following Vietnam and Cambodia. I place the

assassinations of FFT leaders within the context of a range of violence against farmer activists and other new political actors. I then turn to the life and death of one important FFT leader, Intha Sribunruang. Intha led the struggle to implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and the neighboring provinces. By examining his murder, I highlight how the political became devastatingly personal. Through exploring his life and death, I cast the assassinations of FFT leaders as part of a larger project to silence dissent.

In Chapter Six, I turn to a seemingly bizarre series of events catalyzed by Intha's assassination. Following his assassination, students, farmers, teachers, workers, and other people across the country protested and demanded that the government address the assassinations and protect the farmers. Rather than arrest the assassins of the farmers, eight farmer activists and one student were arrested on trumped-up charges in Lamphun province (adjacent to Chiang Mai province). When their arrests were met with intensified protests calling for state responsibility, local police officials, national police officials, provincial officials, Ministry of Interior officials in Bangkok and the Prime Minister, Kukrit Pramoj, all denied ordering the arrests. The protests finally secured the release of the nine arrested activists. In short order, the police began protesting the release, which they viewed as indicating the breakdown of the rule of law. The protests by the police grew until they climaxed in the vandalism and sacking of PM Kukrit Pramoj's house in Bangkok (*Prachachaat Weekly*, Special issue on the Farmers' Crisis, 2.92 (21 August 2518 [1975])). This series of events at first seems quite bizarre – there seemed to be no attempt, even at the level of the police, to hide the illegitimate nature of the arrests of the nine activists. Informed by Abrams (1988) and Corrigan and Sayer (1985), I frame my analysis of this series of events in relation to state formation (and state disintegration). In 1975-1976, different parts of the Thai state continually acted to deny the claims of activists,

obfuscated their own roles, and contradicted one another. The utter fiction of a unified state at this moment was undeniable. Yet, the Thai state continued to operate *as a state* for another year until its formal dissolution with the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup. Rather than viewing the apparent disunity of the Thai state as a temporary aberration, here I argue that it was constitutive of the violence carried out in the name of the state.

In Chapter Seven, I revisit the question of silence and the latent evidence of history with which I began. One week after the 6 October 1976 coup massacre at Thammasat University in Bangkok, the ruling junta, the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC), proclaimed Orders 22 and 34. In force until August 1979, these two measures delineated the terms of arbitrary, potentially infinite detention and "training" of nine categories of people deemed a "danger to society." Under Orders 22 and 34, thousands of people across Thailand underwent "re-education" in "good citizenship," including acceptance of "democracy with the king as head of state" as the only legitimate form of government. Re-education was to take place at centers operated by the Department of Corrections; the locations of five such centers were widely reported in *Siam Rat*, *Bangkok Post*, *Thai Niu*, and Thai and English-language human rights reports. Drawing on northern Thai newspaper accounts and interviews with former detainees, this chapter takes as its point of departure a historiography of the Karunyathep Center, a re-education center located in Chiang Mai omitted from the reports noted above. Through close readings of Orders 22 and 34, the annual reports of the Department of Corrections for 1976 – 1979, a self-criticism written by a former detainee, and the life stories of two additional detainees and one former guard, I examine the emergence and disappearance of a new category of criminal promulgated in October 1976. The former detainees were all quick to assure me that although they were held against their will, they were not physically mistreated. The Karunyathep

detainees’ lack of experience of physical mistreatment was surprising, given the legal terms under which they were held. Yet the tension between what actually happened and what might have happened emerges as both a strategy of state repression and a clarion call for critical analysis.

CHAPTER ONE
HISTORY AND ITS MARGINS

A few months into my dissertation research, in March 2004, I visited the library at Ratchaphat Institute, the four-year college that had previously been the Chiang Mai Teachers' College. Teachers' College students were very active in the student and farmer movements between 1973 and 1976 and the radical writer Samruam Singh was on the faculty during the same period.[1] With this in mind, I hoped that the library might hold the papers of the student organizations or periodicals from the 1970s.

The library at Ratchaphat is a big eight-story building with little, if any, air circulation. I began my search by trawling the online catalogue for any records containing the words "student" (นักศึกษา), "student organization" (องค์การ นักศึกษา), "student social movement" (การเคลื่อนไหว นักศึกษา), "farmer" (ชาวนา), and "farmer movement" (การเคลื่อนไหว ชาวนา), without yielding any records other than those referring to popular published books dealing primarily with the events of 14 October 1973 (e.g. Charnvit ed. 2541 [1998], Charnvit 2544 [2001]).

I then walked to an information desk near the library entrance and asked the staff person if the library possessed any materials related to the activities of Teachers' College students and professors in the 1970s. He responded to my question by listing the different majors available to enrolled students in the 1970s. Concerned that I was unclear, I rephrased my question by explaining that I was interested in the *political* activities of Teachers' College students and professors in the 1970s, and asked if he

[1] Samruam Singh was one of the pen names of Surasinghsamruam Shimbanao, a teacher and writer of news articles and short stories for a variety of publications between 1973 and 1976, including *Chao Baan* (ชาวบ้าน), *Jaturat* (จตุรัส), and *Prachathipatai* (ประชาธิปไตย). See Katherine Bowie (1991) for a collection and translation into English of previously published and unpublished short stories of Samruam Singh.

could help me locate relevant materials in the library. He directed me to the main reference desk a few floors up.

When I arrived at the main reference desk I introduced myself and explained that I was doing research about the student and farmer movements in Chiang Mai in the 1970s. I further explained that I was particularly interested in the roles of the Teachers' College students and faculty. The librarian began to narrate an abbreviated version of the events surrounding the 14 October 1973 movement as they unfolded in Bangkok. When she finished, she asked me what I was doing in Chiang Mai, and why I was at the Ratchaphat Library. I began to explain my dissertation project again, and stressed that I was interested in the participation of the Teachers' College students in the 1970s social movements. She looked surprised, and said that she had never heard of the students at Teachers' College being part of social movements or anything political. She asked me to wait while she asked her seniors. When she returned, she informed me that her senior colleagues did not know anything about the participation of Teachers' College students, or any students in Chiang Mai, for that matter, in the political movements of the 1970s. She apologized for not being able to help me, and then said, really, *nong* (younger sister), you should go to the Thammasat Library, since the important events, 14 October (1973), 6 October (1976) happened in Bangkok.

*

My experience at Ratchaphat was one repeated many times while I was conducting research. Rarely, unless I was speaking to a former activist or supporter of the movements, did I meet people who acknowledged, or even seemed to know about, the recent histories of student and farmer activism in Chiang Mai. Repeatedly, I was told that the *important*, if not the only, social and political events occurred in Bangkok; within these Bangkok-centered narratives, students were most often cited as the primary actors. However, even as I received advice to shift the locus of my

research to Bangkok, I spent my days talking to people who had participated in the student and farmer movements in Chiang Mai. I spent hours in the CMU libraries and the Chiang Mai branch of the National Archives, tracing what remains of the material record of the 1970s progressive and left activism and the right-wing backlash that followed. Although some key documents are hard to find in Thailand, as I will explain later, many are available.

What is at issue here is not that Chiang Mai lacks a vibrant history of struggle, or that information, excitement, and anxiety about the social and political transformations resultant from the struggle were not circulating in the 1970s. The stories I listened to about students and teachers who joined the farmers in organizing between 1973 and 1976, the newspaper articles and archival documents that I read about and beyond the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 in Chiang Mai, and the 1970s-era Thai translations of Paulo Freire's (2517a [1974]; 2517b [1974]) and Frantz Fanon's (2517 [1974]) writing that I found in the library at the CMU Faculty of Education are all different forms of evidence of the activist past in Chiang Mai. However, what is at issue is the status of this activist past thirty years later. While not wholly expunged from the historical record, the stories of struggle are in limited circulation, even as there has been an attempt to make public and spread information about the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 as they occurred in Bangkok.[2]

I planned to research and write *against* what I saw as the historiographic dominance of the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976. Initially, I thought that this meant not asking questions about peoples' experiences of the two events, and

[2] The attempts to make public and spread information have not been uniform across the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976. For a variety of reasons, some of which will be highlighted in this dissertation and many which are outside its possible scope, 6 October 1976 remains far more contentious and ambivalent. See Thongchai (2002) for a critical and insightful examination of this ambivalence.

refusing to devote space on the pages of this dissertation to them. Despite my resolve to avoid the two events, they repeatedly came up in my conversations with former progressive activists. Many of the former progressive activists I spoke with cited 14 October 1973 as the first time that they protested in the streets. For many, 14 October 1973 was the beginning of a life dedicated to different social justice causes. 14 October 1973 was the moment from which they dated the transformation of Thai society.[3]

Similarly, the violence of 6 October 1976 irrevocably changed the futures of many people who shared their life stories with me. Many people used the categories **before 14 October, after 14 October**, and **after 6 October** to order the narratives of their lives that they shared with me.

For nearly everyone with whom I spoke, activist or not, progressive or not, the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976, which I will refer to together as the "October events," represented the beginning and ending of a singularly unique period of Thai social and political transformation. Although these two dates have come to symbolize the opening and closure of open politics, I will argue here and throughout this dissertation that progressive social and political transformation began long before October 1973, and continues long after October 1976.

What I learned through field research deepened rather than resolved my ambivalence about the position of the October events in my analysis. At the core of this ambivalence are questions about what may be elided by a focus on the October events, the disparate experiences of the events themselves, and the political and historiographic relationships between Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Rather than

---

[3] For example, S., a former CMU student activist characterized the effects of 14 October as "…making everyone concerned about other people. Everyone desired to see a just society" ("...ทำให้ทุกคนคิดถึงคนอื่น ทุกคนมีความรู้สึกอยากจะ เห็นสังคมที่เป็นธรรม").

attempting a resolution to the emergent contradictions and uncertainties, I respond here by taking them as a methodological imperative. In this chapter, I present the oft-repeated, marginal, *and* unheard-of-until-now stories of progressive change surrounding and exceeding the October events.

Specifically, I first examine the dominant stories of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 in Bangkok. Then I turn to multiple perspectives on the two events as they unfolded in Chiang Mai. My intention is to both articulate what happened in Chiang Mai during that time, as well as trace the differences in various accounts of what transpired. Next I trace the life stories of two individuals, Nisit Jirasophon and *Ajarn* (Professor) Angun Malik, who were catalysts of progressive change in Chiang Mai. Nisit was a student activist at CMU and a journalist in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was assassinated under unclear circumstances in April 1975. I learned about him in April 2005, when a commemoration of his life and work was held in Chiang Mai. Ajarn Angun taught in the Faculty of Humanities at CMU from the late 1960s until 1976. Although absent from many accounts of progressive change, I learned about her by listening to the recollections of her former students and reading memorial volumes published after her death in 1990.

By placing these accounts side-by-side, I aim to illustrate the ways in which they bear on one another. What happened in Bangkok during the October events is inexplicable without knowing what was happening in Chiang Mai (and elsewhere) at the same time, and vice versa. In considering the October events in Bangkok and Chiang Mai together, I am able to raise questions about how the *local* and *national* are constituted politically and historiographically. By presenting the lives of Ajarn Angun Malik and Nisit Jirasophon in tandem with my analysis of these events, I also advance the claim that our understanding of the period marked by the two October events is grossly distorted without the stories of their lives. Not only did Nisit and

Ajarn Angun each make important contributions to political change in Thailand, but by including their lives in my analysis here, I challenge the optics we use in order to chart large-scale social and political transformation. Social and political change begins when people question the established order. By seeking to capture this, our representations of transformation as comprised of a series of seamless events are complicated by the contradictions and rich texture of individual desires and actions.

Eleven days in Bangkok: 14 October 1973

On 5 October 1973, Thirayuth Bunmi, the former secretary-general of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT), along with other supporters, held a press conference on Sanam Luang across from Thammasat University calling for the promulgation of a constitution. At the press conference Thirayuth released the names of one hundred prominent academic and government figures who signed a petition in support of a constitution. While marching through Bangkok, on 6 October 1973, eleven members of the group calling for a constitution were arrested; they were denied visitors and bail. By 8 October 1973, the number of arrested and detained people rose to thirteen; on the evening of the 8th, students at Thammasat decided to call off exams until further notice. On 9 October, university, technical, and secondary students begin to mass at Thammasat University and demanded the release of the thirteen detainees and the promulgation of a constitution. By 11 October 1973, over 50,000 people were assembled at Thammasat. On 12 October, with over 200,000 people massed at Thammasat, the NSCT issued a demand to the government such that "the government has twenty-four hours, counting from noon, October 12, 1973, to free all the detainees. If the NSCT has not received a satisfactory response by 12 noon, October 13, 1973, it will then consider taking decisive measures" (quoted in Charnvit 2544 [2001]: 14).

By 12 noon on 13 October, the government had not yet released the thirteen detained people. In response, approximately 500,000 people spilled out of Thammasat and began to march towards Ratchadamnoen Avenue and the Democracy Monument. Late in the afternoon on the 13th, the demonstrators moved from the Democracy Monument to the Rama V Equestrian statue. Although a radio broadcast at 8 p.m. confirmed that the thirteen arrested people had been released and a constitution would be promulgated within a year, this information did not reach the demonstrators in the streets. Concerned with the potential for police or military violence, at midnight the leaders of the demonstration moved the protest to the grounds of Chitlada Palace. Early in the morning on 14 October, the news of the released thirteen and the promise of a constitution finally reached the demonstrators. As they were preparing to disperse, violence broke out. Throughout the day of the 14th, there was fighting between (armed) police and military and (unarmed) students, workers, and other people. Finally, on the evening of 14 October 1973, King Bhumipol made a public announcement and named Sanya Thammasak, the rector of Thammasat University, as the new Prime Minister. Despite the removal of the dictators Thanom Kittikachorn, Praphat Jarusathien and Narong Kittikachorn and the appointment of Sanya, the fighting did not die down until late on the 15th. At least 77 people were killed and 856 were wounded between the early hours of the 14th and 15th.[4]

The rupture of violence: 6 October 1976 in Bangkok

On 19 September 1976, Thanom Kittikachorn, one of the dictators ousted during the events of 14 October 1973, returned to Thailand. His return prompted concern among many progressives that a return to dictatorship was imminent. On 25

---

[4] In writing this summary, I drew heavily on Charnvit Kasetsiri's (2544 [2001]) book, *14 Tula*, in particular Benedict Anderson's translation of Charnvit's account on pages 183-215.

September 1976, while posting flyers against the return of Thanom, two labor activists were hung in Nakhon Pathom near Bangkok (*Thai Rat* 26 September 2519 [1976]: 1). On 27 September, *Thai Rat* newspaper reported that the police were involved in the hanging of the two activists; on 4 October, someone bombed the *Thai Rat* office with an M79 grenade (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 273). Also on 4 October, student activists re-enacted the hanging in a skit as a critique of police violence (Puey 1977: 5). Angered by the killings of the two labor activists and concerned that Thanom's return to Thailand might signal a possible coup, four to five thousand students and other activists massed inside the gates of Thammasat University.

On 5 October, *Dao Siam*, a right-wing Thai-language newspaper, reported that the skit about the murdered labor activists was actually a mock hanging of an effigy of the Crown Prince and that the student activists wanted to destroy the monarchy (Thongchai 2002: 249).[5] Right-wing forces circulated copies of the photograph and the newspaper article about the alleged mock hanging of the Crown Prince (Puey 1977:5). Throughout the evening of 5 October, military radio broadcasts called for the defense of "Nation, Religion, and King," the three pillars of Thai state nationalism promulgated during the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) (Bowie: 1997: 26, 48).[6]

Shortly after 2 a.m. on the morning of 6 October 1976 state and para-state forces, including Border Patrol Police, Village Scouts, Red Gaurs and other actors, began a sustained period of violence against students and other activists inside Thammasat University that did not end until the declaration of martial law and the announcement of a new ruling body, the National Administrative Reform Council

---

[5] Many people allege that *Dao Siam* and the *Bangkok Post*, which also printed an image, touched up the photograph. This remains contentious today. See Thongchai (2002) and Ji and Suthachai (2544 [2001]) for analysis.

[6] For an analysis of the formation and dissemination of this kind of nationalism, see Reynolds et al. (1991).

(NARC), at 6 p.m. (Puey 1977: 8).[7] The NARC reported that 3059 people were arrested, 46 people were killed, and over 180 people were injured (Zimmerman 1978: 58). Unofficial estimates by the Chinese Benevolent Foundation that carried the dead bodies outside the walls of Thammasat University and cremated them put the number killed much higher (Puey 1977: 8).

Explicating event

When one utters the words "14 October," or "สิบสี่ ตุลา," in Thai, one immediately references a calendar date and year (14 October 1973), a narrative of the eleven-day series of protests as they unfolded in Bangkok that culminated in the removal of the three ruling dictators, and the beginning of a three-year period of open politics in Thailand.[8] The many accounts of the eleven days between the initial call for a new constitution on 5 October and the conclusion of the violence on 15 October, such as the one I summarized above, serve as invaluable records of the ability of a united people to foment political change.

In contrast to the responses elicited when mentioning 14 October 1973, when one speaks the words "6 October," or "หก ตุลา," in Thai one is frequently greeted by silence or a turning away. Of the 3059 arrested on 6 October, all were released except for eighteen. Known as the "Bangkok 18," these activists were all charged as Communists, while seven were charged with lese-majeste, a crime punishable by

---

[7] For a detailed account of the events of this day, see Puey (1977) and Charnvit et al. (2541 [1998]).

[8] I use the term *open politics* to describe the period between 14 October 1973 and the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup following Morell and Chai-anan (1981). Morell and Chai-anan characterize this period as follows: "Political conflict in Thailand in recent years has mobilized farmers as well as generals, laborers as well as businessmen and taxi drivers, provincial elites and ordinary villagers as well as residents of Bangkok. At its core is a search for a new definition of legitimacy as the basis for the contemporary political system. New procedures are needed for participation in political life, and new mechanisms are required to reduce the growing income disparities characteristic of development in recent years. Much of the conflict during the 1973-1976 period of open politics involved these issues of legitimacy, participation, and equity" (1981: 4).

death in the Kingdom of Thailand.[9] The Bangkok 18 were released in September 1978 under an amnesty granted by the Crown Prince and the current monarch, King Bhumipol Adulyadej. The amnesty extended to everyone involved in the 6 October 1976 violence. Therefore, while the amnesty ended the trial of the Bangkok 18, it also foreclosed the possibility of a future trial for others involved, including state and para-state perpetrators of violence (Thongchai 2002: 254).[10]

Thongchai Winichakul, a historian as well as one of the Bangkok 18, argues that on the rare occasion that 6 October 1976 is present in public discourse, for example in commemorative publications or in reference to current politics, it is often shrouded in ambiguity, ambivalence, and the unsaid, by former students and other activists, as well as state and para-state actors. For Thongchai, one strategy for addressing the ambivalence and ending the silence around this event is "through the fullest telling of what happened from all sides and perspectives" (2002: 46). Benedict Anderson argues for an understanding of the coup and the violence leading up to it as a planned, sustained "two-year-long right-wing campaign of public intimidation, assault, and assassination best symbolized by the orchestrated mob violence of October 6 itself" (1977: 13).[11] Despite the violence that came in the months before, the brutality of the massacre on the morning of 6 October 1976 at Thammasat University was unprecedented.[12]

---

[9] See Streckfuss (1998) for an analysis of lese-majeste and its relationship to nationalism in Thailand. See Klum Naksuksa Kotmai (2521 [1978]) for letters from the Bangkok 18 and documents related to their trial.

[10] Although another trial is not legally possible, Ji and Suthachai (2544 [2001]) have called for an independent truth commission to investigate the event.

[11] In Chapters Five and Six, I trace this violence as experienced by farmers and their supporters in the north.

[12] For an account of the massacre, see the timetable in Puey (1977) as well as the recollections of survivors in Ji and Suthachai (2544 [2001]). Here, as elsewhere in my dissertation, I direct the reader to other, detailed descriptions rather than write my own. In *The Nervous System*, Michael Taussig writes that "As I read the early 20th-century reports on terror in the rubber boom along the lower reaches of the Putumayo River, and simultaneously heard people around me in the early 1980s discussing the disfigured corpses found along the roads leading into Puerto Tejada in the canefields of western Colombia, far from the Putumayo, I came to feel that terror dissolved certainty every bit as much as it

For different reasons, both 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 each function, in Shahid Amin's formulation, as both event and a metaphor: "… as an event fixed in time … and also as a metaphor gathering significance outside this time-frame" (1995: 3). Following Sally Falk Moore (1987) and Veena Das (1995), one approach to assessing the importance of the October events, as well as the period of open politics contained between them, is through a study of the events themselves. Moore argues that by carefully selecting significant events as sites of inquiry, anthropologists can illuminate "ongoing contests and conflicts and the efforts to prevent, suppress, or repress these" (1987: 730). In an era when there is no longer a unitary story to tell, and telling the *whole* story is similarly impossible, Moore argues, this is one strategy for organizing anthropological inquiry. Resonantly, Veena Das organizes her critique of contemporary Indian society around what she terms "critical events." Critical events are thus named because subsequent to their occurrence, "new modes of action came into being which redefined traditional categories such as codes of purity and honour, the meaning of martyrdom, and the construction of a heroic life. Equally, new forms were acquired by a variety of political actors, such as caste groups, religious communities, women's groups, and the nation as a whole" (1995: 6). Das argues that precisely because events necessarily affect a range of actors and organizations, attention to them "helps form an ethnography which makes an incision upon all these institutions together, so that their mutual implication in the events are foregrounded during the analysis" (1995: 6). A focus on event, in the sense of an occurrence that

---

preyed on one's heartfelt desire to find its secret order. Yet the more one looked for order, the more one was caught in its sticky web of evasions, bluffs, and halls of mirrors. And the more one tried to bluff back, fighting indeterminacy with indeterminacy, there waiting in the wings was Order with a giant rabbit-killer. Here, interpretation was no esoteric practice of the literary critic but a matter of survival" (1992: 9). What is needed in this case is not another recounting of what happened, but a way to assess it, if not make sense of it.

happens in a specific time and place, may therefore effectively illuminate the trajectories of social and political transformation.

However, an examination only of these two events, whether primarily documentary or explicitly analytical, fails to account for the diversity of experiences of transformation during the period of open politics. For example, as regards 14 October 1973, with the notable exception of the book published by the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT 2517 [1974]) detailing the sequence of events as they unfolded in every province in Thailand, the accounts are often exclusively, or primarily, focused on what happened in Bangkok. While very significant, not least due to the many protestors who died in Bangkok, and the intervention of the king, the protests as they unfolded in Bangkok are not the only story of 14 October 1973. The dominant narrative of the events of 6 October 1976 is even more forcefully centered in Bangkok. The massacre took place in Bangkok, but what happened in the rest of the country as the coup was launched? While it is clear that the actions which took place in the city of Bangkok were significant, the privileging of these accounts to the point of elision of accounts indicates that these accounts have become the *national* accounts. If we think of the events as metaphors, this becomes particularly problematic. In *Event, Memory, Metaphor*, Shahid Amin (1995) traces how the story of the Chauri Chaura riots became a metaphor for the Indian anticolonial struggle against the British. My concern is that if the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 come to be seen as metaphors of the height of peoples' struggles and their most brutal repression, then these metaphors will locate Bangkok as the penultimate site of social and political transformation.

In addition, by privileging the October events, critics elide what came before and after the events, what catalyzed the events and what was catalyzed by the events. Prajak Kongkirati specifies one of these elisions in the introduction to his thesis on

student and intellectual cultural politics between 1957 and 1973. While recognizing the importance of the inclusion of the events of the eleven days surrounding 14 October 1973 in secondary school textbooks, he identifies significant limitations with the inclusion. Prajak argues that students

> may know who did what, when, and how in those 11 days. But they do not know who these people were, where they came from, how they came to have a role in the event, and why they decided to act, or not act. They do not know what pushed these people forward, or the reasons behind their actions. They do not know what they thought, felt, or lost hope about. They do not know why all of this came together in this event. It is clear that in order to answer these questions, it is necessary to study and create understanding greater than that solely about the event itself (Prajak 2545 [2002]: 5).[13]

Through an exhaustive examination of different forms of cultural politics, namely pocket books, magazines, and student and other newspapers published between 1963 and 1973, Prajak addresses this lacuna. By tracing the development of political consciousness leading up to 14 October 1973, he historicizes the event as a particular combination of nationalist, leftist, and royalist ideas that crystallized in the roles of intellectuals. Prajak's important work is only the beginning; many years of research and critical analysis remain to be imagined and carried out.

In this spirit, I intervene here into what is elided by a specific focus on the October events in Bangkok by examining the events prior, between and subsequent to them in Chiang Mai. By detailing how 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 were experienced in Chiang Mai, I begin now by offering an alternate geography to the oft-cited Bangkok-centered accounts. In presenting this account, I do not aim to replace

---

[13] "อาจจะได้รู้ว่า ใครทำอะไร เมื่อไร อย่างไรบ้างในช่วง 11 วันนั้น แต่เขาก็จะไม่รู้ว่า คนเหล่านี้เป็นใครมาจากไหน ก้าวมามีบทบาทในเหตุการณ์ได้อย่างไร ทำไมถึงตัดสินใจทำและไม่ทำอะไรอย่างนั้น อะไรเป็นแรงผลักดัน เป็นเหตุผลที่อยู่เบื้องหลัง พวกเขาคิด รู้สึก คาดหวังอะไร และทำไมจึงมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กันอย่างที่ปรากฏในเหตุการณ์ เห็นได้ชัดว่าจะตอบคำถามเหล่านี้ต้องศึกษาทำความเข้าใจถึงกระบวนการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่มากไปกว่าตัวเหตุการณ์เพียงลำพัง"

the Bangkok-centered accounts with a definitive account of what happened in Chiang Mai. My accounts of 14 and 6 October in Chiang Mai are doubly partial. First, I do not make claims to capture all experiences of the events as they unfolded in Chiang Mai. Second, as I have argued that the Chiang Mai accounts are marginalized by the oft-repeated Bangkok accounts, my Chiang Mai accounts also necessarily function to marginalize other stories of change.

The shifting subjects of history: telling 14 October in Chiang Mai

Founded on the banks of the Ping River in 1292 C.E. by King Mengrai, the city of Chiang Mai is bounded by walls and a moat (Wyatt 1984). Five gates interrupt the four walls of the city: Tha Pae (west), Suan Prung (south), Chiang Mai (south), Suan Dok (east), and Chang Puak (north). To the west of the walled city, the roads lead to Warorot Market and the Ping River. To the east of the walled city, Huay Kaew and Suthep roads lead first to Chiang Mai University and then to Doi Suthep, the range of mountains at the edge of the city.

At one time the gates allowed passage in and outside of the city walls; today the walls have largely crumbled, leaving many openings and removing the urgent need for the gates. The gates remain points on a map, landmarks, and places to tell a *songthaew* driver to drop one off. However, in the history of recent politics in Chiang Mai, Tha Pae, the western gate, figures prominently. Surrounding Tha Pae is an open plaza, a space large enough for vendors to spread out their wares, a youth symphony to set up for a concert on a dry evening, or a large crowd of people to mass for a demonstration.

During the events of 14 October 1973, Tha Pae was one location on a circuit among Chiang Mai University at the end of Huay Kaew Road, Teachers' College, which was located outside the city walls near Chang Puak gate, and the Chiang Mai

provincial administration building, which was located within the walls of the old city. Students first organized debates on the campuses and then spilled out through the streets of the city, massing at Tha Pae and the provincial administration building. Professors and administrators initially watched the expanding protests with growing concern, and then moved to join the demonstrations with a new sense of responsibility as teachers and citizens. The events, as well as the slogans and declarations of the students, were meticulously charted by the security forces and reported in a conservative Chiang Mai newspaper, *Thai Niu*.

Here I offer three different accounts of 14 October in Chiang Mai from these perspectives. By looking at accounts by student activists, the Faculty Assembly at CMU, and those contained in *Thai Niu*, I identify the transformations of roles for students, professors, and citizens. Throughout the accounts there are many articulations of the events as *historic* -- what is articulated as significant are the large numbers, public actions, and courage of the protestors. In my assessment, not only were the events *historic* in these terms, but I argue that new subjects of history emerged as well. These new subjects emerged as the boundaries between what was considered appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and seditious and necessary dissent blurred and morphed. Students, professors, and other citizens became new subjects as they traversed and contested these boundaries.

In his analysis of violence in Garmukhteshwar during Partition in India in 1946-1947, Gyanendra Pandey suggests that we view the local as a "particular, designated, definable geographical space" (2001: 93). For Pandey, the significant questions are framed in terms of relation: "Indeed, the relationship between the 'local' and the 'national' is a matter of some importance …. "How did national forces affect the local? And local forces appropriate the national? How was the national perceived, and constructed, in particular instances – by local participants as well as by outside

commentators?" (2001: 93). By arguing that the stories of 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai are marked by various kinds of connection and disconnection to Bangkok, my analysis necessarily extends beyond assigning Chiang Mai as *local* in relation to the *national* of Bangkok. Instead, following Pandey, I aim to explore how Chiang Mai and Bangkok are intertwined, and how this affected both what took place on the streets and the historiographies of the event:

> For by the time such an event gains a place in 'history' (and in the state's archives), the 'local' and the 'national' are so inextricably intertwined in it as to make their disentangling a practical impossibility. What we might more fruitfully ask, on the basis of this kind of historical records, is *not*: what was the 'local' and what the 'national' in this event, *but*: how does historiography itself proceed to *localize* or *nationalize* the event: or both? (2001: 94, emphasis is in original).

Through my reading of the events through the three different perspectives, I further argue that a new geography of the city emerged as well. In addition, I map the relations of coordination, transmission, and uncertainty between Bangkok and Chiang Mai during the days surrounding this event. In so doing, I offer these accounts of 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai not as an example of a *local* history of the event, but as an analysis of what is elided when what occurred in Bangkok comes to stand in for the *national*, or only, history of the event.[14]

---

[14] This intervention may be particularly important within the field of anthropology. In *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai writes: "If a large part of the ethnographic record can be reread and rewritten as a record of the multifarious modes for the production of locality, it follows that ethnography has been unwittingly complicit in this activity. This is a point about knowledge and representation rather than about guilt or violence. The ethnographic project is in a peculiar way isomorphic with the very knowledges it seems to discover and document, as both the ethnographic project and the social projects it seeks to describe have the production of locality as their governing telos. The misrecognition of this fact in both projects, as involving only more humdrum and discrete actions and settings (house building, child naming, boundary rituals, greeting rituals, spatial purifications), is the constitutive misrecognition that guarantees both the special appropriateness of ethnography to certain kinds of description and its peculiar lack of reflexivity as a project of knowledge and reproduction. Drawn into the very localization they seek to document, most ethnographic descriptions have taken locality as ground not figure, recognizing neither its fragility nor its ethos *as a property of social life*" (Appadurai 1996: 181-182, emphasis is in original). This is another reason why I stress that my project here is not to *center* Chiang Mai, but to call into question the historiographic and analytic practice of centering any one account or location.

Traversing the city: student mobilization in Chiang Mai

During the demonstrations surrounding 14 October 1973 in Bangkok, the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) emerged as the primary coordination body. Founded in 1970 and based in Bangkok, the member institutions of the NSCT included the nation's four year universities, but not the teachers' colleges or technical institutes. Given the difficulties of coordinating with students in Bangkok as well as desiring coordination among all the post-secondary institutions in the northern region, in June 1973, H., a CMU student activist, proposed the ideas of a regional student union. He sent letters of invitation to a meeting about a possible pan-northern student association to students at each institute of higher education in the northern region.[15] At the meeting, held in August 1973 on the CMU campus, the Northern Student Center (NSC) was formally established.[16]

During the events of 14 October 1973, the NSC played a significant role coordinating actions across Chiang Mai and throughout the northern region.[17] In H.'s assessment, the work during the 14 October protests greatly strengthened the NSC and enabled the organization to organize and raise consciousness effectively in the following three years. The narrative of 14 October 1973 that I offer here is based on two interviews I conducted with H. as well as the detailed account recorded in the NSCT's book of province-by-province events (NSCT 2517 [1974]).

---

[15] The following provinces comprise the northern region of Thailand: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Nan, Mae Hong Son, Phrae, Phitsanulok, Lampang, Lamphun, Kamphaeng Phet, Nakhon Sawan, Phayao, Phetchabun, Phichit, Sukhothai, Uthai Thani, and Uttaradit.

[16] The Northern Student Center was comprised of representatives from Phibun Songkhram Teachers' College (Phitsanulok); Uttaradit Teachers' College (Uttaradit); Chiang Mai Teachers' College (Chiang Mai); Tak Technical College (Tak); Phayap Technical College (Chiang Mai); Chiang Mai Agricultural College (Chiang Mai); Nursing, Health and Midwifery School (Phitsanulok); McCormick Nursing School; Health Studies College (Chiang Mai); and Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai).

[17] A question which I am unable to address is the actual level of communication and coordination among the activists across the north. H. noted that it was very difficult to communicate with activists at institutions outside of Chiang Mai, and so activists at the institutions within Chiang Mai communicated closely with one another.

On 7 October, only one day after the activists calling for a constitution in Bangkok were arrested, posters were put up all over Chiang Mai city that "severely attacked the government" (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 507).[18] On 10 October, by 2 p.m., debates about the actions of the government were raging across the Teachers' College campus. Then, organized by the NSC, at 4:30 p.m. on 10 October, Teachers' College and CMU students massed on the CMU campus (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 507). After discussing the actions of the government, at 5:30 p.m., they decided to march in groups down different roads, massing at Tha Pae gate. At Tha Pae, they were joined by night students from Teachers' College as well; by 8 p.m., approximately 5000 students and people were massed. At 9 p.m., echoing the calls of the NSCT, the NSC issued a statement calling for the release of the thirteen arrested people in Bangkok and the promulgation of a constitution within the year. They then dispersed, with a promise to mass again if the government did not respond to their demands.

The first Thai academic semester runs from early June to October, and at the beginning of October, final exams were still ongoing. Although a few students took the bus to Bangkok to join the demonstrations at Thammasat, the vast majority protested in Chiang Mai (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 507). Throughout the day of 11 October, they held "Hyde Park"-style speakouts and debates at CMU, Teachers' College, and Mae Jo Agricultural College. The NSC coordinated marches from each campus to the Chiang Mai provincial office in the center of the walled city. Unable to rely on the local newspapers to provide fair coverage, the NSC drove around the city using megaphones to announce the news of their activities to Chiang Mai residents.

The NSC activists built a stage in front of the provincial building. While protests continued moving across Chiang Mai, the NSC space at the provincial building became the site of coordination for all activities. The students and the other

---

[18] "โจมตีรัฐบาลอย่างรุนแรง"

people who joined them stayed for three days and nights between 11 and 14 October. The largest number of people massed in front of the office between 7 p.m. and midnight. While some people went home to sleep after midnight, H. told me that more than 1000 people remained and slept in front of the office each night.

On the morning of 12 October, approximately fifty people put up posters across the city announcing a protest at Tha Pae at 4:30 p.m. At 4:30, students and other people met at Tha Pae and performed plays and debated the political situation. At this time, the NSC issued a declaration demanding the release of the thirteen arrested activists in Bangkok and the resignation of the Thanom-Praphat-Narong government. In the declaration, the leaders of the NSC positioned themselves in relation to students across the country by saying that they struggle together with students "in other regions to call for true democracy and justice in Thailand" (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 511). In their declaration, they explained that they "can see that the government has behavior that is a true danger to the people" (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 511).[19] They identify the basis of their claims as follows: "at this time university and other students, teachers, merchants, and people across the country have risen up and joined together to struggle as fiercely as possible, in a way that has **never happened before in Thai history**" (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 510, emphasis added).[20] Similarly, although the NSCT account does not provide the approximate number of people who attended the protests on the 12th, they noted that "the coming together in this day was **the largest in history**" (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 508, emphasis added).[21]

---

[19] "ได้เล็งเห็นว่ารัฐบาลมีพฤติกรรมที่เป็นภัยต่อประชาชนจริงๆ"

[20] "ขณะนี้ นิสิต นักศึกษา คณาจารย์นักเรียน พ่อค้า ประชาชนทั่วประเทศได้ลุกฮือเข้าร่วมมือกันต่อสู้อย่างรุนแรงที่สุดอย่าง**ไม่เคยมีมาในประวัติศาสตร์ไทย**"

[21] "การรวมตัวในวันนี้นับเป็นการรวมตัว**ครั้งใหญ่ที่สุดในประวัติศาสตร์**"

Recurrent throughout the accounts of 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai, the protests, and the courage and shared (if contingently so) desires of the people they represented, are cited as historic. The contexts of the NSC and NSCT declarations of the events as "historic" suggest that what is remarkable for them about these protests is their public form and the vast number of participants.[22]

In Bangkok, the NSCT insisted that the government meet their demands by 12 noon on the 13th, or they would take their protest outside of the walls of Thammasat into the city streets. Significantly, the students and other protestors in Chiang Mai had left the campuses to become a visible presence in the city streets days before. From the beginning, the NSC made the protest a city-wide occurrence. In their 12 October declaration, the NSC also gave the government until 12 noon on 13 October to answer their demands. If their demands (which were identical to the NSCT demands for the release of the thirteen arrested activists and a new constitution) were not met, then they would call for continued protests. Despite radio and television reports asserting the contrary, after contacting the NSCT leaders in Bangkok at 12 noon on the 13th, the NSC confirmed that there had been no response from the government and called for a continuation of the protests.

The NSC leaders spread this news to the people massed at the provincial hall and then led a demonstration around the city. While at Tha Pae, the protestors burned a giant puppet of Praphat Jarusathien, one of the ruling dictators (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 508). The NSC led a caravan of over 100 vehicles throughout the city; people stood on top of strategically placed vehicles and used megaphones to announce the news of the government's inaction as the caravan weaved through Chiang Mai's neighborhoods.

[22] Notably, in the accounting of this historic moment, *farmers* are not specifically listed. Was this because they were not present, or because they were not visible as a category separate from "people" to the NSCT chroniclers? Given the widespread political action of farmers in Chiang Mai in the period following 14 October, which I discuss in later chapters, I suspect it was the latter.

H., the former NSC activist with whom I spoke, thought that on the 13th, more than 20,000 people demonstrated in the streets of Chiang Mai. After the demonstration was concluded, many people came back to the provincial hall and vigiled there until the morning of the 14th.

On the morning of the 14th, the reports of violence in Bangkok spread throughout Chiang Mai. After hearing the news of the police and military force used against unarmed students in Bangkok, the mood in Chiang Mai grew sad and anxious. As they had throughout the previous days of protests, the NSC drove around the city using megaphones to alert the residents of the violence. Chiang Mai residents grew uncertain and confused due to the discrepancies between the news reports given by the Northern Student Center of state violence against unarmed students and the reports broadcast on government-operated radio, which stated that the students were armed (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 508). This was a crucial difference between the experiences of those in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Bangkok residents could confirm or disprove the reports broadcasted by the government by going into the streets themselves, or seeking eye-witness accounts from neighbors or relatives. Chiang Mai residents were forced to rely on the mediated reports of either the NSC or the government.

After hearing the announcement in the evening of the 14th that the dictators were leaving the country, more than 10,000 people massed outside the provincial building in the center of Chiang Mai. At this time, some professors joined the demonstration and many people came to donate money and blood to send to those injured in Bangkok. News of the violence in Bangkok continued to arrive in Chiang Mai. As news that there was a possibility that the military in Chiang Mai would act against the protestors, concerns for the safety of the crowd deepened. As Chiang Mai residents acted to help victims of violence in Bangkok, they themselves became vulnerable. The entire nation witnessed the violence in Bangkok; if the police or

military harmed protestors in Chiang Mai, who would be watching? After a long meeting, the NSC decided at 1:30 a.m. on the morning of 15 October that the safest option was to disperse the protests and for everyone to return home to sleep (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 509).

Despite the concerns, there was no violence in Chiang Mai. The process of remembering the violence that occurred in Bangkok on the 14th began immediately across the country, including Chiang Mai.[23] Throughout the protests in Chiang Mai, the Northern Student Center acted as both the organizer of the protests and a form of independent media spreading the student perspective on the events in Bangkok and Chiang Mai through posters, plays, and traveling megaphone caravans. The NSC existed prior to October 1973, and as I discuss later in this chapter, was preceded by years of other forms of progressive student organizing under more repressive regimes. What changed during those days in October 1973 was the locus and public expression of this organizing. In circling the city with their megaphones and demonstrations, students created a new geography of protest in Chiang Mai. Over the next three years, both Tha Pae and the provincial hall continued to serve as sites of assembly for student, farmer, and other activists in Chiang Mai.

Recording official boundaries: professorial concerns

Established in 1970, the Faculty Assembly (สภา อาจารย์) of Chiang Mai University is comprised of elected representatives drawn from each faculty, the president and vice president's offices, and the deans. Through holding at least three

[23] The violence against protestors in Bangkok that began on the morning of 14 October transformed the protestors into heroes and martyrs for the Thai nation. At 10 a.m. on the morning of 15 October, students from universities and many secondary schools including the elite schools Montfort and Satri Watanothaipayap, as well as many other people met at the Chiang Mai municipal stadium to hold a ceremony in honor of those who died protesting. On 16 October, many students gathered in Chiang Mai in order to make merit for those who died (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 509).

scheduled meetings per semester and disseminating news of their activities to the entire faculty and staff, their mandate is to express observations and give advice about a variety of concerns related to the academic, welfare, and administrative matters of the university (Sapha Ajarn 1974 [2517]: 1-4).

Two unscheduled meetings were held during the events of 14 October 1973. First, four days after their regularly scheduled meeting, they called a special meeting at 9 a.m. on 13 October at the Sala Taam, their usual meeting spot. Thirty-five members of the Assembly attended this meeting and eight were absent.[24] After hearing the news about the violence used against students in Bangkok, an emergency meeting was called for 2 p.m. on 14 October at the Sala Ang Kaew. The emergency meeting was attended by more than 300 faculty members and civil servants (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 43).

The challenges, fears, and possibilities the Faculty Assembly faced after learning of the violence against students and others in Bangkok were starkly evident in the minutes of the meetings. While only twenty-nine hours separated the two meetings, the dramatically different conditions surrounding the two meetings prompted reassessment of the Assembly's roles, the university's place in society, and the meanings of civic responsibility. The very inclusion of the minutes of the meetings within the published records of the Assembly for the 1973-1974 academic year reflects this reassessment, and the transformation wrought by the events of 14 October 1973.

The special meeting on 13 October was initiated by one of the members of the Assembly who wanted to examine the call by students, professors and others across the country for a new constitution. As recorded in the minutes:

---

[24] Although this meeting was noted as open to all faculty members at the university, if non-Assembly members attended, their presence was not recorded (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 39).

> The need for this meeting was caused and based in the events taking place outside [the Assembly] in the country. These events arose from the professors, students and people who have called for a constitution from the administrators of the country; thirteen of those calling for a constitution have been arrested. This meeting of the Faculty Assembly is being held in order to propose a way to perform the duties of the Faculty Assembly vis-à-vis the university in this situation (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 39).[25]

As the meeting progressed, delimiting the duty of the Assembly, as well as the basis for this duty, became increasingly complicated.

A representative from the CMU students' organization was invited to present the student perspective on the events that had unfolded in Chiang Mai since 7 October. After listing the activities, debates, and demonstrations which had taken place, the student representative explained that the CMU students were involved because they were part of the Northern Student Center, and the Northern Student Center was active because they were part of the National Student Center of Thailand (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 40). The student then requested that the Faculty Assembly become involved and that they not "sit idly, because this is an issue that affects educational institutions and the rights of professors as well" (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 40).[26] In addition, the student requested that the Assembly issue a declaration to the CMU community and the Prime Minister expressing their concerns.

These requests prompted debate among the assembled members. One person asserted that while the CMU students had joined the demonstrations due to their membership in the NSC, and by extension the NSCT, the Faculty Assembly was not part of a larger coalition of faculty assemblies nationwide (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]:

---

[25] "ความจำเป็นในการประชุมครั้งนี้มีสาเหตุมูลฐานมาจากเหตุการณ์บ้านเมืองภายนอก อันเนื่องมาจากการที่อาจารย์ นักศึกษาและประชาชนได้ทำการเรียกร้องรัฐธรรมนูญจากผู้บริหารของประเทศและได้มีผู้ดำเนินการทั้ง ๑๓ คนถูกจับกุมไปตามลำดับนั้น ที่ประชุมสภาอาจารย์ประชุมครั้งนี้เพื่อให้ได้ข้อเสนอแนะตามหน้าที่ของสภาอาจารย์ให้แก่มหาวิทยาลัย ในเรื่องนี้"

[26] "วางเฉย เพราะเป็นเรื่องที่กระทบกระเทือนต่อสถาบันการศึกษา และเกี่ยวข้องกับสิทธิของอาจารย์ด้วย"

40). However, other people argued that the Assembly should be involved because the students were their responsibility, and they should be urged to act appropriately (“ตามความเหมาะสม”); what was meant by “appropriate” here was left unspecified. Other members expressed concern at the development of problems within the university or the interruption of teaching if the government were to use force against the students (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 42). Also, concerned with the safety of students, a group within the Faculty of Medicine organized first-aid teams (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 41).

Despite the dissension, the Faculty Assembly concluded that they did need to take an active role in the protests *as the Faculty Assembly*. In lieu of entering the streets under a collective banner, they decided to issue a declaration to the rest of the faculty and staff at CMU, in order to convey the information about the demonstrations that they received from the student representative. The important parts of this declaration were cited as including the following: the series of events was having negative effects on teaching throughout the nation as students could not finish their exams; the arrest of the thirteen activists who called for a constitution was excessive; and all relevant agencies and offices should work to find a solution to the unrest (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 40). In addition, the Assembly decided that it was appropriate for them to contact provincial and national level offices to request that they proceed without using violence against those from the NSC. Using violence, they asserted, would only cause increased unrest. Finally, they requested that the government “examine the actions of the Center as just, because the Faculty Assembly of Chiang Mai University has observed that the actions of the Northern Student Center to demand a constitution are innocent and virtuous” (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 42).[27]

[27] “พิจารณาการกระทำของศูนย์แห่งนี้อย่างเป็นธรรม เพราะสภาอาจารย์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่เห็นว่า ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาภาคเหนือดำเนินเรียกร้องรัฐธรรมนูญด้วยความบริสุทธิ์และสุจริตใจ”

The opinion of the Faculty Assembly members on the events was not at issue. Even in the form of response that the Assembly deemed appropriate and in keeping with their constitution, their perspective was critical of state action against the students.

However, at this time, the Faculty Assembly remained clear in their decision not to join the demonstrations *as the Faculty Assembly*. They concluded that "Any faculty person who sees it as appropriate to join with the students can do as an individual citizen, but not in the name of the Faculty Assembly, because that would not follow the ideas in the constitution of the Faculty Assembly" (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 41).[28] Despite this firm decision, by the next morning the boundaries between the duties of individual citizens and the members of the Faculty Assembly blurred.

Once the news reached Chiang Mai that the government used violence against students and other people in Bangkok, the Assembly became the organizing body for all concerned faculty and staff on the CMU campus. At 10 a.m. on 14 October, an emergency meeting was called for 4 p.m. at the Sala Ang Kaew, around the reservoir at the western edge of the CMU campus. The meeting was held at the Sala Ang Kaew rather than the usual location because "This meeting was not an official university meeting. Professors and civil servants met together *as one group of citizens*" (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 43, emphasis is added).[29] However, the minutes of the meeting were included along with the minutes of the *official* meetings of the Faculty Assembly. Their inclusion casts doubt on the stated separation of this meeting, and the actions planned during it, from *official* university business.

---

[28] "อาจารย์ท่านใดเห็นสมควรกับนักศึกษาก็ควรได้ทำในนามของประชาชนคนหนึ่งก็ได้ แต่มิใช่ในนามของสภาอาจารย์เพราะจะทำให้เสียแนวทางปฏิบัติตามรัฐธรรมนูญของสภาอาจารย์ไป"

[29] "การประชุมครั้งนี้มิใช่กระทำเป็นทางการของมหาวิทยาลัย อาจารย์ข้าราชการจึงได้ประชุมกัน**ในฐานะประชาชนกลุ่มหนึ่ง**"

The more than 300 people in attendance met because they were concerned about the violence that occurred in Bangkok and wanted to work together to find a solution as soon as possible (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 43). In particular, they wanted to know how to prevent violence against the students of the NSC and their supporters who were massed at the provincial building in the center of Chiang Mai city. Overnight the situation in Bangkok turned violent, and they began the meeting by urgently calling for calm in Chiang Mai:

> The Northern Student Center has occupied the area of the Chiang Mai provincial building and made it into the center of their activities. If the officials use violent measures it will certainly be dangerous for students from CMU and other institutions. Therefore we ask that we meet and examine this situation and its reasons and not only with a hot-tempered attitude (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 44).[30]

Then the floor was opened for debate. In the period that followed, a diversity of views was expressed, including those expressing compassion and support for the students as well as those criticizing their actions (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 44).[31]

Following the debate, the conclusion was that the best way to prevent violence was to appoint a committee to collect information and contact all of the parties involved (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 44). They also called for donations of money, food and other items for the Northern Student Center (Sapha Ajarn 2517 [1974]: 45). Finally, they issued a call for donations of blood to send to Bangkok, and, in a parenthetical addition, to use in Chiang Mai in case there was a need (Sapha Ajarn

---

[30] "ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาภาคเหนือก็ได้เข้าไปยึดบริเวณศาลากลางจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ไว้เป็นศูนย์ปฏิบัติงาน หากทางการจะใช้มาตรการรุนแรงก็จะเกิดอันตรายแก่ นักศึกษา มช. และสถาบันอื่นๆ อย่างแน่นอน ฉะนั้นจึ้งใคร ขอให้ที่ประชุมได้พิจารณาเรื่องนี้อย่างมีเหตุผลและอย่าได้ใช้อารมณ์ฉุนเฉียวเพียงอย่างเดียว"

[31] Notably, there is mention in the NSCT account as well of the professors who did not support the student protests (NSCT 2517 [1974]: 508). In neither the NSCT nor the Faculty Assembly account are there any details about the forms of the criticism of these professors – were there counter-protests or other forms of harassment? This is an important and possibly fruitful line of future inquiry.

2517 [1974]: 45).[32] As university members and as citizens, meeting under the (unofficial) banner of the Faculty Assembly, they fervently hoped that the violence would not spread to Chiang Mai.

As you will recall from the previous section, there was no violence in Chiang Mai at this time. In working to prevent violence, and prepare to response to its possibility in Chiang Mai, the CMU Faculty Assembly discarded their concerns with adherence to bureaucratic codes. Even as the minutes of the Assembly reflected a stated concern with their prescribed duties, their actions extended far beyond the stated limits. In this sense, the Faculty Assembly became another site where the events of 14 October 1973 prompted transformation.

Ambivalent reporting: journalism as more than observation

The third account of the events surrounding 14 October 1973 that I examine here is drawn form the pages of *Thai Niu*, which I assess as a conservative/center-right Chiang Mai daily newspaper. While the demonstrations, debates, and other NSC-led activities were reported in another Chiang Mai newspaper, the fortnightly *Khon Muang*, and mentioned in Bangkok-based papers, including the English-language *Bangkok Post* as well as *Thai Rat*, the *Thai Niu* coverage was the most extensive. In addition, *Thai Niu*'s reporting is remarkable in two interrelated registers. First, in contrast to the explicit position against the Thai state expressed by the NSC and although to a lesser degree, the CMU Faculty Assembly, the terms used and reporting perspective in *Thai Niu* reflects a far less antagonistic, and perhaps even pro-state position. Second, my analysis of the suspicion of the NSC expressed in the pages of *Thai Niu* serves as valuable context for my analysis of farmers' activism in later

---

[32] "ได้ขอให้บริจาคโลหิตไปช่วยเหลือผู้ได้รับบาดเจ็บที่กรุงเทพ ฯ (หรือหากมีเหตุการณ์อันคาดไม่ถึงก็อาจจะได้ใช้ในเชียงใหม่ด้วย"

chapters. While the writers and editors of *Thai Niu* do not deny that 14 October 1973 transformed the course of Thai history, ambivalence about this transformation reverberated through the pages of the newspaper.

The burgeoning struggle was first announced through a headline emblazoned across the top of the front page of *Thai Niu* on 9 October 1973 reading "A hidden hand has posted posters throughout the city vilifying the pulverized government" (*Thai Niu* 9 October 2516 [1973]: 1).[33] An accompanying article notes that the posters supporting the call for a constitution were put up secretly (ลอบ) and criticized the government using violent (รุนแรง) language.[34] The posters were found in front of the entrance to the airport, as well as many places throughout the old city, including near Yupparaj School, Wattano School, and in the areas of Sam Lan, Chang Moi and Tha Pae roads. *Thai Niu* reported that in addition to the posters

> in front of Yupparaj School and Sattriwattanothaiphayap School and on Sam Lan Road, a hidden hand used red paint to write in big letters, approximately one foot. *Thai Niu* is unable to print the heart of what was written on the street and on the posters, because the words were entirely and completely violent (*Thai Niu* 9 October 2516 [1973]: 8).[35]

Was *Thai Niu* afraid that they would come under attack by the government if they reported the contents of the posters? Or did they choose not to print the messages contained on the posters, and so prevent the reproduction and circulation of the messages? We can surmise from the NSCT and NSC accounts described earlier that

[33] "มือมืดปิดโปสเตอร์เต็มเมืองด่ารัฐบาลแหลก!"

[34] The posters were also described as "เถื่อน" – which could be translated as "illegal," "unauthorized," or "savage." In my assessment here, the meaning may be a combination of all three words.

[35] "ส่วนที่หน้าโรงเรียนยุพราช หน้าโรงเรียนสตรีวัฒโนทัยพยัพ และบนเส้นทางถนนสามล้าน มือมืดได้ใช้สีแดงเขียนเป็นตัวอักษรกว้างยาว ประมาณ ๑ ฟุต ซึ่งใจความที่เขียน บนถนน และบนแผ่นโปสเตอร์ "ไทยนิวส์" ไม่สามารถที่จะนำมาตีพิมพ์ได้ เพราะ ล้วนแต่เป็นถ้อยคำรุนแรงทั้งสิ้น"

the so-called "hidden hand" referred to the hands of many student activists.[36] As *Thai Niu* ominously reported, at the time of the printing of the newspaper, the Special Branch police began an investigation into the posters and their authors. In the meantime, the police were ordered to collect and take down the posters.

On 10 October, *Thai Niu* reported that Chiang Mai officials had contacted the Bangkok officials about the posters, and were waiting for orders from Bangkok about what to do (*Thai Niu* 10 October 2516 [1973]: 1). By 11 October, photographs of some of the offending photographs were printed on the front page (*Thai Niu* 11 October 2516 [1973]: 1); unfortunately the quality of the microfilm from which I read *Thai Niu* was such that I could not read the text printed on the posters.

On 13 October, *Thai Niu* reported that "a second wave of posters attacking the government have been posted, as if [the authors are] unafraid of the law" around the city (*Thai Niu* 13 October 2516 [1973]: 1).[37] *Thai Niu* offered a detailed account of the protests hung on the afternoon of 12 October:

> A group of young people marched through the city of Chiang Mai, posting posters attacking the government, handing out declarations of the students calling for the government to release the thirteen people being held. Today there were approximately 100 CMU students who marched all over Chiang Mai, beginning at Chang Moi Road, and then going proceeding to Wichayanon Road, then to Tha Pae. Throughout this march, they covered every place they passed with posters, many hundreds of sheets. In addition, they gave out four declarations of the CMU and Teachers' College students. One of the declarations, "To brothers, sisters, and citizens who love the nation," attached the government of Field Marshal Thanom that has been in power since 1963, as having received power but not built or developed the country so it could progress at all. The bottom of the declaration was signed by "people who love the nation." The second declaration was from CMU and Teachers' College students and called for the government to release the 13 arrested for rebellion and the 3 MPs who were arrested

[36] For an analysis of the "third hand" and its changing meanings and uses in Thai political discourse, see Attachak (2549 [2006]).

[37] "ปิดโปสเตอร์โจมตีรัฐบาลระลอกสอง แบบไม่กลัวกฎหมาย"

> and called for the government to promulgate a constitution by 10 December 1973; at the bottom they demanded an answer within 24 hours. The third declaration, by the Northern Student Center, criticized the government as having behavior inappropriate to leaders, and was issued on 12 October 1973 (*Thai Niu* 13 October 2516: 1, 8).[38]

This account of the protest on 12 October is very similar to that offered in the NSCT account. However, the *Thai Niu* account is remarkable for its detail of the declarations handed out by the students of CMU, Teachers' College, and the Northern Student Center. Given that hard copies of the declarations do not remain, the reporting in *Thai Niu* is a valuable resource.[39]

On 14 October, *Thai Niu* devoted the entire first three pages of the newspaper to reporting the events that had transpired. They report that the army clashed with the people in Bangkok and that the situation in Chiang Mai was growing graver. The police and army were preparing for action (*Thai Niu* 14 October 2516 [1973]: 1-3). In addition, photographs of many banners critical of the government were printed, with the caption "these pictures do not need to be explained" (*Thai Niu* 14 October 2516

---

[38] "กลุ่มหนุ่ม เดินขบวนหัวเมืองเชียงใหม่ ปิดโปสเตอร์ โจมตีรัฐบาล แจกแถลงการณ์ นักศึกษาเรียกร้องให้รัฐบาลปล่อยตัว ๑๓ ผู้ต้องหาขบถ เมื่อวันนี้มีนักศึกษา ม.ช. จำนวนหนึ่ง ประมาณ ๑๐๐ คน เศษ ได้เดินขบวนทั่วเชียงใหม่ ตั้งแต่ถนนช้างม่อย เข้าถนนวิชยานนท์ ไปท่าแพ ตลอดทางนำโปสเตอร์ปิดตามสถานี่ต่างๆ ที่เดินผ่านไปหล่ายร้อยแผ่น นอกจากนี้ยังมีแจกแถลงการณ์ ของนักศึกษา ม.ช. กับ นศ. ว.ค.ช.ม. แถลงการณ์มี ๔ ฉบับ . "ถึงพี่น้องประชาชนผู้รักชาติ" หนึ่งฉบับมีใจความโจมตีรัฐบาลของจอมพลถนอม ซึ่งตั้งแต่ ปี ๒๕๐๖ ที่ได้อำนาจมาก็ไม่เคยสร้างหรือพัฒนาประเทศให้เจริญขึ้นเลย ลงท้ายแถลงการณ์ว่ากลุ่มผู้รักชาติ ฉบับ ๒ เป็นแถลงการณ์ของนศ. มช. เรียกร้องให้รัฐบาลปล่อย ๑๓ ผู้ต้องหาขบถ และ ๓ สส. ที่ถูกจับ และให้รัฐบาลประกาศใช้รัฐธรรมนูญภายในวันที่ ๑๐ ธ.๕. ๑๖ และให้รัฐบาลตอบภายใน ๗๒ ชั่วโมง ลงท้าย แถลงการณ์ว่า นศ. ว.ค. ลงวันที่ ๑๐ ต.ค. ๑๖ แบับที่ ๓ แถลงการณ์ของ ศูนย์นักศึกษาภาคเหนื่อ โจมตีรัฐบาลว่า มีพฤติการณ์ไม่เหมาะสมที่จะเป็นผู้นำ ลงวันที่ ๑๒ ต.ค. ๑๖"

[39] This is true not only for the events surrounding 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai, but for many issues and events during the period of open politics. Sources from a left or progressive perspective have in many cases been destroyed or are not in public circulation. This is largely due to the criminalization of possession of these materials following 6 October 1976. Perhaps no one imagined that the conservative and right-wing sources would come to be such an important material record of the progressive activism that so rapidly came to be seen as subversion.

[1973]: 3).[40] What about these pictures did not need explanation? By printing the posters without an accompanying explication, *Thai Niu* left open a space for their readers to form their own opinions.

By 15 October, *Thai Niu* reported that the government had accepted defeat (*Thai Niu* 15 October 2516 [1973]: 1). As well, on 15 October, coupled with a large headline about Praphat Jarusathien and Narong Kittikachorn leaving for Japan, there was a big headline referring to the protests on 14 October stating that "Today's march, the largest march ever in Chiang Mai, is worth recording" (*Thai Niu* 15 October 2516 [1973]: 1).[41] The first page was filled with photos of the march and some of the captions were handwritten, which indicated that the reporters and editors worked up until the printing deadline to make sure the news went out. One of the handwritten captions read "Lastly, the power of the students and the people have inscribed Thai national history with blood and turned life to a new page" (*Thai Niu* 15 October 2516 [1973]: 1).[42]

The three different accounts of the events of 14 October 1973 that I have engaged here -- the news printed in *Thai Niu*, the records of the CMU Faculty Assembly, and the accounts of the NSCT and a former NSC student activist -- overlap and diverge from one another. While the forces of the Thai state in Chiang Mai remained a spectral and possible source of danger in the accounts of the Faculty Assembly and the student activists, the Thai state was decidedly concrete in *Thai Niu*. *Thai Niu* reported the surveillance actions of the regular and Special Branch police and confirmed that the military was preparing for possible action in Chiang Mai. Like the

---

[40] "ภาพนี้ไม่จำเป็นตองบรรยาย"

[41] "ช.ม. เดินขบวนครั้งยิ่งใหญ่ที่สุดเป็นประวัติการณ์ในวันนี้"

[42] "ในที่สุดประวัติศาสตร์ชาติไทยซึ่งได้จารึกด้วยเลือด และชีวิต ก็ถูกผลักไปอีกหน้าหนึ่งแล้ว ด้วยพลัง นร. นศง และประชาชน"

students of the NSC and NSCT, the authors and editors of *Thai Niu* recognized the significance of the events of 14 October 1973. Yet those writing for *Thai Niu* were decidedly uncertain about the new page of Thai history. As their coverage of the student and farmer movements over the next three years revealed, this uncertainty deepened into ambivalence, and at times, outright hostility. This editorial hostility was matched by the development of real violence from other conservative and right-wing forces over the next three years. Yet unlike what transpired in Bangkok, a massacre did not occur on the morning of 6 October 1976 in Chiang Mai. It is to this unrealized violence that I now turn.

Averting a massacre: 6 October 1976 in Chiang Mai

Beginning on 3 October 1976, hundreds of students, farmers and other people were massed outside the Chiang Mai provincial building, decrying the return of Thanom Kittikachorn and demonstrating in solidarity with those at Thammasat University in Bangkok. By 5 October 1976, in response to reports of student protests on government radio stations, thousands of right-wing forces including Red Gaurs, Nawaphon and Village Scouts were massed at Wat Chedi Luang, a few blocks from the provincial hall. The atmosphere between the two groups grew more and more heated. For a time the progressive activists massed at the provincial hall refused to end their protest. Finally the right-wing forces at Wat Chedi Luang announced that they would take decisive action to ensure that those protesting outside the provincial hall would disperse.

At 10 a.m. on 6 October, the Village Scouts sent ten representatives to meet with the progressive activists massed at the provincial hall. They gave the activists until 12 noon to leave the area. At this time, student leaders became concerned about the possibility of imminent violence in Chiang Mai. Chaturon Chaisaeng, president of

the CMU student organization, decided to end the protest. The students and farmers massed at the provincial hall dispersed at 10:45 a.m. on the morning of 6 October. From the newspaper accounts of the massacre, as well accounts from those present at the provincial building which I discuss in Chapter Seven, it is unclear if activists in Chiang Mai knew what had already transpired in Bangkok. As I was told again and again, what is clear is that violence was avoided in Chiang Mai by a margin of minutes, or at most an hour (*Thai Niu* 7 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12; *Thin Thai* 7 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12).

The methodology of individual lives

This may seem like an appropriate place to end this chapter. I began by arguing that the narratives of the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 in Bangkok have become the dominant stories of progressive political change. I contended that stories of transformation existing outside Bangkok and these moments have been elided as a result. In response, I traced the protests surrounding 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai. I examined accounts of the unfolding of 14 October in Chiang Mai from three different perspectives in order to illustrate the multiple reasons why an event comes to be named as significant and *historic*. Finally, I wrote about how those massed at the provincial building in Chiang Mai in the early days of October 1976 avoided a massacre. This does not mean that their lives were not dramatically altered by the coup and violence which took place at Thammasat University in Bangkok, only that they were not witness to it.

Yet this chapter does not end here. Instead, I now turn to the lives of two individuals: Nisit Jirasophon and Ajarn Angun Malik. Both Nisit and Ajarn Angun were part of fostering cultures of progressive politics and social justice prior to 14 October 1973. They were both important to the struggles and changes which

constituted the period of open politics between 1973 and 1976. Despite their roles, Nisit and Ajarn Angun are largely absent from existing histories of this period. Their stories are transmitted in cremation volumes and in public commemorations, and circulate among their former colleagues. These stories are caught between public and private spaces. While some of the cremation volumes can be found in libraries and the commemorative events may be announced in newspapers or online, in practice they are invisible to those not already aware of their significance.

Therefore, my analysis of their lives here, in tandem with the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976, constitutes an intervention in two registers. At a basic level, the lives of Nisit Jirasophon and Ajarn Angun Malik constituted an integral part of the period of open politics; understanding their lives helps us understand this period and the events which mark it. Yet my inclusion of their lives here is also a methodological intervention whose significance encapsulates the goal of this dissertation as a whole. By looking at individuals whose lives have not (yet) been canonized as part of the dominant narratives and struggles whose success or failure cannot be easily discerned, the picture of the recent past that we create changes. Not least among these changes, participation in social justice is shown to be accessible to all kinds of people, not only the visible leaders in the streets. What counts as action for social justice likewise expands from marching in the streets to include progressive journalism, teaching against the grain, and supporting those in the streets. Further, woven into my analysis here are the stories of how I learned about Nisit Jirasophon and Ajarn Angun Malik. Knowledge of the sources and locations of evidence also perceptibly shifts our understanding of the production of what counts as history.

Remembering Phii Nisit

On Sunday, 3 April 2005, over 100 people gathered at Wat Fai Hin, a temple adjoining the CMU campus, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Nisit Jirasophon. Assassinated at the age of 25, *Phii* (older brother) Nisit was a member of the first generation of student activists at CMU in the late 1960s and became a prominent left-wing journalist following 14 October 1973. From nine a.m. until five p.m. on the 3rd, Phii Nisit's life, as well as the broader student and political movements of which he was a part, were recounted, discussed, and debated. Organized by a small group of former CMU student activists, the commemoration was attended by a striking range of people, including former CMU, Teachers' College, and other student activists, some of whom became prominent (and sometimes competing) politicians, academics, poets, and businesspeople in the intervening years, as well as many former farmer activists and Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) members from the 1970s as well. Reflecting one of the distances created in the intervening thirty years, the participants arrived from places all over the north, and as distant as Bangkok and the northeastern (Isan) and southern provinces. For an hour in the afternoon, ethernet cables were stretched across the grounds of Wat Fai Hin to enable a former student activist now living in Los Angeles to join the commemoration via videoconference. For the duration of the day, everyone assembled sat on metal folding chairs outside in the temple compound, with Doi Suthep in front of us, and the city of Chiang Mai down the hill behind us.

While this commemoration was designated as a specific day to remember, honor, and make merit for Phii Nisit, it also marked the beginning of a series of reunions of former student, farmer, and CPT activists active in the 1970s in northern Thailand. Held throughout 2005 and 2006, these reunions were part of a grassroots activist history project called the "Project to record the history of the student, farmer,

and northern people's movements."[43] Organized by a group of former student activists, the reunions were designed to commemorate and collect the histories of political struggle in the north. Drawing on collective and individual oral histories elicited and recorded during the reunions, the coordinating group planned to publish a book on the thirtieth anniversary of the 6 October 1976 massacre in October 2006.[44] In addition, the coordinating group began collecting documents, periodicals, music, and books from and about the student, farmer and other struggles of the 1970s to house in a library at Suan Anya, the former house and garden of Ajarn Angun Malik. Reflected in many of the comments voiced during the commemoration for Phii Nisit, the former activists are at once interested in documenting the specific histories of struggle in the north, while also claiming a place for themselves within the national history of 1970s progressive activism.

Nisit Jirasophon was a student from southern Thailand who enrolled in the Faculty of Political Science at CMU in 1968. He was one of the editors of *Walanchathat* (วลัญชทัศน์), a CMU student publication published twice in 1971. During the commemoration for Phii Nisit, one of the surviving members of the editorial group explained that *Walanchathat* means "to see the way between."[45] Unlike other student publications at CMU at the time, such as *Su Sarn Muanchon* (สื่อสารมวลชน), a newspaper published under the direct support and advisement of the Department of Mass Communications in the Faculty of Humanities, *Walanchathat* was published by an independent group called the United Front of Chiang Mai University Students

---

[43] โครงการ "บันทึกประวัติศาสตร์การเคลื่อนไหว ของ นักศึกษา ชาวนา และชนชาติภาคเหนือ"; In the remainder of this chapter and dissertation, I will refer to this project as the "Chiang Mai activist history recording project," and also simply the "activist history recording project."

[44] The social and political divisions caused by the fall of Thaksin Shinawatra and the 19 September 2006 coup put this project on hold. It is my hope that it will soon be revived.

[45] "มองเห็นช่องทางใน"

(แนวร่วมนักศึกษามหวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่).[46] *Walanchathat*'s independence from the university bureaucracy (and the state, as public universities in Thailand are state institutions) were acutely reflected in the topics and perspectives explored between its covers.

The first issue of *Walanchathat* was published in June 1971. Entitled "Human and Society," the issue included articles about the student movement in Thailand, Marxian and Hegelian influences on the writing of history, the New Left, and Thailand's foreign relations policies, as well as politically-inspired poems, including one dedicated to Komol Keemthong.[47] In a declaration introducing themselves to their readers, the editorial group described themselves in the following terms:

> We are perhaps young people who have lost patience with rule in a system of democracy that is very **faint** like this one – We are perhaps young people who don't want Thai people to experience oppression by individuals who **remain steadily in power by the power of the uniform and the gun barrel** – We are perhaps young people who are searching for the meanings of the words **freedom, liberty and justice** in a pure society (*Walanchathat* 1.1 (June 2514 [1971]: n.p., emphasis is in original).[48]

In their second issue, released in September 1971, entitled "Green Danger" ("ภัยเขียว"), the authors directly addressed those whose power was assured by their olive-color uniforms and government-issued weapons: the Thai military. The text of an advertisement for the "Green Danger" issue printed in the first issue read "You know

---

[46] Although the editorial group was identified as belonging to the Department of Political Science in the Faculty of Social Sciences on the title page of the journal, during the commemoration of Nisit's life, the independence of the journal from the Faculty and the CMU administration was stressed.

[47] Komol Keemthong was a 1970 graduate of the Faculty of Education at Chulalongkorn University. Upon graduation he took up a position as a teacher in a remote village school in Surat Thani; he was assassinated on 22 February 1971 by Communist forces. His ideas about the need for university students to respond to the gulf between poor and wealthy, and rural and urban people in Thai society were very influential with many young people. I discuss his life further in Chapter Three.

[48] "เราอาจจะเป็นเด็กหนุ่มผู้หมดความอดทนต่อการปกครอง ในระบอบประชาธิปไตย ที่มากด้วย **ความเชยและเชย** เยี่ยงนี้ – เราอาจจะเป็นเด็กหนุ่ม ผู้ไม่ปรารถนาที่จะให้ชาวไทยถูกกดหัวโดยคณะบุคคล **ที่ยืนหยัดอยู่ได้ด้วยอำนาจแห่งเครื่องแบบและกระบอกปืน** – เราอาจจะเป็นเด็กหนุ่มผู้กำลังแสวงหาความหมายของคำว่า **อิสรภาพ เสรีภาพรวมทั้งความยุติธรรม** ในสังคมอันบริสุทธิ์"

about the Red Danger, the Yellow Danger, and the White Danger, but none is more unrelenting than one danger that remains. The editors of *Walanchathat* will introduce you to the Green Danger!!" (*Walanchathat* 1.1 (June 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[49] The words "Green Danger," stand out in the advertisement, larger than the rest; here, Red Danger refers to Communism, the Yellow Danger to Japanese imperialism, and the White Danger to U.S. imperialism.[50] At times writing under pseudonyms, the authors of the articles in the "Green Danger" issue criticized the overarching role of the military in Thai political and social life. Although Thailand was under a parliamentary democracy, at least in name, with Thanom Kittikachorn as prime minister in September 1971, on 17 November 1971, Thanom and Praphat Jarusathien staged a coup and installed themselves as the ruling military dictators. Issued in the period of time leading up to the coup, and in circulation following the coup, the "Green Danger" issue of *Walanchathat* can be read as an immanent and courageous critique of the growth of the role of the military in politics (Thanet 2539 [1996]: 41). Even though the most critical articles were written under pseudonyms, had the Special Branch police (สันติบาล) or other security forces wanted to learn of the authors' identities, they would likely have been able to do so.[51] As one of the members of the *Walanchathat* editorial group commented at the commemoration for Phii Nisit in 2005, they distributed the "Green Danger" issue even though there might have been consequences. Another person commented that he didn't know what would happen

---

[49] "ท่านรู้จัก ภัยแดง ภัยเหลือง และ ภัยขาว แต่ ภัย ที่เป็น ภัย ไม่ยิ่งหย่อนไปกว่าภัยเหล่านี้ก็ยังมี คณะผู้จัดทำวารสาร วลัญชทัศน์ ขอแนะนำให้ท่านรู้จักกับ ภัยเขียว!!"

[50] In March 1971, the Sapha Na Dome group at Thammasat University in Bangkok issued a short book entitled "White Danger" (ภัยขาว). See Thanet (2539 [1996]), pages 38-39, for a description of the short book and his experience and fears distributing it at Tha Prajan outside of Thammasat.

[51] For a resonant discussion of risk and danger, see Thanet (2539 [1996]), page 33, for a discussion about the fears students at Thammasat felt in 1970 when printing the short book *Treatise* (คัมภีร์). The front cover was a block print of Vladimir Lenin, and the students involved in printing it were concerned that either the print shop owner would refuse to print it, or if they would not be safe from the Special Branch police if they distributed it.

once the issue was printed – if the copies would be seized, if they would be arrested, or worse. Although an issue on rural society was planned, the "Green Danger" issue was the second and last issue of *Walanchathat* to be published. In the words of one of the editors, they did not publish another issue because *Walanchathat* was "very very famous."[52]

Shortly after *Athipat*, the newspaper of the National Student Center of Thailand, was established following the 14 October 1973 movement, Nisit joined the staff in Bangkok. After 14 October 1973, he also became active in other publishing projects. When he learned that there was not already a book about the farmers' struggles available in Thai, he organized the translation and printing of one of Mao Tze Tung's books. Nisit's younger brother was present at the commemoration and explained that Phii Nisit sent copies of all of the books he helped publish to his family. While on the train on his way to cover a story for *Athipat* in Nakorn Si Thammarat at the beginning of April 1975, Nisit Jirasophon was assassinated.[53]

Despite, or more accurately, due to the fame and influence of *Walanchathat* in the early 1970s, it largely disappeared following the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup. As I take up in Chapter Seven, following 6 October 1976, possession of any printed material deemed leftist, socialist, communist, or otherwise critical of the state, was grounds for arrest and detention. *Walanchathat* fit squarely within this category. Many people burned, buried, or hid their books. As a result, many of the material documents of the student, farmer, worker and other struggles of the 1970s are either difficult to find, or completely out of public circulation in Thailand.

---

[52] Indicating the reach and influence of *Walanchathat*, one of the former student activists present at the commemoration explained that although he was from a younger generation than Phi Nisit, and never met him, he read *Walanchathat* when he was a secondary school student at the Chiang Mai University Demonstration School. He later went on to become an important student activist at CMU between 1974 and 1976.

[53] See the special issue of *Athipat* (4-9 April 2518 [1975]) dedicated to Nisit's life and the conditions of his death.

April is one of the hottest months in Thailand, and the day of the commemoration the weather alternated between blistering sun and a dark sky threatening rain. During the afternoon, a copy of each of the two issues of *Walanchathat* circulated through the assembled people. Recognized as very precious, the two issues of *Walanchathat* were passed carefully from person to person throughout the crowd. They belonged to a former student activist who found each issue in used bookstores at different times many years after 6 October 1976. When they came to me, the woman sitting next to me urged me to look closely – these will be important for your research, *nong*, these aren't in the CMU library, she said, you should pay close attention. I was afraid to touch the magazines. I was worried that my sticky hands would tear the pages or that the magazines would slide off the smooth linen of my skirt onto the ground. Yet to refuse to open the covers and at least flip through the pages would be to deny the magazine's importance.

I knew that *Walanchathat* was not available in the CMU library – a few months earlier I had asked a librarian about the journal, and she said no, they had no copies available. The only CMU student periodicals available in the CMU library were a student newspaper, *Su Sarn Muanchon*, printed in 1969-1970, prior to *Walanchathat*, and another student newspaper, *Ang Kaew*, which began publication in January 1977. In Thailand, the only public repository where *Walanchathat* is available is the Thammasat University Archives.[54] Mindful of the possible rain and everyone else around me who also wanted to leaf through the issues of *Walanchathat*, I quickly passed them on to the person sitting next to me. I knew that when I returned to Cornell

---

[54] Established in 1991 by historian Charnvit Kasetsiri, the Thammasat Archives contains official and private records about the foundation of the university and papers about political events and movements, particularly those in which the university or its students had a role. See http://www.arc.tu.ac.th to access the online catalog of the Thammasat University Archives.

University to write my dissertation I could check out copies of both issues from Kroch Library.[55]

The commemoration at Wat Fai Hin was a celebration and re-telling of the vibrant student and farmer movements in Chiang Mai in the 1970s. Throughout the day, former activists reunited with one another and shared stories of their past struggles, successes, and disappointments. Although unrealized, their plan to collect and distribute their stories in a book printed for another anniversary, the thirtieth anniversary of the 6 October 1976 massacre, reflects their self-assessment of the historical significance of their actions. One of the explicit motivations of the Chiang Mai activist history recording project is to preserve the histories of struggle for the younger and future generations. The denial of any history of student, let alone farmer, political action by the librarian at Ratchaphat Institute underscores the urgency of recording and circulating these histories. In one sense, the activist history recording project can be read as a response to the librarian's insistence that my research should be located in Bangkok, not Chiang Mai.

As I was preparing to leave Wat Fai Hin at the end of the day, one of the organizers stopped me. He explained that the story of Phii Nisit and the student movement was only one-third of the whole, the other two-thirds of the story were the farmer movement and a very special teacher. The farmer movement was the primary topic of my dissertation research. The very special teacher he referred to was Ajarn Angun Malik. I had learned about Ajarn Angun Malik almost immediately after

[55] Cornell University's Kroch Library is known as possessing one of the finest collections of Southeast Asian materials in the world. Within the Thai language collection, there are a large number of important and hard-to-find periodicals, monographs, and other materials from the 1970s both available on the shelves and in the rare books collection. Many times during my research a book or periodical would be mentioned to me and I would realize after fruitlessly searching the catalogs or shelves of the CMU, Thammasat, Chulalongkorn, and National Libraries that it was available at Kroch Library. In addition to the Thammasat University Archives and Kroch Library, *Walanchathat* is also available at the National Library of Australia.

beginning field research the year before. His comments both made me think that I was on the right track with my work, but also made me question what stories and individuals still remain undocumented. In other words, the fact that he and I both arrived at the same three significant pieces of the lesser-known story raised a concern about those which still remain untold. With this in mind, I turn now to Ajarn Angun's life.

Ajarn Angun Malik and politics

I brought a typed list of fifteen questions about student politics at CMU in the 1960s and 1970s to my first oral history interview in February 2004. While over the next months I dispensed with the typed list of questions, and simply asked the former students, farmers, and professors I spoke with to tell me about their lives, I began with a clear idea of what I thought I wanted to know. My first interview was with J., a woman who attended Chiang Mai University beginning in 1968. I was particularly excited about asking her about female students' involvement in student activism.

After beginning with general questions about the different student political organizations at CMU, I posed a series of questions about gender and politics. *"What were gender relations and politics within student organizations like?" "What were the ways in which women participated in student politics?" "Was there a women's organization at CMU?" "Did the CMU students' association or the Northern Student Center have a women's wing?"* After reminding me that she left Chiang Mai before the formation of the Northern Student Center in 1973, the former CMU student dismissed the form of my questions. She explained:

"When I was at CMU there wasn't a women's organization, maybe after … but … your questions are too specific, you are trying to draw a straight line in a muddy

field. Before 14 October, there wasn't something called a 'women's movement,' we weren't thinking in those terms then. That came later," she said.

At times during my research, a dissonance between the questions I asked and the experiences of people I interviewed emerged. Sometimes I re-phrased my questions, attempting another angle. Other times the dissonance reflected an incommensurable distance between my analytic categories and the experiences of students and farmers. In those moments, my analytic categories necessarily shifted.

"If you want to know about gender at that time, if you want to ask questions about women, what you should do is try to find out about this ajarn, this maverick ajarn," the former CMU student told me. "Her name was Ajarn Angun, Ajarn Angun Malik. Her family name was originally 'Suwannamalik,' but they did not support her. They were very, very wealthy. So Ajarn Angun used 'Malik' for her last name." Intrigued, I asked her more about this maverick ajarn. She said that Ajarn Angun was no longer alive, but that she used to teach in the Faculty of Humanities. Although she did not study with her, J. remembered her unusual clothes. In contrast to the formal silk and polyester suits and dresses favored by other female professors and civil servants at the time, Ajarn Angun wore plastic flip-flops, a straw hat, indigo-dyed cotton farmers' shirts, and long cotton skirts.

After talking about Ajarn Angun, J. cited the restrictions placed on the movement of female students through the dormitory curfews. While the doors to the male dormitories were always left open, those to the female dormitories were locked at 10 p.m. However, as she and other female students I later spoke to informed me, one could always climb up the side of the building. As long as there were trees near the dormitory, one could enter one's room through the windows long after the curfew.

As our interview was ending, she said to me, "Really, try to find out more about Ajarn Angun. You could start by trying to find her funeral book."

*

I conducted the oral history interview with J. in the morning, and went to the CMU library in the afternoon. When I entered “Angun Malik” (“องุ่น มาลิก”) into the online library catalog, one entry was returned. I located the volume on the shelf, and it was a book published to commemorate her life in 1999, entitled *Remembering the Blooming Flower Touching Our Hearts: Teacher Angun Malik* (รำลึกถึง ดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก) (Sinsawat ed. 2542 [1999]). Published nine years after her death, the book contained recollections of Ajarn Angun’s life written by former students, colleagues, and friends.

The contributors wrote of Ajarn Angun’s life as well as their shared pursuits. As I flipped through the pages I began to realize that Ajarn Angun’s life was not only an important lens for thinking about the gendering of political activism, but was in fact key to my broader project about student and farmer activism in Chiang Mai in the 1970s. In the book, former student activists wrote about how coming to study at CMU and becoming involved with the farmers’ movement changed their lives. In addition, Pradap Manurasada, a lawyer who worked with the Farmers’ Federation of Thailand (FFT) wrote about traveling from Bangkok to Chiang Mai nearly every weekend between 1973 and 1976 to help farmers launch complaints against landlords (Pradap 2542 [1999]: 17).[56] Dr. Apichet Naklekha, or Mor Muang Phrao, a progressive doctor wrote about choosing to live and practice medicine in a remote, impoverished, and grossly underserved district of Chiang Mai (Apichet 2542 [1999]: 31-32).[57] Like

[56] In his piece about Ajarn Angun, Pradap remembered how when he and others working with the FFT needed money for their work, she gave them 2000 baht. She advised him on many concerns, political and otherwise (Pradap 2542 [1999]: 17). Pradap died in April 1994 at end of a life dedicated to fighting for justice using the legal system. See Chanchai et al., eds. (2537 [1994]) for accounts of his life and work.

[57] Dr. Apichet and Ajarn Angun worked together between 1981 and 1983 on a project training primary school teachers in basic health and medicine. Their project was shut down for a number of reasons; one of these reasons was that they were harassed by the Special Branch police due to their prior political activities (Apichet 2542 [1999]: 32). See Apichet (2519 [1976]) for an account of practicing medicine in Phrao district during 1974-1976. Dr. Apichet died in November 2006.

Pradap and Mor Muang Phrao, Ajarn Angun was past the age of being a university student when the events of 14 October 1973 catalyzed a broad set of changes through the country. Also like Poh Pradap and Mor Muang Phrao, Ajarn Angun actively chose to sacrifice her privilege to work *and* live in the service of a more just Thai society.

Ajarn Angun's house and garden in Chiang Mai, Suan Anya, or Anya Garden, was mentioned as the site of many activist organizing meetings, communal living, and a place of shelter for student and farmer activists fleeing state and para-state forces.[58] Ajarn Angun's significant material generosity supported and facilitated many different social justice projects, during her time in Chiang Mai as well as after she retired from civil service and returned to Bangkok. Yet most striking were the accounts of the intangible roles Ajarn Angun played in her students' and colleagues' lives. Many people cited her life as the example that either propelled them towards activism, or helped sustain their commitment to justice.

Over the next year and a half, I collected seven more semi-private cremation and commemoration volumes about Ajarn Angun's life.[59] Her name came up in every interview I conducted with former student and farmer activists, professors, CMU employees, and others. The more I learned about her life, the more important to political history, or the history of how people struggle and contest the ruling order, and how the ruling order responds, she seemed. Yet, despite her clear and multifaceted role, she is not mentioned in any of the histories about political activism or movements in the 1970s outside of the books published in her honor. While part of the

---

[58] Ajarn Angun named her house and garden Suan Anya (สวน อัญญา), after Anya, the first disciple of Buddha (Wiriya 2536 [1993]: 77).
[59] See Thamora Fishel (2001), especially Chapter 2, for a discussion of the use of Thai cremation volumes as an academic source. In the case of Professor Angun I classify the books as "semi-private" because of the seven that I have, only two are in publicly accessible libraries in Thailand. They were produced primarily for dissemination to her friends, students, and other interested parties.

explanation to why Ajarn Angun is absent is the sheer recognition that this period has yet to be fully treated historically, thornier issues complicate her exclusion.

At the core of this exclusion is the very definition, and gendering, of *politics.* In response, while tracing the ambivalent place of Ajarn Angun in recent Thai history, in the remainder of this chapter, I call for a new conception of politics capable of accounting for the multiple sites and varied ways that individuals alter their lives and join with others to change society. Here I am particularly interested in how Ajarn Angun became involved in struggles for social justice and how these struggles became meaningful to her. In addition, I explore the effects of her historiographic exclusion. By reading Ajarn Angun's life in tandem with Thai and other feminist analyses, I argue that her exclusion is not accidental, but is instead symptomatic of a broader practice of excluding women's perspectives and lives from political history. In turn, the effects of this exclusion are not only academic.

*

Ajarn Angun was born into a wealthy Bangkok family on 5 April 1917. Her mother, Bu (บู่), was the third wife of her father, Thong Suwannamalik (ทอง สุวรรณมาลิก).[60] Her family initially lived in the Phayathai area of Bangkok, but moved to what is now known as Soi Thong Lor off Thanon Sukhumwit. While Ajarn Angun was a child, Soi Thong Lor was still rice fields (Wacharaphan 2536 [1993]: 12). Ajarn Angun had one sister, Arun (อรุณ), and one brother, Thong U (ทองอู่). After completing secondary school in 1934, Ajarn Angun enrolled in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University. Following the completion of her degree in 1937, she taught English at various secondary schools in Bangkok for the next twenty-five years. While the majority of Ajarn Angun's paid work was in education, she also worked for

[60] Ajarn Angun's father had a royal title, Phra Rukchat Burirak (พระรุกขชาติบริรักษ์).

two years as the secretary of a tobacco factory (1943-1945) and wrote for a variety of publications, including the newspaper *Sayam Nikorn* (สยาม นิกร).

In 1962, Ajarn Angun went to the United States to pursue graduate study, first at the University of Hawaii and then at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 1965, she completed a master's degree in psychology at the University of Illinois. Upon returning to Thailand, Ajarn Angun briefly took up a position teaching English at Silpakorn University in Bangkok. Then, in 1968, she joined Chiang Mai University (CMU) as a professor of psychology in the Faculty of Humanities. At the time, CMU was still a fledgling university, having opened its doors four years earlier in 1964.[61] Ajarn Angun was fifty-one years-old when she arrived at CMU. She remained there until her retirement in 1977 (Sinsawat 2542 [1999]: 5-6).

At CMU, Ajarn Angun taught "Introduction to Psychology," a required course for all first-year humanities students. Although Ajarn Angun's intellectual achievements were significant, including a series of articles on psychology she wrote for popular magazines (collected in Sinsawat, ed. 2536 [1993]), here I am compelled by her life outside and at the margins of the classroom. While she was living in Chiang Mai, she rose every morning at 3 or 4 a.m. to work the land, and then wrote letters and articles before going to teach.

Ajarn Angun was known for her strong commitment to Buddhist teachings and social justice. Shortly after arriving at CMU in 1968, she was struck by the self-interested attitudes of students she met. In response, she set out to offer students opportunities and examples of working to change society.

---

[61] Chiang Mai University was established as part of a national project of the creation of regional universities in Thailand under Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat. For more information on the broader context of Sarit's development projects and concerns with regionalism, see Thak (1979). For a detailed account of the establishment of CMU, including the movement in Chiang Mai for a university, see Chiang Mai University (2532 [1989]), a commemorative volume published on the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the university. Thank you to Parissara Liewkeat for emphasizing the movement in Chiang Mai for a university, as well as the national and regional dynamics involved.

Throughout 1969 and 1970, she and Ajarn Nidhi Eoseewong worked with students to rehabilitate Wat Fai Hin, the temple adjoining the western edge of the university campus. Ajarn Nidhi recalled that the project began when Ajarn Angun acquired a small sum of money and decided to use it to buy a bell for the temple. In his assessment, this was typical for Ajarn Angun – rather than using her resources to buy things to fulfill her own desires, she chose to use them in the service of the broader good (Nidhi 2542 [1999]: 19). Explaining why it was important to restore a temple that had fallen into disrepair, Ajarn Angun was quoted in the student newspaper, *Su Sarn Muanchon* (สื่อสารมวลชน), as saying:

> We believe that the chance location of Chiang Mai University in an area adjoining this ancient wat is a symbol of the rebirth of the inspiration of young men and women of the university, who will remain steadfastly moral …. If there are individuals who are knowledgeable, but without morals, any opportunity for these people to have any broader usefulness for society will not be fully actualized (*Su Sarn Muanchon* 12 August 2512 [1969]: 11).[62]

Students from the education, medical, and agricultural faculties came to help with the rehabilitation. None of the students who came to help were students she taught directly, but Ajarn Angun "assumed that they came to help because from their heart they wanted to work for the public good" (Angun 2519 [1976]: 7).

Ajarn Angun's work at Wat Fai Hin was the beginning of both broader activist organizing by the students and her interest in student activities. In addition to the work repairing Wat Fai Hin, before the 14 October 1973 movement, Ajarn Angun was involved with student publications and drama productions, as well as being an active member of the Faculty Assembly. One of her former students commented to me that

---

[62] "พวกเราเชื่อว่าเหตุการบังเอญที่มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่ ได้มีอาณาเขตเชื่อมกับวัดโบราณแห่งนี้จะเป็นสัญญลักษณ์แห่ง การ เกิดใหม่ของแรงบันดาลใจ ของหนุมสาวชาวมหาวิทยาลัย ที่จะตั้งมั่นอยู่ในศีลธรรม .... บุคคลมีความรู้นั้น ถ้าหากขาดศิลธรรมเสียแล้ว โอกาสที่เขาจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อสังคมในวงกว้างก็ไม่เต็มเม็ดเต็มหน่วย"

even before 14 October, Ajarn Angun's life began to shift dramatically. During the summer break in 1973, between March and June, she was torn between going to meditate at Wat Suan Mokh in southern Thailand, or remaining in Chiang Mai to organize with the farmers and students. She chose to remain in Chiang Mai. Following 14 October 1973, Ajarn Angun became involved in explicitly political and contentious social justice work.

After 14 October 1973, Ajarn Angun opened Suan Anya to the farmers of the newly-formed Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) (สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย) and the students of the Farmer Project (โครงการชาวนา). As I will discuss in Chapters Three and Four, their primary campaign was the implementation of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act and they often strategized sitting under the trees in Suan Anya. During this period, Ajarn Angun used her straw hat as a billboard, writing "U.S. army out of Thailand" and "Justice for the Farmers" on it at different points. When a house occupied by members of the Farmer Project was raided and students and farmers were arrested on alleged possession of weapons and seditious documents in May 1976, Ajarn Angun put the title for Suan Anya up as bond for their release (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 153-154). Before Ajarn Angun died in 1990, she deeded Suan Anya to the Chaiwana Foundation, which she established and whose broad purpose is to support and promote the health, education, and participation in art and culture in Bangkok and throughout the country.[63] One of her former CMU students, M., is now the caretaker of Suan Anya. We met during the course of my research and she invited me to visit Suan Anya.

It was raining heavily on the day of my visit to Suan Anya. Winding through the small streets behind Chiang Mai University on my 50cc scooter, I could not find

[63] Ajarn Angun initially wanted to give Suan Anya to the FFT, but at that time the FFT no longer existed as such (Pradap 2542 [1999]: 17).

the entrance to Ajarn Angun's old house. I called M. and she asked me to wait for her at the entrance to the Midnight University soi; she would meet me there and guide me to Suan Anya.[64] We were both wet and muddy already, so when we arrived at Suan Anya she took me on a tour around the garden. She lives in Ajarn Angun's old house, which like the others in the compound, is a small wooden house on stilts. There are four small houses in total; the inhabitants share two common bathrooms at the edge of the compound. At one time, there was a fifth house occupied by Chatri Hutanuwat, a CMU student activist and leader of the Farmer Project, but it was burned down by right-wing students in 1975.[65] Huay Kaew stream runs along one border of the property.

M. pointed to a jackfruit tree in the middle of the garden. I asked if the jackfruit from the tree was delicious. She directed my eyes to a squirrel in a neighboring tree and informed me that the jackfruit was for the squirrels. When Ajarn Angun planted the trees and plants, she did so with the intention of feeding the squirrels and birds, not herself or the other human inhabitants of the garden. M. described Ajarn Angun as "a very lovely person." When I asked her about Ajarn Angun and women's activism, she responded by saying that Ajarn Angun had been married once, but later divorced. Then she said, "Na, Ajarn Angun was a feminist," using the English-language word "feminist."

She commented that the atmosphere at Suan Anya changed with Ajarn Angun's changing involvements in different periods of time. Before 14 October 2516, many of the students who spent time at Suan Anya were very interested in dhamma

---

[64] The Midnight University, founded by a group of professors at Chiang Mai University in 1998, is an alternative education site with regular activities connecting intellectual and activist concerns. When landless farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun were arrested in 2002 on charges of trespassing, the Midnight University led a movement for professors in Thai state universities to put their civil service rank up for bail. See http://www.midnightuniv.org for more information.

[65] While Ajarn Angun, Chatri, and other residents of the compound were at a protest, Chatri's house was burned down. See *Thai Niu*, 13 March 2518 [1975]: 1, 12, for more details.

and Buddhist practice. After 14 October, on the other hand, the house and garden became a gathering space for the students and farmers active with the Farmers' Federation. However, when I asked M. about Ajarn Angun's role in the student and farmer movements, she said that she was an advisor and supporter, "rather than someone who joined in" as an active member of the movements.[66]

Reflecting on his experiences with Ajarn Angun during the 1973-1976 period, Chatri Hutanuwat commented that:

> From outside appearances, some people might think that Ajarn Angun was a radical leftist or a Communist. But actually Ajarn was not a Marxist or a Communist. Ajarn was a fighter for justice and a serious Buddhist, a serene person who favored the growth of meditation. She especially was committed to the teachings of Buddhathat Bhikku of Wat Suan Mokh, who enjoyed Ajarn Angun's special preference and respect. Certainly Ajarn Angun and all of us found, studied, and discussed many different ideologies. We studied them not to discover the true essence of the philosophy only for the sake of study, but we studied them to find the solution to different problems. We did not fix our minds on any one theory (Chatri 2542 [1999]: 27).[67]

As I learned about Ajarn Angun and began writing about her life, one of the persistent questions that emerged was her relationship to politics. While she was at CMU, Ajarn Angun urged and inspired her students to become involved in social, political, and cultural work. During the period of open politics between 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976, she became involved, as a supporter and advisor, with the progressive

---

[66] "มากว่าผู้มี่ส่วนรวม"

[67] "จากลักษณะภายนอกที่ปรากฏ อาจทำให้บางคนมีทัศนะว่า ท่านอาจารย์เป็นคนหัวรุนแรงเอียงซ้ายหรือเป็นคอมมิวนิสต์ แต่โดยแท้จริงแล้วท่านอาจารย์ไม่ได้เป็นมาร์กซิสต์หรือคอมมิวนิสต์ ท่านอาจารย์เป็นนักต่อสู้เพื่อความเป็นธรรม และเป็นพุทธศาสนิกชนผู้เคร่งครัดสมถะและนิยมในการเจริญสมาธิภาวนา โดยเฉพาะคำสอนของท่านพุทธทาสภิกขุแห่งวัดสวนโมกข์ฯ ได้รับความนิยมเชื่อถือจากท่านอาจารย์เป็นพิเศา เป็นที่แน่นอนว่าท่านอาจารย์กับพวกเราเคยได้ศึกษาค้นค้วาถกเถียงกันหัวข้อลัทธิต่างๆ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นของใครตลอดจนแก่นแท้ด้านแนวคิดและปรัชญาด้วยแต่นั้นก็เป็นแต่เพียงการศึกษา และแสวงหาทางออกให้กับปัญหาต่างๆ เท่านั้น มิใช่ปักใจเชื่อในลัทธิใดลัทธิหนึ่ง"

organizing of students and farmers. Her house and garden, Suan Anya, functioned as a site of strategizing, solidarity, and refuge for those involved in various movements. By recounting the life of M., which I will return to in Chapter Three, I showed how Ajarn Angun catalyzed her to embark on a life dedicated to justice and struggle.

However, as the quote from Chatri's account above indicates, engagement in political action was only one part of Ajarn Angun's life. R., one of her former colleagues, perhaps frustrated by my repeated questions about her work with the students and farmers explained to me that she "was a person of many convictions," and was not only interested in politics.[68] Further, she was "more of an actor, rather than a theorist."[69] In his opinion, Buddhism was the most important influence in her life. However, in the same breath that her separation from activism was stressed to me, many insisted that she was courageous and committed to justice, such as S., a former CMU student who described her as "brave, a fighter."

Further, despite her various roles in progressive politics, however, Ajarn Angun is absent from published histories of activist struggle in Thailand (excluding the books published in her honor) – including those written by individuals part of or sympathetic to the struggles. As I have noted earlier, this is partially due to the fact that the period of open politics has yet to be fully treated historically. I hope my description above has demonstrated that her absence is a glaring one. At the center of this issue is how politics, and political history, are defined, gendered, and studied.

What is it about her life, or the definitions of politics and activism in operation, that make the two so dissonant in the minds of her former students, colleagues, and supporters? Is this resistance the reason why Ajarn Angun's life is so strikingly absent from the printed histories of the 1970s? What of the place of Buddhism in her life? Is

---

[68] "เป็นคนหลายมติ"

[69] "เป็นนักปฏิวัติมากกว่านักทฤษฎี"

her deep commitment to Buddhism seen as incompatible with political activism? However, I think immediately of the engaged Buddhist movement of direct involvement in social justice work. Although the movement has grown most dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s, Ajarn Angun could be seen as a forerunner to engaged Buddhism.[70] Even if one might be able to analytically place Ajarn Angun in a trajectory of engaged Buddhist action (and doing so is outside the purview of this dissertation), the reticence of her former students and colleagues to name her an activist remains.

Part of this reticence may lie in the definitions prevalent in Thailand of *politics* as the workings of bureaucracy and, or, a realm of dishonest and dirty machinations. These ideas are both valid, but they cannot account for either how rule is accomplished, or how it is contested and transformed.

Complicating this discussion is the fact that after 6 October 1976, Ajarn Angun was detained as a "danger to society," under Order 22 of the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC). While I will reserve most of the discussion of her and others detention until Chapter Seven, here I offer a few details of what is to come. Following 6 October 1976 massacre, many people fled to join the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in order to evade arrest or worse. Ajarn Angun refused to flee. She believed her life and work had been just – and she neither wanted to nor felt there was a need for her to flee or join the CPT. However, along with many other teachers, students, farmers, and civil servants in Chiang Mai, she was arrested as a "danger to society." She underwent three months of "training" in good citizenship and correct behavior at the Karunyathep Center, operated by the Internal Security Operations

[70] See Chappel (2003) and Sulak (1988, 1998, 2005) for more information about socially-engaged Buddhism in Thailand. For another articulation of Buddhism with politics, see Keyes (1978) and Morell and Chai-anan (1981), pages 246-249, on the involvement of right-wing monks in politics in the mid-1970s.

Command (ISOC). The Thai state understood the importance of Ajarn Angun to progressive political struggle at that time. While her often "behind the scenes" support to progressive farmer and student activists has not guaranteed her a place in activist histories of progressive politics, the Chiang Mai ISOC officers who drew up arrest lists following 6 October 1976 saw her actions as essential to progressive political movement at the time.

Dwelling in dissonance and lacunae

At the beginning of this dissertation, I argued that political history is the history of how people struggle and contest the ruling order, and how the ruling order responds. Concerned with how particular narratives of political history became dominant, here I have offered narratives of the events of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 as they unfolded in Chiang Mai. Precisely what was so powerful and significant about 14 October 1973 is that it did not only occur in Bangkok, but in cities across Thailand; similarly, there are histories of what happened to progressive activists on the morning of 6 October 1976 which diverge from the violence that took place in Bangkok . At the very least, what remains is for accounts of events in each of these sites to be fully explicated and circulated. In so doing, activists and historians will do more than provide *local* accounts of the *national* protests, but will call into question and complicate the Bangkok-centered narratives of the events. Simultaneously, this radical multiplying of accounts of the events will open the possibilities of analysis of actions that exist outside them. In this respect, my project in this chapter has been broadly methodological as well as specific to my particular trajectory in this dissertation. To put in another way, in a broad sense, my goal as a scholar is to contribute to opening the space for a wider variety of stories about progressive struggles to be written and to circulate, rather than claim that the story that I tell is the

most important account. At the same time, I have offered my description and analysis of what happened in Chiang Mai here as the frame for the rest of my dissertation, in which I raise questions about solidarity, struggle, and repression through close analysis of progressive politics and the backlash to them in Chiang Mai.

Rather than arguing that one of the three accounts of 14 October 1973 in Chiang Mai that I have engaged here -- that of student activists, the Faculty Assembly, or *Thai Niu* -- is the correct, or true, account, I suggest that the tensions between the accounts of the events and the questions about the possible futures they herald be read as the political and social context for the emergence of farmer-student solidarity that I engage later in this dissertation. By this I mean that the effects of 14 October 1973 were felt in many different, often conflicting ways – sometimes by the same actors.

Although notably absent from the accounts of 14 October that I have read here, in the months following 14 October, farmers began organizing across the north. By engaging their actions and the development of student-farmer solidarity in Chapters Three and Four, I analyze one series of effects of 14 October. Picking up on the never-decreed 1950 Land Rent Control Act in 1974, farmers in Chiang Mai become (newly) political. Within the context of their actions, the dissonance which is ever present in this chapter – that between the evidence of a rich history of progressive activism in Chiang Mai and the relative official silences around this history – becomes even more pronounced.

Yet, I want to add a further rider to our study. It is not only the disparate subjects of history to which we must attend, but the diverse locations of both action and evidence. Far too often the content of political history, including the version that I offer in most of this dissertation, is limited to accounts of people demonstrating in the streets, striking, and taking up arms against dominant powers. Yet limiting political history to these actions frequently excludes the experiences of people whose

work makes those explicitly public actions possible. The gendering and sexism within many political movements means that many of those working “behind the scenes” (and behind the view of many historians) are women.[71] Leaving out the roles of women such as Ajarn Angun, whose material, intellectual, and emotional support helped make the struggles of the Farmer Project and the Farmers’ Federation of Thailand possible, creates a vision of political history which is grossly flawed.[72] If one wishes to write a more inclusive, and more accurate, history of how change occurs, this means considering not only what happens in the streets, but how those who are in the streets came to be there: who is behind them, who was in the planning room with them, who supports them, who will bail them out if arrested.[73] Politics is everywhere around us. The challenge to us as academics, critics and activists, is to see and act on this recognition. We cannot afford to live without doing so.

[71] Even women who fit into the conventional, sexist definitions of political action are often historiographically marginalized. The recent works of Cholthira (2544 [2001]) and Sucheela (2546 [2003]) about women activists and the events of 6 October 1976 address this marginalization.
[72] Cynthia Enloe offers an excellent and sharp analysis of the problems of leaving women’s roles and experiences out of analyses of international politics. In *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, she writes “By taking women’s experiences of international politics seriously, I think we can acquire a more realistic understanding of how international politics actually ‘works.’ We may also increase women’s confidence in using their own experiences and knowledge as the basis for making sense of the sprawling, abstract structure known as ‘the international political economy’” (1990: 4). Categories of analysis which exclude women not only reflect the sexist bias of researchers, they are inadequate to understand how power, domination, and liberation work.
[73] See Thaweelak (2549 [2006]) for an insightful and important discussion of Pornphetch Muansri, a longtime female farmer activist from the Northeast, her contributions to the farmers’ struggle, and the challenges of archiving her materials.

CHAPTER TWO
BREAKING THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION

> "…we could argue that it is always the specter of an open rebellion by the peasantry which haunts the consciousness of the dominant classes in agrarian societies and shapes and modifies their forms of exercise of domination" (Chatterjee 1993: 171).

In October 2006, I visited the Thai Labour Museum in Bangkok.[1] Housed in the former headquarters of the Railway Labour Union, the permanent exhibits at the museum narrate the struggles of Thai workers from the feudal era to the present-day. While many of the displays focus on workers as urban dwellers and producers, one of the Cold War era posters caught my eye. Included in a display about the 1950s, the poster was a Thai government creation. The poster was divided into two panels of equal size. Emblazoned across the top was the text "Communist or Freedom."[2] On the left, the Communist side, was an image of many people working in a parched rice field with neither rice nor buffalo. Underneath, the viewer was told: "In Communist countries, citizens do not have the right to own land. Everyone is forced to work as though they are buffalo."[3] On the right, the side of freedom, life was brighter. Four farmers worked with one plump buffalo to harvest abundant rice. A wooden house on stilts was in the edge of the frame. Written across the bottom was this assertion: "Thai farmers love and zealously guard their land. They own it."[4]

For the class of farmers wealthy enough to own their rice fields, land ownership was a powerful pre-emptive antidote to joining the Communist insurgency (Larsson 2007). Yet not all Thai farmers in the 1950s were able to purchase their land.

---

[1] The Museum is located at 503/20 Nikommakkasan Road in the Ratchathewi district of Bangkok. The Museum's online presence can be found at http://www.thailabourmuseum.org.

[2] "คอมมิวนิสต์หรือเสรีภาพ"

[3] "ในประเทศคอมมิวนิสต์ราษฎรไม่มีสิทธิเป็นเจ้าของที่ดิน และทุกคนบังคับให้ทำงานเยี่ยงวัวควาย"

[4] "ชาวนาไทยรักและหวงแหนที่ทำกิน อันเป็นกรรมสิทธิของตนเอง"

Instead, some farmers rented land and shared the rice harvest with land owners as rental payment. Other farmers hired out their labor to landowners for a cash or rice wage; they often did so before the rice-planting season began, and therefore sold their labor for a relatively low wage. Looking for a solution to their chronic poverty and hunger, tenant farmers in Chiang Mai organized around land rent relief in 1951. Although it aroused fears of Communism in some quarters, at the heart of the struggle was a call for the fuller realization of participatory, democratic politics. Ironically, neither in 1951, nor in the 1974 struggle for land rent relief to which the 1951 struggle was a precursor, did the farmers receive support from Communist forces. Land rent relief, particularly relief defined by passage and adherence to a legal act, did not comprise revolutionary structural change in their eyes.

In contrast, in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, I argue that the struggle for land rent control fomented fundamental change in multiple registers. The tenant farmers' demands in 1951 and later in the 1970s for the legal regulation of land rental practices first threatened, and then unseated centuries of patron-client relationships in Chiang Mai. The anxiety expressed by landowners indicated concern about the spread of Communism (and their own potential loss of land), but also a significantly different vision of the rural balance of power than that of the dissenting tenant farmers. Here I trace the contention over the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai as a precursor to the movement for land rent relief in Chiang Mai in 1974. My analysis here does not only historicize the struggles and violence which I discuss in the next chapters, but also contributes to creating an interpretive framework within which the contention in the 1970s becomes meaningful.

Grasping the significance of the farmers' actions about land rent control demands an analysis of farmers as a specific kind of political subject. By developing an optic which accounts for this farmer political subject, in this chapter I also extend

and challenge earlier work about agrarian life and resistance. Yet the case of land tenancy does not only demand an idea of farmers as complex, political subjects, but a similarly nuanced conception of landowners as well. To this end, here I argue that landowners were panicked about the 1950 Land Rent Control Act for reasons which exceeded the fear of material loss. They were anxious because the farmers' claims challenged their public, and self, image as generous individuals who took care of the people who worked their rice fields. Financial losses could be recovered, but image, as events in the 1950s and later in the 1970s acutely illustrated, was far more fleeting.

Therefore, while the previous chapter constituted an intervention into how we assign significance to events and individuals who make political change, here I specify this intervention within the context of late twentieth-century land tenancy in northern Thailand. By offering a logic for examining the non-decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai, I deepened the critique I began in Chapter One about the locations of social and political transformation. In addition, I further map the connections between Bangkok and Chiang Mai by showing how the actions of the farmers incited concerns at the highest levels of state administration and public life, indicated by intervention by Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram and editorial commentary published in *Siam Rat* newspaper. The margin of Chiang Mai came to be of concern precisely because it was so far from the presumed center of Bangkok. Rather than functioning to make Chiang Mai irrelevant, the distance magnified the potential for uncontained, and uncontainable, problems.

Foregrounding land rent control

Across central and northern Thailand, by the 1950s land rent prices were uneven. Further, the prices were growing with each passing year as cultivable land

grew scarcer.[5] As the author of an editorial published in the *Bangkok Post* in 1951 commented, land rents were often "ruinously high" (14 July 1951: 4). Farmers in many areas had to give the landowners 50% or more of the rice harvest as rental payment.

In an attempt to address this, on 12 October 1950, Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram signed a Land Rent Control Act which lowered and standardized rice paddy land rents to between 5-25% of the yearly rice harvest.[6] The act affected broadcasted rice paddy land less than one hundred rai and transplanted paddy land less than fifty rai in area.[7] Under the new act, the amount of rent charged for a given area was determined by the yearly yield. Land with a greater yield commanded a proportionately higher rent, while land with a lower yield commanded a lower rent. For example, for rice paddy with a yearly yield of more than forty thang per rai, a landowner could charge up to ten thang per rai, or 25%; for rice paddy with a yearly yield of less than twenty thang per rai, a landowner could charge up to only one thang per rai, or 5%.[8] For tenant farmers subject to often high, uncertain rents, the Act proposed an alternative, stable system of land rent pricing.

The act also offered rent adjustments for low yields and unforeseen problems. If weather or other natural disasters reduced a tenant's yield to less than a full crop, the act stipulated that the *tenant* could reduce the amount of rice s/he paid as rent. If the yield was less than one-tenth of the usual crop, then the tenant did not have to pay

[5] I will discuss the many factors responsible for the continuing increases in land rent prices in further depth in the next chapter. Noting an increase in land rent in a village in Chiang Rai province in 1960, from one-third to one-half of the harvest, Michael Moerman commented that "This high rent probably does not indicate a sudden increase in population; rather it is a culmination – based on the introduction of tractor agriculture – of the accelerating demand for land that began about 1920, when the railroad from Bangkok first came to Lampang" (1968: 111-112).
[6] For the full text of the law in Thai see *Ratchakitchanubeksa* 17 October 2493 [1950], Book 67, Part 56, pages 957-966. For the full text in English, see Translation and Secretarial Office (1951).
[7] 1 rai = 0.4 acres. Broadcasted rice is a process of planting in which rice is seeded into dry ground. When the rainy season begins, the seeds sprout. Transplanted rice is a process of planting in which seedlings are inserted into a level, already-wet paddy (Chang 2000: 141, 143).
[8] 1 thang = 20 liters.

rent. In addition, the act specified that land rent could only be collected after the harvest, rather than before the planting season as preferred by some landowners.

Finally, the act delimited the parameters of the relationship between the landlord and the tenant. The act exempted the tenant from paying tea-money or offering other services to the landlord. In letter, landlords were barred from forcing the tenant to pay a higher rent than specified under the act. Under the law, land leases could only be cancelled for a specific set of reasons, including failure of the tenant to pay rent during the prior year and subletting by the tenant without the prior permission of the landlord. If a landlord was going to cancel a contract, s/he was required to give the tenant appropriate notice and could not do so in the middle of the rice planting season. Disagreements between landlords and tenants were to be mediated by the local district (อำเภอ) officers.

In letter the Land Rent Control Act promised a significant reduction in land rents. By positing both the landlord and the tenant farmer as decision-making partners in a contractual relationship, the Act also recast landlord-tenant relations. If fully implemented and enforced, tenants would cease, at least in letter, to be at the complete mercy of landlords.

However, the act did not immediately apply anywhere in the country; instead the use of the law in a particular province had to be mandated by royal decree. The Ministry of Interior was responsible for determining for which provinces the act should be decreed. On 4 May 1951, a royal decree covering the eighteen provinces of central Thailand was issued (Translation and Secretarial Office 1951).[9]

---

[9] Central Thailand has traditionally had the highest percentage of tenancy, often close to 40% of all cultivated land. Commenting on the reasons behind this, Witayakorn Chiengkul argued: "The high rate of tenancy in the Central Region is often viewed by some of the commentators as mainly a result of particular historical circumstances in the Central Region (most of the tenants never own any land before) and the demographic pressure (land is fragmented because of inheritance practice so many young peasants have to rent additional plots of land). But I would argue that it was significantly the result of capitalist penetration which forced the peasants to depend more on usurers and lose their land

Although central Thailand has a slightly higher percentage of tenancy than northern Thailand in general, Chiang Mai province had a high rate of tenancy in the early 1950s. The Chiang Mai provincial government reported that in 1951, 59.5% of total rice land was owner-operated (this included owners who paid a wage to laborers to work the land), 31.6% was occupied by tenant farmers, and the remaining 8.9% was occupied by part-owners (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 51).

Upon learning of the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in central Thailand, rent farmers in Chiang Mai hoped for its decree in northern Thailand. A group of self-identified poor farmers from Saraphi district wrote a letter in support of the decree of the Act and sent it to their Member of Parliament, Thongdee Isarachiwin. In the letter, which is held in the Chiang Mai branch of the National Archives, the farmers argued that the high and arbitrary rates of land rent charged in Chiang Mai, were "an antiquated tradition actually dating from the time of the kings, but not appropriate in the present period of democracy" (CM 1.2.2/3: 56).[10] Not surprisingly, the landowners did not share the farmers' opinion.

The Lanna kingdom ended when it was colonized and incorporated into Siam in 1892 (Wyatt 1984). Yet in August 1951 when the Chiang Mai provincial government invited the largest landowners in the province to comment on the

---

when they could not redeem the mortgaged land. Some of them sold their small plot of land which brought them comparatively low return in the monopoly capitalist market either to become tenants, rural wage labourers or to migrate to become wage labourers in Bangkok and other towns" (1983: 109).

[10] "เป็นประเพณีโบราณกาลก่อนนั้นจริง สมัยสมบูรณายาสิทธิราช แต่มันไม่เหมาะสมในสมัย ปัจจุบันประชาธิปไตยนี้"; Kanoksak Kaewthep asserts that the second period of Phibun's rule, between 1948 and 1957, was marked by "reasonable political freedom" (มีเสรีภาพทางการเมืองพอสมควร) (2530 [1987]: 43).[10] Kanoksak cites the passage of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act as one indication of this freedom (2530 [1987]: 43). Although not cited by Kanoksak, actions taken by the farmers in Saraphi district of Chiang Mai province in northern Thailand can also be read as an indication of this moment of slightly open politics. The precise nature either of what Kanoksak calls "reasonable political freedom" or the farmers identify as "democracy" is difficult to ascertain. See Thak (1979), Chapter 2, for one insightful assessment of Phibun's second term. As I explain later, an analysis of the status of "democracy" in 1951 is outside the realm of my research. Instead I choose to understand democracy as articulated by the Saraphi farmers themselves.

proposed decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act, six of the twenty-two invitees still retained the title "Lord" (เจ้า) (CM 1.2.2/3: 48). When asked their opinion about the situation of the rent farmers, the landowners denied the farmers' claims to poverty and hunger. Despite an insistence otherwise, as reflected by the contents of a file in the Chiang Mai provincial archives, the provincial government based their recommendations to the Ministry of Interior solely on the opinions of the landowners. As a result, the 1950 Land Rent Control Act was never implemented outside of the 18 provinces of central Thailand.[11] In this situation, the landowners were able to use their influence within the provincial meeting room to ensure that the analysis and demands of the farmers went unheard and unheeded.

Given the non-decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai, however, the first question must be: why study this Act? Even, or perhaps especially, due to the lack of decree of the 1950 Act, I argue that an analysis of the contention surrounding it reveals a struggle at once material and strikingly social and epistemological. When influential landowners fought against the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in the north, they clearly acted in defense of their substantial financial interests. When farmers struggled for the decree of the 1950 Act for Chiang Mai province, they did so, as they explicitly state, because their stomachs were empty. Yet, read differently, the contention surrounding the 1950 Act can be understood as a fight to publicly decide what was considered "the truth" (ความจริง) about the conditions of farmers' lives. The challenges farmers made in the 1950s, and later in the 1970s, threatened not only to limit the substantial financial gains landowners derived from

[11] Even in the central region, the act has been criticized for its failure to effect change in farmers' lives. Kanoksak notes that it had no significant effect (2530 [1987]: 43). Kroekkiat (2521 [1978]) argues that although decreed by the government, the government was not seriously committed to enforcing it, and therefore its effects were limited. Andrew Turton argues that the act "was introduced mainly for political propaganda reasons and remained a dead letter … it did not provide any security of tenure, and introduced no powers of compulsory purchase" (1982: 29).

unjust land rent practices, but also to transform the very social and political order which underpinned landowners' position as elites and their own position as subject to the landowners' decisions. This transformation acted to question the assumed benign nature of patrons (landlords) relationships with clients (tenants). As significant as their fear of loss of power within the rural order, the critical assessment of landlords as less than generous patrons threatened their self-conception as beneficent fathers, uncles, and older brothers to tenant farmers.

Yet there is another register in which analysis of this struggle is important, that of historiography. Kanoksak Kaewthep's work on the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย) represents the most in-depth academic engagement with twentieth-century Thai farmers' movements.[12] While I address the Federation and Kanoksak's work more fully in subsequent chapters, his assessment of farmers' activism in the period prior to the 14 October 1973 movement bears upon my project in this chapter.

Kanoksak summarizes the period before 1973 as one in which farmers were active, but primarily *complained* (ร้องเรียน) to the government. Farmers lacked a society-wide, sustained, and coordinated movement. Farmers responded locally to individual problems but did so without linking with farmers in other localities or creating a long-term plan (Kanoksak 2530 [1987]: 46). In Kanoksak's view, the mid-century organizing also faced a concomitant lack of a politicized consciousness. He writes:

> …the U.S. imperialist's indirect control over Thailand was not very obvious to the people. Consequently it was not possible for people's political class consciousness to develop. There was no viable political environment in which people could gain their political experiences (Kanoksak 1985: 156-157).

[12] See Kanoksak (1984; 1985; 2530 [1987]; 2539 [1997]; 2543 [1999]; 2548 [2004]. See Pitch (2001) for a review article addressing many themes in Kanoksak's work.

Taken together, what do Kanoksak's critiques of the structural limitations and the undeveloped consciousness of the farmers in the 1950s mean? Can political consciousness only develop when struggle is carried out at a national level, or is it possible, indeed necessary, for it to arise within other scales? As I will argue throughout this dissertation, even when a shift in political consciousness can be identified through the emergence of a nationwide movement, the locus of change is often elsewhere. The locus of change is at the edge of a rice field, when one farmer tells his neighbor about the new Land Rent Control Act he heard was decreed in the Central region. The locus of change is the *sala* or village temple compound where a group of farmers gather to plan the content of a protest letter. Political consciousness is born when a small group of people come together to talk about injustice in their lives, when people who are not oppressed listen to oppressed people and realize that that their lives are bound up with one another, and when either of these groups risks sharing their nascent knowledge with others.

Despite his analysis of the limitations of the organizing in the 1950s, Kanoksak does not dismiss it as insignificant. Instead he cites the continual oppression of farmers and failures prior to 1973 as the foundation upon which the FFT was established in November 1974 (2530 [1987]: 46). In his assessment of the FFT, he argues that it was ground-breaking because it was the first autonomous, national organization created by farmers for farmers.

Although I agree with Kanoksak's assessment of the FFT's significance, the evidence present in the Chiang Mai provincial archives makes it possible to re-consider his analysis of the earlier farmers as lacking political consciousness and engaged primarily in complaint. While certainly the Saraphi farmers' letter can be read as a complaint to the government, they also go beyond complaint and offer a vision for a different political system. By critiquing political decision-making

structures and identifying themselves as the political actors with the authority to speak about land rent conditions in Chiang Mai, the Saraphi farmers reflected a politicized consciousness. Here I further argue that they challenged established authority and offered a re-formulation of it.

This chapter takes the letter of the Saraphi farmers contained in the Chiang Mai archives as a point of inspiration and departure. Their dissent in 1951 makes claims to either a completed subdued rural population or seamless rule by landowners impossible to sustain. Further, given the claims about and to farmers' lives made in the 1950s by different state institutions, bureaucrats, politicians, and editorialists that I will consider below, the Saraphi farmers' analysis stands as a critical counter-claim. In the pages that follow I consider how to evaluate the significance and meanings of their action – politically in the 1950s and historiographically within the broader stories of farmers' activism in Thailand.

Conceptually, this chapter can be divided into three parts. In the first part I consider how various representations of farmers locate farmers as having a politically important existence, but fail to imagine farmers themselves as capable of political action (or any action). I trace this lacuna across counter-insurgency rhetoric about hunger, dictionary definitions, and an editorial about the oppression of farmers.

In the second part I examine the contents of the file on the 1950 Land Rent Control Act found in the Chiang Mai provincial archives. Beginning with a closer examination of the Saraphi farmers' letter, I reconstruct the chain of events that ultimately led to the non-implementation of the Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai. I argue that in the midst of the competing representations of farmers' lives discussed here, the Saraphi farmers force a re-examination of both the histories and possible futures of farmer dissent. Finally, in the third section I consider the excesses and limitations of both the archival file and my analysis.

The hunger of politics

In 1951, when the Saraphi farmers demanded the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in the north, their request was denied. Simultaneously, their claims to hunger and impoverishment, which underlined their desire for the decree, were denied as well. The major landowners and Chiang Mai bureaucrats repeatedly insist that the farmers were not angry, not troubled (ไม่เดือดร้อน). Upon initial reflection, one might be tempted to take this denial as an attempt by the lords to preserve their vision of northern Thai tradition (ประเพณี). While this may be part of the story, as I take up later, their concern about the troubles of the farmers acquires an additional meaning when read together with the rising panic over the spread of communism at the time. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949, Thailand (as well as its allies) wanted to ensure that communism remained outside its borders. Perhaps ironic, given the vanguard position of farmers in Maoist visions of revolution, farmers emerged in the 1950s as a key protection against the spread of communism in Thailand.

Farmers were viewed as strategic in the struggle against communism in two senses. First, as I explore in greater depth below, avoiding hunger and famine were seen as a critical part of preventing communism. People with full bellies are content with the status quo, apparently. Hungry people, on the other hand, desire regime change. As growers of rice, the staple grain in Thailand, farmers could prevent hunger. Yet, for the majority of the population in 1950, preventing *their* hunger was paramount. As long as people were not hungry, the official line seemed to go, they would not want to topple the existing system. The representations of farmers in government documents, Thai and English-language newspaper accounts, and the Royal Institute dictionary share one characteristic: *farmers are important to politics, but they are not (imagined to be) political.* Through their words and actions, the

Saraphi farmers refuted this idea. In the remainder of this chapter I engage their dissent, and the very contents and definitions of politics and political in which their dissent acquired subversive meaning.

*

On 4 September 1950, the Southeast Asian rice importing countries (Singapore, Federation of Malaya, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, North Borneo, Hong Kong, Sarawak) along with the United States and Britain began an "informal" conference on rice in Singapore (*Straits Times*, 6 September 1950: 8) The Singapore English-language daily paper, *The Straits Times,* reported that the purpose of the meeting was "to exchange information in regard to the estimated rice requirements of the participants, the estimated availability and how best to meet the deficit" (*Straits Times,* 4 September 1950: 5). While *The Straits Times* reporting on the outcomes of the conference was slim, the English-language daily *Bangkok Post* reported extensively on the conference. At the time, Thailand was one of the primary rice-producing nations which would be selling rice to the assembled rice-importing nations.

According to an article in the *Bangkok Post*, equal distribution of rice across the region was important in order to "prevent any great number of people in the deficit countries going hungry and, therefore, become more susceptible to subversive propaganda" (*Bangkok Post,* 4 September 1950: 5). Apparently, if one's belly is full, one does not (can not? will not?) dream of a different life, another future. By preventing hunger, communism could be prevented. In the assessment of the *Bangkok Post* reporter, one of the outcomes of the meeting was to recognize "the importance of Thai rice as an anti-Communist weapon" in the struggle (*Bangkok Post,* 4 September 1950: 5). By the close of the conference, the *Bangkok Post* ran a front-page headline that read "Anti-Communist Success Said Dependent on Rice" (*Bangkok Post,* 8

September 1950: 1). Not only were bellies full of Thai rice a great protection against the spread of communism, but "the delegates were agreed that the supply of rice and the price have great political significance" (*Bangkok Post,* 8 September 1950: 1). The consumers of rice are clearly addressed here, but what about the growers of rice? What about the farmers?

One answer to this question came over a year later in a *Bangkok Post* editorial entitled "On Land Reform" (12 October 1951: 4). The editorial addressed a UNESCO meeting on land tenure held from 8 October to 20 November 1951 in Madison, Wisconsin.[13] The editorial noted that when the Thai delegates returned

> they will bring back with them suggestions for land reform which should be organized into a national blueprint for a system of land tenure incorporating the best features of land ownership and tenancy methods of free countries in all parts of the world. This is the best answer to Communist claims about land reform. Soviet propagandists have dangled promises of great changes to impoverished and hungry people in other lands in many states it may have seemed that any change must be an improvement. But the peasants of Eastern Europe, like the peasants of Russia, have learned that Soviet "collectivization," or land reforms imposed from the top, brings worse oppression than before. Confiscation of property and liquidation of land owners as practiced in Russia, Eastern Europe and now in China have done anything to improve the lot of the farmer. All that "collectivization" has accomplished is to make a tool out of man for the state" (*Bangkok Post*, 12 October 1951: 4).

I quote at length from the *Bangkok Post* editorial here because it raises many pertinent questions for my purposes. Again, hungry people were cast as susceptible to propaganda. But perhaps more striking is the comment that collectivization has made "a tool out of man for the state." Yet aren't the farmers who will grow enough rice to fill bellies across Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia *also* made into a tool for the (anti-communist) state? The problem was not service for the state, but service for a particular kind of state.

[13] See Parsons, Penn and Raup (1956) for proceedings of the conference.

*

In his influential work on peasant rebellion in colonial India, Ranajit Guha (1988a) critiques historians who have failed to discern a politics populated by non-elite actors. Most important, this failure has meant that existing writing about peasant revolt has been unable to imagine revolt as an intentional undertaking by peasants. Rather than view peasant insurgency as constituted by peasant desire for change, "…insurgency is regarded as *external* to the peasant's consciousness and Cause is made to stand in as a phantom surrogate for Reason, the logic of that consciousness" (Guha 1988b: 47). Metaphors of natural disaster are used to describe peasant uprisings or they are explained within a framework of cause and effect. Guha notes that these causes – which include hunger – are often

> factors of economic and political deprivation which do not relate at all to the peasant's consciousness or do so negatively – triggering off rebellion as a sort of reflex action, that is, as an instinctive and almost mindless response to physical suffering of one kind or another (e.g. hunger, torture, forced labour, etc.) or as a passive reaction to some initiative of his superordinate enemy (Guha 1988b: 47).

However, Guha argues that this not only fails to perceive the peasant as an agent of politics, but also fails to adequately assess the consequences of rebellion for peasants. Dismissing the argument that peasant rebellions were spontaneous, he states that in fact peasant uprisings were not spontaneous because peasants "had far too much at stake and would not launch into it except as a deliberate, even if desperate, way out of an intolerable condition of existence. Insurgency, in other words, was a motivated and conscious undertaking on the part of the rural masses" (Guha 1988b: 46). Not only was rebellion an action which might result in incarceration, other punishment, or death, but it simultaneously threatened to shift the epistemology of the peasants' (and the lords') world(s). As Guha explains, "To rebel was indeed to destroy many of those familiar signs which he had learned to read and manipulate in order to extract a

meaning out of the harsh world around him and live with it. The risk in ‘turning things upside down’ under these conditions was indeed so grave that he could hardly afford to engage in such a project in a state of absent-mindedness” (1988b: 45). The task for historians of colonial India therefore, is to research and write about peasants “as an entity whose will and reason constituted the praxis called rebellion” (Guha 1988b: 46).

Although I do not address Thai peasant revolt here, rebellion was a frequent occurrence in the nineteenth century.[14] Rather, Guha’s analysis of the historiography of colonial India is resonant with both the representations of farmers in 1950s Thailand and my own methodological concerns. As noted above, communism could be prevented as long as no one was hungry. Within this logic, only those with empty bellies might want communism. The role of farmers was precisely to fill those bellies and to prevent the nation, even the region, from a communist future. However, what happens when farmers themselves are hungry, when their bellies are empty, and they want something *other than* communism? Can they be understood? Are they imaginable? Perhaps not for the various architects and protectors of the Thai nation-state. Inspired by Guha, I trace both the unimagineability of politicized farmers, and their irrefutable vision of a different, more just future – a future that may, or may not, be communist.

Definitions, Of backbones and farmers

As my discussion of the roles of farmers in anti-communist counter-insurgency illustrated, farmers’ labor was up for grabs in the 1950s. As I also noted, in these discussions, a particular image of the farmer was being created. I suggest that this

---

[14] See Tej (2524 [1981]), Wutthichai and Thammanit eds. (2525 [1982]), Chatthip (1984), Tanabe (1984), and Bowie (1988) for accounts of various Thai peasant rebellions.

image was not created accidentally, but was as important as appropriating the labor of the farmers as a crucial counter-insurgency tool. You see, farmers had to solve the problem of hunger, without ever being hungry themselves. *This* demands a particular kind of actor.

In their letter to their MP arguing for the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai, one of the ways in which the Saraphi farmers identify themselves is as "the backbone of the nation" (กระดูกสั้นหลังของชาติ). This was the basis on which they made their claim for the decree. Yet the phrase was not coined, or even only used, by the farmers.

While I have not yet located the first occurrence of the phrase, here I explore two moments of its use. First, I trace the emergence of the phrase over three editions of the official, state-endorsed dictionary of the Thai language, the Royal Institute dictionary (พจนานุกรมราชบัณฑิตสถาน).[15] Then I turn to a newspaper editorial from *Prachathipathai*, a pro-Phibun Thai-language paper, entitled, in a perhaps ironic play on words, "The Backbone of the Farmers" (กระดูกสันหลังของชาวนา). I offer my analysis as a partial genealogy of the phrase, one attentive not only to the position of farmers vis-à-vis the nation, but also to the imagined subjectivity of the farmers.

*

The Royal Institute was established on 31 March 1933, only nine months after the 24 June 1932 revolution transformed Siam from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.[16] In 1934, the newly established Royal Institute was tasked with the editing of a comprehensive dictionary (พจนานุกรม) of the Thai language. Prior to the

---

[15] Although many Thai-foreign language dictionaries predated the Royal Institute dictionary, including Michell (1892) and Pallegoix (1896), here I am interested in analyzing the Royal Institute dictionary as the official, Thai-Thai lexicon.

[16] The name "Siam" was used until 1939, when the name of the country was changed to "Thailand," in one of the twelve *rathhaniyom*, or "state-isms," decreed by Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram (Thak 1978: 245). The twelve state-isms are translated in full in Thak (1978).

establishment of the Royal Institute, the Department of Religion had printed a dictionary (ปทานุกรม) in 1927, but as the introduction to the first edition of the new dictionary noted, it was not comprehensive and was deemed to be too greatly focused on Pali and Sanskrit words (Royal Institute 2493 [1950]: kh). Instead, what was needed after the promulgation of Siam's first constitution was a book which would include all of the *Thai* words in use at the time (Royal Institute 2493 [1950]: kh). The dictionary was thus poised as a lexicon in the service of the newly-changed nation.

Sixteen years elapsed from the inception of the dictionary project until the Royal Institute printed the first edition in 1950. While an investigation into the contentious discussions which may have gone into the construction of the first edition is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, given the newness of the Institute, and the nation, the length involved is perhaps not surprising.[17] Following the publication of the first edition, the Institute maintained a committee of scholars to review proposed words, and disseminated the new words in succeeding editions of the dictionary.

Anthony Diller notes that while the Royal Institute dictionary has not been without its critics, it is considered the definitive dictionary of the Thai language (1991:

[17] A brief reference to some of the key actors involved may be instructive here. Luang Wichitwathakan, described by David Wyatt as "the most prolific and ardent popularizer of the constitutional regime" (1984: 242) personally recommended or approved all members of the Institute (Sulak 1990: 50). In Sulak Sivaraksa's assessment, the Royal Institute was one of the sites where Luang Wichit attempted to destroy "everything that the princes had created and preserved, starting with the word Siam … and the Royal Council, the last creation of Prince Damrong" (1990: 50). See Saechol (2545 [2002]) for an illuminating discussion of Luang Wichit, nationalism, and Thai-ness. The first two presidents of the Royal Institute, Prince Wan Waithayakon and Phya Anuman Rajadhon may be seen as standing in contrast to Luang Wichit and his support of Phibunsongkhram's efforts to "modernize" and "Westernize" Siam and his visions of exclusive "Thai"-ness. Prince Wan, in particular, was very concerned with the creation of "Thai" words and the codification of the Thai language. A bilingual publication of his article "Coining Thai Words"/ "การบัญญัติศัพท์ภาษาไทย" is included in the commemorative volume published on the 110th anniversary of his birth (Munnithi Narathip Praphanphong-Worawan 2544 [2001]). See Kasian (2001), pages 196-199, for Prince Wan's influences on the creation of Thai words to talk about leftist and dissident politics. For accounts of Phya Anuman's life and work, see Tej and Smithies (1970) and Sulak (1990). The Royal Institute itself has what Anthony Diller describes as a "plurality in its objectives" and has been under the purview of at least three different ministries since its inception, including the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education (1991: 105, 122n).

105). Indeed, many abbreviated Thai dictionaries include the note that they are based on the Royal Institute dictionary, such as Yot (2543 [2000]). The Royal Institute dictionary is positioned as the official, authoritative arbiter of the meaning, pronunciation, and history of each word in the Thai language. To determine the meaning of a word is always a significant act. Meaning-making is certainly not the exclusive province of the dictionary – but I would argue that the significance of the Royal Institute dictionary as the official codification of the Thai language cannot be denied. It is for this reason that I now turn to the place of farmers within the dictionary.

Following the publication of the initial edition in 1950, subsequent revisions were issued in 1982 and 1999 (Royal Institute 2525 [1982], 2542 [1999]). When I arrived in Thailand in December 2003 to begin dissertation research, it was the first book I purchased.

Curious about the how official dictionary defined "farmer" (ชาวนา), I looked it up. There is no specific entry for "farmer." However, a few months later, I found the file on the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in the Chiang Mai provincial archives. When I came across the phrase "backbone of the nation" (กระดูกสันหลังของชาติ) in the Saraphi farmers' letter, I didn't know how to translate it. Although I knew the meaning of the root word, "bone" (กระดูก), I was confused as to why farmers would refer to themselves as a kind of bone. As I continued my research into the farmers' movement of the 1970s, I heard the phrase over and over again. However, that was months ahead, and my first instinct was to open the dictionary.

I picked up my new edition of the Royal Institute dictionary and turned to the root word, "bone" (กระดูก). Not only is "backbone" (กระดูกสันหลัง) listed as a sub-entry for "bone," but the very phrase that sent me to the dictionary was present as well. The backbone is defined as

> the bone that is in the middle of the back of the body, characterized by interconnected joints that form a line beginning from the top of the behind. The backbone protects the spinal cord from danger. It is therefore an important part, the part that is the supporting strength. **For example, farmers are the backbone of the nation** (Royal Institute 2542 [1999]: 34, emphasis is added).[18]

Farmers are not only present in the dictionary, they are the defined as the exemplary backbone.

Curious as to whether farmers and backbones were rendered similarly in the earlier editions, I then turned to the 1950 and 1982 editions of the dictionary. The 1950 entry for "bone" is very short, and does not include a sub-entry for backbone. However, in 1982, there is a sub-entry for "backbone of the nation." It is defined as "the most important part of the nation, usually referring to farmers" (Royal Institute 2525 [1982]: 26).[19]

A specific articulation of farmers to the Thai nation emerges over the course of the three revisions of the Royal Institute dictionary. As I read the various definitions, however, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of dissonance. If farmers are the backbone of the nation, the nation's supporting strength, then why, at so many moments in the second half of the twentieth century have they been ignored, denied, and harassed by various government officials and bodies?

One's backbone connects the base of the skull to the pelvis. Without a backbone, the body cannot stand upright and collapses. Yet the backbone is rigidly held in place, in part due to its structural position. On second thought, perhaps the official dictionary definition and government (in)action do not necessarily stand in contradiction to one another.

---

[18] "กระดูกที่อยู่ในแนว กึ่งกลางทางด้านหลังของลำตัว เป็นแกนของร่างก่าย มีลักษณะเป็นข้อๆ ต่อกันเป็นแนวตั้งแต่บริเวณด้านหลังของทวารหนัก ทำหน้าที่ป้องกันอันตรายให้แก่ไขสันหลัง, โดยปริยายหมายถึงส่วนที่สำคัญ, ส่วนที่เป็นพลังค้ำจุน, **เช่น ชาวนาเป็นกระดูกสันหลังของชาติ**"

[19] "ส่วนสำคัญที่สุดของชาติ มักหมายถึงชาวนา"

*

On 21 June 1951, the first half of a two-part opinion essay entitled "The backbone of the farmers" (กระดูกสันหลังของชาวนา) was printed in *Prachathipatai* newspaper. Assuming the penname "Mister Bumbam" (มิสเตอร์ บุ่มบั่ม), the author bemoaned the tragic situation of farmers. Mister Bumbam offered a three-part typology of farmers, ranging from the least oppressed to the most oppressed. He detailed the capricious, harsh and arbitrary treatment meted out to tenant farmers and laborers at the hands of some landlords. As I read the essay, I was struck by his sharp prose and description of the difficulties of farmers' lives.

Throughout his essay, Mister Bumbam urged his audience to understand the plight of the farmers. Despite his admirable and striking critique of the oppression felt by farmers, he did not appear to imagine farmers to be part of his audience. His audience ate rice, but did not grow rice. This became even more apparent by the close of the second part of his essay when he turned to the issue of solutions to the problems at hand. In contrast to his fiery critique, he implored the landlords to be kinder and various government ministries to take equally tepid steps to address the injustices experienced by the farmers. His solutions were strangely out-of-step with his critique of the status quo. In order to think further about the implications of his argument I turn now to a close reading of his two-part essay.

Mister Bumbam began his piece by making a claim of the knowledge of his readers by commenting that "All of us Thai people should know very well who we are talking about when we say the backbone of the country" (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[20] Although there is no mention of the phrase "farmers are the backbone of the nation," in the 1950 edition of the Royal Institute dictionary, Mister Bumbam's comment indicates that it was already in circulation in 1951.

---

[20] "เราชาวไทยทั้งหลาย คงจะทราบได้ดีว่า ที่เรียกว่ากระดูกสันหลังของประเทศนั้นคืออะไร"

He then wrote not about the collapse of the backbone, but its fracture. He asked: "If our backbone is broken or cracked, then what is it like? But the backbone of the country is already cracking" (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[21] This is significant because the farmers grew the rice eaten by his readers, their families, their neighbors, and the nation. The importance of farmers was not confined to Thailand, he insisted, but extended to the whole world.

In Mister Bumbam's view, not only were farmers the backbone of the nation, but they were comparable to "a very large rice cooking pot" (หม้อข้าวหม้อใหญ่). Japan did not seize Thailand during World War II because "they were afraid if they seized Thailand, the very large rice cooking pot would shatter. They would all starve" (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[22] In his assessment, Thai farmers not only kept the bellies of the citizens full, but safeguarded the sovereignty of the nation as well. During World War II, the threat of hunger restrained Japanese forces. As we have seen, in the 1950s, preventing hunger was seen as a way to stop the spread of communism.

The opening of the essay is important because Mister Bumbam framed the rest of his discussion by appealing to the bellies of his readers. He next turned to a description of the three kinds of farmers in order to show the points at which the backbone was cracking. The three kinds of farmers were as follows: 1.) "prosperous farmers" (ชาวนาวัฒนา), who owned and farmed their own land; 2.) "fed up farmers" (ชาวนาพากันเอือม), who rented land to farm; and 3.) "farmers soaked in sweat for the haves" (ชาวนาอาบเหงื่อเพื่อคนมี), who had neither their own land nor the ability to rent land. If his readers did not want to go hungry, he indicated, then they must pay attention to the wretched (น่าอนาถ) lives of the farmers.

---

[21] "ถ้ากระดูกสันหลังของคนเราหักหรือเดาะ จะเป็นอย่างไร แต่ที่กระดูกสันหลังของประเทศกำลังเดาะแล้ว"

[22] "เขากลัวหม้อข้าวที่ยิ่งใหญ่จะแตก เขาจะพากันอดตาย"

Of the three groups of farmers, the first, "prosperous farmers," were clearly the most comfortable. They "don't have to worry about anything" (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[23] They owned agricultural equipment, buffalo, cows, cars, and houses. During the planting and harvest season, the farmer and his family worked their land and hired laborers if they needed help. Once the harvest was over, this kind of farmer tended to save his rice rather than selling it, because he tended to not have debts. Mister Bumbam noted that this kind of farmer was able to feed and take care of his family. In summary, he said that the "prosperous farmers" live "freely and extremely happily" (อยู่เป็นอิสสระแสนจะผาสุก) (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).

The second group of farmers, "fed-up farmers," were in a far less desirable situation than the "prosperous farmers." Unlike the prosperous farmers who owned their own land and tools, these farmers rented everything. If anything happened to their rented buffalo, they had to inform the owner immediately. In the case of a drought or a flood, they were still required to make rental payments on the land and animals. They were often forced to go into debt in order to do so. If they could not make the rental payments on time, then the farmer was required to pay an additional amount as a late fine. Mister Bumbam indicated the greed of some landlords when he noted that they demanded full payment from the farmer "whether he has food to eat or not, no matter if his wife starves" (*Prachathipatai*, 21 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[24] While Mister Bumbam did not directly address the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in his essay, if implemented and enforced to the letter, the act might have helped improve the lives of some of the "fed-up farmers."

The name of the third group of farmers in Mr. Bumbam's typology, "the farmers soaked in sweat for the haves," is particularly acute. He began this section by

---

[23] "ไม่ต้องกังวลต่อสิ่งใดทั้งสิ้น"

[24] "จะมีกินหรือไม่มีกิน ลูกเมียจะอดจะอยากก็ตาม"

explaining that this name for the farmers “means that the haves are parasites on this group of farmers similar to loranthus viscum, which kills the farmers in cold blood” (*Prachathipatai*, 22 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[25] These farmers were unable even to rent land and had to hire themselves out to work on other people’s land. They worked, ate, and lived from day-to-day. They were often compelled to sell their labor before the planting season commenced because they needed rice or money. As they had to sell their labor ahead of time, they had to accept lower wages than if they contracted their labor after the season began. In Mister Bumbam’s stark terms, “these farmers are pressed, picked, impoverished.”[26] Their livelihood was “uncertain” (อนิจจัง) (*Prachathipatai*, 22 June 2494 [1951]: 2).

After describing the three groups of farmers, Mister Bumbam despaired of the survival of the Thai nation. If the government did not take steps to support the second and third groups of farmers, then Thailand could not survive. This was due to the vast majority of Thai people being farmers, “ever since the time of our grandparents and great-grandparents” (*Prachathipatai*, 22 June 2494 [1951]: 2).[27] In this moment he *almost* addressed farmers, but fell short. However, at least for a brief moment, farmers were acknowledged as something other than producers of rice.

However, even if farmers are not only producers of rice to fill non-farmers’ bellies, they remained, in Mister Bumbam’s worldview, incapable of making change in their own lives. Despite his emphasis on the wretched conditions of their lives, he did not call on farmers, protest, or even write a letter of complaint. Instead, he addressed landlords and various parts of the government.

---

[25] “หมายความว่าคนมีจะเกาะกินชาวนาจำพวกนี้เหมือนอย่างกาฝาก ให้ตายไปอย่างเลือดเย็น”; Loranthus viscum is a type of parasitic vine that destroys crops.

[26] “ชาวนาประเภทนี้นับว่า อัดคัดขาดแคลนมาก”

[27] “ตั้งแต่ครั้งปู่ย่าตาชวด”

If landlords were unable to work their own land, then they should hire a manager who will oppress the farmers as little as possible. He called on the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Interior to take action. The Ministry of Agriculture should distribute more communal use agricultural equipment. The Ministry of Interior should address the issues of land rent, landlessness, the price of rice, and the status of the canals and water. The Ministry of Education should expand its agricultural education programs so that children in rural areas could gain relevant agricultural expertise.

Mister Bumbam's solutions, even if implemented fully, would necessarily fall short of addressing the problems he described. As I will demonstrate, the sweat of the farmers could not be dried by the occasional kindnesses of a few sympathetic landowners. What was needed was a call for justice and structural change, not amelioration. Less than two weeks later, the Saraphi made such a call in the letter they wrote to their MP requesting the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai province.

Riding expensive bicycles: hunger and democracy against contempt

I turn now to the file on the 1950 Land Rent Control Act present in the Chiang Mai archives. Contained within the file are letters written by farmers, Thongdee Isarachiwin, the provincial government, and the Ministry of Interior, in addition to transcripts of meetings held at the provincial hall. Critical for my purposes of demonstrating how land tenancy became an acutely intimate site of contention, the file documents the contestation between landlords and tenant farmers. There were no records of face-to-face meetings, but through the farmers' letters and landlord contributions to meetings they counter each other's formulations of their lives and the

world. Chiang Mai provincial officials and Thongdee are present as interlocutors to this contestation.

The documents in this file are important in a number of registers. At the most basic level, like the newspaper articles and the dictionary, the file is a site of representations of farmers. However, the letters by the Saraphi and Doi Saket farmers are a much different kind of representation than the others – the letters are *representations of farmers by farmers*. While the Doi Saket letter was short, the Saraphi letter, which I address in detail here, goes beyond self-representation to represent democracy. I recognize that the letters have histories of production that I cannot trace – i.e., I cannot know for certain that the person who penned the letter also planted rice with his own hands in 1951. However, farmers are markedly absent as both creators and addressees of the other representations I have considered here.

Finally, although the act was never decreed, the anxiety precipitated by the farmers' letter revealed the tenuousness of the position of the landowners. The letter can be read as diagnostic of the possibilities of the power of a united rural opposition. Twenty years later, both the power of the united rural opposition and the anxiety of the landholding elites were to prove irrepressible.

*

Five months (19 March 1951) after the enactment of the Land Rent Control Act on 12 October 1950, the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok sent an urgent letter to each province asking whether or not it was appropriate to decree the law in the province (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 59). The Chiang Mai government responded within the month (19 April 1951) and cited traditional Lanna land rent practices as the reason why the act would be inappropriate for use in Chiang Mai. The tradition (ประเพณี) cited encompassed both the amount of land rent and the relations between landowners and renters. According to tradition, landowners and renters split the rice harvest in half, or

another amount agreed upon by the two parties. In the eyes of the Chiang Mai government, however, more important than the amount of land rent exchanged was the interdependence between the land owners and renters. The 1950 Act threatened to destroy the tradition by which generous landowners provided for rent farmers whatever they could not provide for themselves. The author of the letter explained that:

> If it so happens that farmers are lacking work animals or capital, even including clothing to wear, the landowners will charitably provide them to the farmers. They are interdependent. So much so that you can regard it as a longstanding tradition … However, if this act is decreed here, it will likely give the landowners an opportunity to cease their charity and disengage from this interdependent relationship (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 63).[28]

This comment raises the question of the nature not only of tradition, but interdependence (การถ้อยที่ถ้อยอาสัยซึ่งกันและกัน). Writing in the context of changing patron-client links in Southeast Asia during the colonial era, James Scott argues that in exchange for a minimum of physical safety and material subsistence, clients will support patrons. When these terms cease being met, clients will withdraw their support (Scott 1972: 7). In this moment, what were farmers expected to do in order to continue receiving the charity of the landowners? In other words, what is their contribution to this interdependence? While it is not stated directly, it would appear to be unquestioning adherence to a system of land rent that they regarded as unjust. Yet they argue that they could no longer survive, which was a problem both material and political.

---

[28] "ถ้าปรากฏว่าผู้ทำนาขาดแคลนสัตว์พาหนะหรือทุนรอน ตลอดจนเสื้อผ้าเครื่องนุ่งห่ม ฝ่ายเจ้าของนาก็เอื้อเฟื้อจัดหา และช่วยเหลือให้เป็นการถ้อยที่ถ้อยอาสัยซึ่งกันและกัน จนเกือบจะถือได้ว่าเป็นประเพณีที่ปฏิบัติสิบเนื่องกันมาช้านานแล้ว .... ถ้าหากประกาศใช้พระราชกฤษฎีกานี้ขึ้นในท้องที่ ใดก็ตาม ย่อมจะเป็นช่องทางให้เจ้าของนาเลิกใช้ วิธีผ่อนผันถ้อยที่ถ้อยอาศัยซึ่งกันและกันนั้นเสีย"

When farmers in Saraphi and Doi Saket districts learned of the Chiang Mai government's recommendation against the decree, they wrote to Thongdee Isarachiwin, their member of parliament, to ask for his help in reversing the decision. The 3 July 1951 letter signed by eighteen farmers from Yangnung and Nongfung subdistricts in Saraphi district was particularly striking for its position in calling for justice (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 55-56). Calling on Thongdee as self-identified "impoverished farmers" (ชาวนาผู้ยากจน), the farmers in Saraphi refuted tradition and defined the meaning of democracy. As mentioned earlier, the Saraphi farmers wrote that the traditional relationship cited by the Chiang Mai government was "an antiquated tradition actually dating from the time of the kings, but not appropriate during the present democratic period" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 56).[29] In one case, they noted that out of 360 thang, a landlord took 220 thang; the remaining 140 thang was not enough rice for a family to eat for one year. If one were to place the Saraphi farmers within Mr. Bumbam's typology, given the amount of rent they paid it seems that they would have fallen between the second and third groups of farmers. While they were able to rent land to farm, like the "fed-up farmers," the amount of rent charged ensured that their own rice supply remained tenuous, like the "farmers soaked in sweat for the haves."

Rather than rely on the possible charity of the landowners, the Saraphi farmers wanted the Land Rent Control Act to be decreed in Chiang Mai so that they would have enough rice to fill the stomachs of their families for all twelve months of the year. In addition, they criticized their exclusion from the provincial level discussions about the law, and asked to be consulted by the district committee (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 55-56). In this moment, the Saraphi farmers interrupted the influence of the landowners

---

[29] "เป็นประเพณีโบราณกาลก่อนนั้นจริงสมัยสมบูรณายาสึทธิราช แต่มันไม่เหมาะสมในสมัย ปัจจุบันประชาธิปไตยนี้"; Rather than speculate on what constituted democracy in 1951 (and whether or not it was really democratic), here I choose to understand democracy as it is articulated by the Saraphi farmers themselves.

by noting the absence of rent farmers from the decision-making process thus far. More importantly, by insisting that they be consulted regarding decisions that would affect them, the Saraphi farmers enacted the democracy they wished to live within.

The Saraphi farmers set in motion a chain of actions that nonetheless ended with the passive refusal to decree the Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai. On 30 July 1951 Thongdee Isarachiwin wrote a letter conveying the concerns and demands of the farmers to Phibun Songkhram, the Prime Minister. Thongdee characterizes why he became involved as follows:

> The impoverished farmers in central Thailand do not experience nearly the same level of persecution and oppression from the wealthy landowners that the impoverished farmers in Chiang Mai do. This caused me to become the representative of my impoverished farmer sisters and brothers in Chiang Mai. In case there is any doubt, it is because the government has not helped our impoverished farmer brothers and sisters in Chiang Mai who have been oppressed by the wealthy for over 100 years. They should receive the same justice as the farmer brothers and sisters in central Thailand (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 66).[30]

Thongdee's sincerity was questioned by the Chiang Mai government, the landowners, and an editorial writer in *Siam Rat* newspaper (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 39; *Siam Rat* 22 November 2494 [1951]: 1). They argued that his motivation to advocate for the rent farmers was purely vote-related. Yet each of these sources also argued that the farmers who wanted the decree of the act in Chiang Mai were an insignificant minority of farmers. If Thongdee was simply interested in garnering votes, wouldn't it make more sense to choose the majority group? Either these farmers *were* the (unacknowledged) majority and/or the accusation of vote-buying was untrue!

---

[30] "ชาวนาผู้ยากจนในจังหวัดภาคกลางยังไม่ถูกกดขี่ข่มเหงจากเศรษฐีเจ้าของนามากควร เช่น ชาวนา ผู้ยากจน ในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่เลย เมื่อเป็นเช่นนี้จึงทำให้ข้าพเจ้าซึ่งเป็นตัวแทนของพี่น้องชาวนา ผู้ยากจนในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่สงสัยไปว่า เป็นเพราะเหตุใดรัฐบาลจึงไม่เห็นอกเห็นใจและ ช่วยเหลือ พี่น้องชาวนาผู้ยากจนในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ซึ่งได้ถูกพวกเศรษฐีหน้าเลือดบีบบังคับกดขี่ข่มเหงมากกว่า 100 ปี ให้ได้รับความเป็นธรรมเทียบเท่าพี่น้องชาวนาในจังหวัดภาคกลางบ้าง"

Following Thongdee's letter, in a letter dated 30 August 1951, the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok requested a re-evaluation of the possible decree of the Land Rent Control Act from the Chiang Mai government. The Chiang Mai government and the Ministry of Interior exchanged letters for the next five years, ending with a letter dated 19 December 1956 from the Ministry of Interior requesting the final recommendations regarding the possible decree of the 1950 Act (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 53). Although the Chiang Mai government never answered this request (or did not archive it), we know that the 1950 Land Rent Control Act was never decreed in Chiang Mai, or in any province outside the initial eighteen provinces decreed in central Thailand.

The archival file therefore documents the non-decree, the non-event, of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai. Writing about her research in the Dutch colonial archives regarding how the Dutch addressed what they perceived as the threat of the *inlandsche kinderen*, the children of European men and Indonesian women, Ann Stoler foregrounds the non-eventful as a site of analysis. She does not, as one might expect, focus on "the concrete and discrete events that made up social reform (which policies were carried out and which not)" (Stoler 2002: 157). Instead, drawing on archives as processes, sites, and technologies of contested knowledge, Stoler examines the proposals and incomplete, unrealized projects of the Dutch to educate, train and otherwise discipline the inlandsche kinderen (2002: 158). By focusing on the non-eventful – what was not realized but imagined, proposed, discussed, and attempted by the Dutch – Stoler is able to consider "deep anxieties about a Dutch national past and of an Indies colonial future, of a colonial utopia obliquely addressed" (2002: 157).

Informed by Stoler's work, I read the documents of non-implementation of the Act as critical documents not only of the refusal [by landowners and government officials] of the Saraphi farmers' vision of democracy, but also as diagnostic of an emerging tension concerning the maintenance of the rural order. In this case, not only

are farmers' demands for lower land rents denied, but their claims to knowing the truth (ความจริง) about their own lives are silenced as well.

Given the characterizations of farmers as passive – yet important – national-political beings in the Royal Institute dictionary, the fight against communism, and Mister Bumbam's analysis of the struggle against their own oppression, their active presence here is at once surprising, and important. The indignation and ferocity with which the landlords responded to the farmers' claims about their own lives underscores the nature of the political passivity constitutive of the other representations of the farmers. I turn now to two archived sites of contestation, denial, and refusal: a transcript of a meeting with seventeen of the largest landowners in Chiang Mai and the final report concerning the possible decree of the 1950 Rent Control Act to the Ministry of Interior by the Chiang Mai government.

While the report of the re-evaluation of land rent in Chiang Mai sent to the Ministry of Interior stated that all different sectors were consulted, my reading of the report as well as the contents of the archival file suggests that the primary source of the re-evaluation was a one-hundred minute meeting with seventeen major landholders in Chiang Mai on 9 August 1951.[31] The meeting began with an apology from the government official, Udom Bunprasop, who led the meeting. He explained that the Chiang Mai government had already informed the Ministry of Interior that the act was inappropriate for use in Chiang Mai. However, due to the letter from Thongdee in support of the farmers' demands, the Ministry of Interior wanted a more thorough

---

[31] Twenty-two landowners were issued and delivered individual invitations to a meeting at the Chiang Mai provincial government building (*Sala Klang Changwat Chiang Mai*). The list of invitees, as well as information about who signed for each invitation is contained in the archival file. Many of the invitees were from longstanding merchant and landholding families in Chiang Mai. See Plai-auw (2529 [1986]) for an illuminating history of capitalism in northern Thailand.

evaluation.[32] Udom claimed he was "only the middle man, the servant of every side" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 32).[33]

The landowners made no such pretense to impartiality. They spoke with certainty and unironic contradiction about their own lives and those of rent farmers. The lack of contention in the meeting was surprising – from the transcript of the meeting the seventeen individuals almost seemed to speak with one voice. The landowners repeatedly insisted that their landholdings were small; even the landowner who owned 100 rai noted that it was *only* 100 rai (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 33). Despite their status as small landholders, they noted their generosity in giving animals and clothes to their tenants. If the Land Rent Control Act was decreed in Chiang Mai, the landowners lamented, they and their families would be devastated.

One of the first comments made during the meeting was an explicit denial of the impoverishment cited by the Saraphi farmers: "The rent farmers in Chiang Mai have a lot. They are not poor …. They have thousands of baht" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 34).[34] Another landowner, Worasak Nimmanan, offered the observation that "everyone renting land has a permanent house already, they aren't troubled, and they aren't really poor" (C.M 1.2.2./3: 38).[35] He further argued that if the act was decreed, his family would face personal ruin as even half the rice harvest would not be enough to eat for twelve months. In Worasak's assessment, most landowners have other occupations

---

[32] He even notes in his introduction to the meeting that in the opinion of some MPs (Thongdee) not enough farmer voices were being heard. This meeting was a strange solution. He commented: "We've heard from some MPs that the province only listens to landowners. We haven't listened to the voices of the rent farmers. So our reporting of the facts is shaky. The Ministry of Interior has asked us to consider it again" ("ประกอบกับได้ทราบจากผู้แทนบางคนว่า จังหวัดฟังแต่เจ้าของนาผู้ให้เช่าเท่านั้น มิได้ฟังเสียงพวกผู้เช่าเลย ข้อเทจจริงจึงไม่น่ามั่นคง กระทรวงมหาดไทยจึงสั่งให้จังหวัดมาพิจารณาอีกครั้งหนึ่ง") (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 32).

[33] "ในฐานะลูกจ้างของทุก ๆ ฝ่าย"

[34] "คนทำนาในเชียงใหม่มั่งมีมาก ไม่ใช่ยากจน .... มีเงินคนละหลาย ๆ พันบาท"

[35] "ทุกคนที่เช่านานั้นมีบ้านอยู่ถาวรทั้งนั้น ไม่ใช่เดือดร้อนและยากจนจริงๆ"

already, and he would be forced to find yet another job for "the money to buy household items and pay my children's school fees, my family is quite large" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 37).[36]

While the Saraphi farmers argued that they needed the Land Rent Control Act to be decreed so that they would have enough rice to eat, *Chao*, or Lord, Pong-in, another landowner, denied that lack of rice is an issue for rent farmers. Instead he argued that they rent to engage in "large-scale production, not for eating, (they) rent to expand their business" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 36).[37] Individually, Worasak and Chao Pong-in each denied the claims the Saraphi farmers made to hunger and lack of rice. Considered together, their comments constituted a dissimulating reversal whereby tenant farmers became agricultural industrialists and landowners became hungry workers.

However, Kraisri Nimmanhemin's comments during the meeting reflected a particularly sharp dismissal of the farmers' claims. Kraisri began his speech by noting the similarity between the rent farmers and the (capitalist) land owners; the rent farmers "are not workers, but another kind of capitalist" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 35).[38] In case this was not enough to disavow the claim made by the farmers to a position of impoverishment and disadvantage vis-à-vis the landowners, Kraisri offered concrete evidence. He explained: "I ask you to observe how they make merit, how they dress, what kinds of things they use. For example, they ride expensive types of bicycles, such as the Raleigh and the Humber. People in the cities don't ride this type, everyone

---

[36] "ค่าใช้จ่ายในบ้านและการศึกษาเด็ก ครอบครัวเรา เป็นครอบครัวใหญ่"

[37] "การมาเช่าเพื่อทำ เป็นอุตสาหกรรม ไม่ใช่เพื่อกิน เป็นการขยายงานของตน"

[38] "ไม่ใช่กรรมกร เป็นนายทุนอีกพวกหนึ่งเหมือนกัน"

in the country does" (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 35).[39] As long as rent farmers could donate money to the temple, purchase their own clothes, and purchase a sturdy bicycle, then, he seemed to suggest, land rents did not need to be standardized or lowered. What had to be visible in order to constitute impoverishment? If documented landlessness and claims to hunger did not suffice, then what would have?[40]

Kraisri's comment about the bicycles used by tenant farmers became evidence in the re-evaluation of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act written by the Chiang Mai provincial government. This report was sent to the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok on 29 September 1951 (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 1-10). In addition to the bicycles and clothes cited by Kraisri, the report claimed that the farmers also had substantial savings (C.M. 1.2.2/3: 5). Despite the note by Udom Bunprasop that he had to be very careful to interrogate the veracity of each claim to truth or troubles, his reliance on the landowners' statements indicates whose version of reality he believed was true. He argued that the decree was unnecessary because the majority of the rent farmers were not really poor, and were not really troubled. Further, citing the fear of the tenant farmers and making an implicit reference to the influence held by the landowners, the author concluded that the act should not be decreed. If land rent control was decreed, then perhaps landowners would refuse to rent land altogether and rent farmers would be forced to work as laborers.

As I read the transcript of the meeting of landowners, I was struck by what I read as the landowners' self-interested comments. Their exaggerated claims to their

---

[39] "ขอให้สังเกตการทำบุญ การแต่งตัว การใช้ของ เช่นรถจักรยาน ใช้ชนิดราคาแพง เช่น ราเลห์ ฮัมเบอร์ คนในเมืองไม่ใช้ คนบ้านนอกใช้หมด"; The Humber was a brand of British bicycle that was later acquired by the Raleigh bicycle company. Thank you to Steven Plust for help in clarifying the existence and history of the Humber bicycle.

[40] To my great dismay, there is no archival record of the vehicles used by each landowner to travel to the meeting. I can only speculate that Kraisri was driven in a car. The certainty would provide an interesting context to his statements.

own impoverishment and dismissal of the hunger of farmers can perhaps be read as a valiant attempt to ensure the shelving of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act for Chiang Mai, and therefore their continued financial success. In this moment, landowners were faced not only with the potential diminishment of their material wealth, but also the loss of their social (and self) image as generous patrons. Preventing this loss required struggle which was at once political and epistemological. I suggest that we also should read this as an equally valiant attempt by the landholding elite to retain their position not only as, in Marx and Engels' terms, "the ruling material force of society," but also as "its ruling intellectual force" (1965:61). Their attempt was successful, for a time.

Missing letters and archival oversights

Almost a month before the Chiang Mai provincial government submitted their report to the Ministry of Interior, Thongdee Isarachiwin sent an additional urgent letter to both Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram and the Ministry of Interior. In the letter, Thongdee criticized the conduct of Udom Bunprasop, the Chiang Mai official in charge of the review of the possible decree of the Land Rent Control Act. Thongdee accused Udom of violating government directives related to the review by unabashedly aligning himself with the landlords. Thongdee urged Phibun to set up a committee to investigate Udom's behavior and transgressions of the rules of conduct for civil servants. This letter was not included in the archival file, but was printed in full in the Thai-language daily newspaper, *Kittisak* (*Kittisak*, 7 September 2494 [1951]: 3, 6). I turn now to a closer examination of the letter, in order to illustrate the specific ways in which Udom's claim to be "only the middle man, the servant of every side," was insincere.

Thongdee began his letter by explaining that in accordance with Ministry of Interior instruction, Udom met with 7 districts in Chiang Mai – Sanpatong, Sankhampaeng, Mae Rim, Mae Thang, Chiang Mai city, Sansai, and Saraphi -- between 15 and 22 August 1951. In contrast to the 9 August meeting with the landowners, if invitations were issued or minutes taken, they were not preserved in the archival file. However, Thongdee noted that every time Udom addressed the rent farmers, rather than telling them about the government policy for farmers, a policy described by Thongdee as one which recognizes that "farmers are the backbone of the nation," Udom violated (ฝ่าฝืน) the government's policy. Thongdee accused Udom of using outright threats to intimidate the farmers. Udom apparently insisted that splitting the rice harvest in half had been a long-standing tradition of Chiang Mai people, and should not be changed. If the land rent control act was decreed, he threatened, it would give the owners an opportunity to fail to fulfill their obligations to the farmers. Most of the owners would choose to work the land themselves. This would be very difficult for the farmers. When the landowners refused to rent their land to the rent farmers, the civil servants and district officers would not be able to help them (*Kittisak*, 7 September 2494 [1951]: 3, 6). Rather than attempt dissimulation in the style of the landlords, Udom opted for direct fear-mongering.

In addition, Thongdee alleged that Udom permitted the landlords to attend the meetings and bully the rent farmers. In case Udom's threats of a dismal (and hungry) future were not enough to intimidate the farmers, the presence of landlords and their supporters were an additional pressure. Thongdee offered specific details, noting that Udom "let the wealthy landowners use megaphones to insult and yell that this is a

horrible law, that it is a law that will bring trouble to the country, that it is a communist law, etc" (*Kittisak*, 7 September 2494 [1951]: 6).[41]

The accusation of the law as "communist" is a reason to pause. In this instance there is not enough information to discern what the people using the term as an accusation or Thongdee mean by "communist." Do they mean Maoist revolution? If so, is it a form of regime change with farmers as the vanguard? In the sense that Udom insisted that the decree of the Land Rent Control Act would give the landowners a crack through which to refuse to rent their land out, might the decree create a crack through which farmers could continue to advocate for justice? And then?

Most striking, however, was Thongdee's use of the ever-present phrase, "farmers are the backbone of the nation." Thongdee summarized Udom's actions as follows: "he cheers on the capitalists who have expansive wide holdings of land, so that they can plow over the backs of the impoverished farmers, who are forever going to be the backbone of the nation" (*Kittisak*, 7 September 1951: 6).[42] In Thongdee's formulation, the farmers were not the backbone of the nation because they grew the rice everyone eats. They are the backbone of the nation because the landlords' wealth was built on their backs, literally. In this moment, Thongdee critiqued not only Udom, but also what he perceived as the deeply classed formulation of the Thai nation.

---

[41] "ปล่อยให้พวกเศรษฐีเจ้าของนา ใช้เครื่องขยายเสียงกล่าวประนามโจมตีว่าเป็นกฎหมายที่ไม่ดี จะมาทำความเดือดร้อนให้แก่บ้านเมือง หรือเป็นกฎหมายของพวกคอมมิวนิสต์เป็นต้น"

[42] "แต่กลับเอาใจช่วยเหลือนายทุนผู้มีที่นาอันกวางใหญ่ไพศาล เพื่อให้ได้ไถหลังพวกชาวนาผู้ยากจน ซึ่งเป็นกระดูกสั้นหลังของชาติไปตลอดกาล"

Undecidability: excesses of communism

In this chapter, I have engaged many references to something called "communism." Farmers, as growers of rice to feed the citizens of the nation, were defined as a strategic tool against the spread of communism. Underlying this vision seemed to be the persistent idea that people with full bellies are less interested in critiquing the current regime or dreaming of a different possibility. Within this formulation, there was no space for farmers themselves to be hungry, and so therefore communist. This lacuna may have reflected an underlying vision of the Thai nation in which farmers were less than citizens. Or, as I argue that farmers were consistently represented as being implicated in politics without themselves being political actors, it may follow that the possibility of a communist farmer may have simply been of no concern. Therefore, their hunger would have been of no concern as well.

As is pointedly obvious in the previous section, however, nearly every formulation of communism I have engaged thus far has been either wholly undefined or vaguely defined. While Thongdee noted the use of the accusation as the Land Rent Control Act as a "communist" law as a tool by landowners in Chiang Mai to intimidate farmers, the meaning of "communist," as understood by either the landlords or Thongdee himself remains unclear.

A few days after Thongdee's letter was printed in *Kittisak*, an editorial about the possible decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai was printed in *Siam Rat,* another Bangkok daily (Siam Rat 9 September 2494 [1951]: 7). In contrast to many of the other formulations, the author of the *Siam Rat* editorial offered a very specific vision of communism. Significantly, the author's formulation also provides another lens on the issue of the landowner's fear and anxiety which I traced through my reading of the archival documents.

While the author of the *Siam Rat* editorial dismissed the need for the decree, he offered a note of warning. The author wrote:

> This is an issue that we should explain so that the citizens have a good understanding about it. We must be very careful. Who benefits between the landowners and the land tenants is clear. However, if this hasn't yet become trouble, hasn't yet become grave, then we shouldn't touch the relationship. Because doing so might create feelings of enemies between different classes. This would be an opening which would allow the entry of communism (*Siam Rat,* 9 September 2494 [1951]: 7).[43]

This is a strikingly astute passage. While advocating against the decree of the Land Rent Control Act, the author did not deny that the landlords were the clear beneficiaries of the relationship. The author seemed to suggest that discussion about class difference should be avoided. Drawing the next logical conjecture, he seemed to indicate that in so doing, communism could be avoided. To make a practice of not speaking about class differences is to attempt to render them unnameable. The editorialist himself leaves class differences unarticulated, by noting that it is clear who, between landowners and tenants, benefits from the status quo, without ever naming landowners as the beneficiaries.

The rhetorical form of his editorial is intriguing – even as he refuses to explicitly name class differences and what they mean concretely, his readers could draw the same conclusions from his analysis that I have here. While the admonition to leave the clear differences among classes unsaid seems naïve, perhaps it was meant here as a request, or even a plea. The author was clearly aware that class consciousness was likely emergent from such an engagement. As evidenced by the

---

[43] "การชี้แจงให้ราษฎรมีความเข้าใจในเรื่องนี้เป็นอันดีก็เป็นสิ่งที่ควร กวดขันระมัดระวัง เพราะผลประโยชน์อันขัดกันระหว่างเจ้าของนาและผู้เช่านี้ ถ้าหากว่าจะมีอยู่จริงแต่ไม่ถึงกับเดือดร้อน สาหัสแล้ว ก็ไม่ควรจะไปแตะต้อง เพราะอาจเป็นขบวนให้เกิดความรู้สึกเป็นศัตรูระหว่างคนต่างชั้นต่างฐานะ อันจะเป็นการเปิดประตูให้แก่ลัทธิคอมมิวนิสม์"

Saraphi farmers' letter discussed in this chapter, class consciousness *did* arise form the recognition of inequality between their lives and the landowners, and then lead to the proposal of a future in which this inequality was addressed. On the surface, the editorialist seems to write in the service of overtly repressing the acknowledgement of class in Thai society. Yet, I wonder if there is another way in which this editorial can be read. Is it possible that in calling to leave class differences unnamed, while simultaneously indicating (i.e., all but naming) them, the author subverted his own purpose?

Here, the *Siam Rat* editorialist suggests that at its most dangerous, class consciousness might lead to a desire for communism. As long as farmers (and their potential allies) could remain un-class conscious, then the nation would remain free of communism. Even if every belly could be filled, it might not be enough of a measure to ward off the development of class consciousness. [44] Further, as I will show in the next chapter when I discuss the struggle to pass and implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, communist wasn't the *only*, or most dangerous possible outcome of the development of class consciousness by rural tenant farmers and their allies. Landowning and other conservative forces often cited Communism, which they seemed to understand as the complete eradication of their way of life, as their deepest fear. Yet, the carrying out of democratic politics to its fullest, in which landowners and tenant farmers met each other on the same footing of the law (at least on paper), represented a threat perhaps less total, but more immediately real. Communism could

---

[44] To be clear – I am discussing the formulations of communism in circulation around the law and the farmers. I am not making a claim as to whether or not the law or the farmers *were* communist. There are various methodological problems, obstacles, and implications involved in making such a claim. Primary among these problems is the sheer lack of evidence or reference to Thai Communist Party (TCP) activity in the north in the early 1950s. While Somsak (1991) notes that at this time there active organizing was taking place in the South and parts of the Northeast, he makes no reference to the North. Race (1974) characterizes pre-1960 communist activity in the north as "rumor." These concerns resurface when I discuss the Farmers' Federation later, so for now, I bracket them for further consideration later.

be explicitly opposed and vilified, but in the period of open politics following 14 October 1973, legal land rent reform was more difficult to dismiss.

Classification and historiographic quandaries: defining claims to legitimacy

In this chapter I have privileged the 1951 letter from the Saraphi farmers as an indication of farmers as political actors against various other representations of them as, paradoxically, implicated in politics without the possibility of acting within them. My analysis of the contention between landowners and rent farmers in Chiang Mai province is significant because it reveals the ways in which the struggle over the 1950 Land Rent Control Act was at once about the amount of rice paid as rent and also about who had the power to name the truth about farmers' lives. While the Saraphi farmers lost the struggle to decree the Act, the presence of their letter in the Chiang Mai provincial archives suggests they did not fully concede the epistemological struggle.

Yet, the Saraphi farmers' letter presents difficulties of interpretation. In one sense, one might argue that their struggle was unsuccessful, because the Act was not decreed for use in Chiang Mai. At the same time, their letter provoked contention that revealed, and may have fractured further, the fragile power of the landowners. Analytically, how does one classify this? How does one assess and place the Saraphi farmers within a genealogy of manifestations of farmers' political consciousness and action in Thailand?

While I noted the resonances between aspects of revolt noted by Guha (1988a, 1988b) and the changes wrought by the Saraphi farmers, the Saraphi farmers were clearly not engaged in revolt. As Kanoksak (1985, 2530 [1987]) notes, their action was not on the scale or of the order of the organized, national, autonomous Farmers' Federation of Thailand. The farmers were not using Scott's (1985) "weapons of the

weak" to chip away at the system of domination. In fact, the Saraphi farmers were challenging the system of domination using its own terms and strategies. In writing and submitting a letter in which they demanded that they, as "the backbone of the nation," be consulted about legislative decisions which affected their lives, they challenged the 1951 government to be democratic. By offering a definition of democracy through their actions, the farmers enacted the future that they wished to see.

A formulation of Andrew Turton's may be helpful. Although developed to account for the post-1976 farmer organizing, I think it may be relevant here as well. He characterizes one of the results of new forms of organizing as the emergence of *claims to legitimacy*. He writes:

> Above all, new forms of knowledge about, and appropriate to, conditions of livelihood are produced and disseminated; there is a new assertion of dignity and human worth, a new self-confidence and boldness; and there are new claims to *legitimacy*, which come to be accepted in a wider field of discourse. Larger in scale, if not in frequency, than isolated acts of individual resistance; smaller in scale, but more pervasive than peasant uprisings in the past, they may also serve to articulate the everyday experiences and practices of peasant struggles with wider social movements, and social and political forces, including non-peasant ones, which may exist or be in the course of development (Turton 1984: 65-66).

I suggest that we view the Saraphi farmers' letter as a claim to legitimacy. In their letter the farmers offer a vision of their lives – as filled with hunger, difficulty, and hope for a different future – that is at odds with every other representation of them in circulation at the time. Even though their claim to legitimacy was contested by the landowners, and the landowners' (illegitimate) claim was successful in preventing the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act, the anxiety precipitated by the farmers' letter revealed the tenuousness of the position of the landowners. The letter can also be read as diagnostic of the possibilities of the power of a united rural opposition.

Twenty years later, both the power of the united rural opposition and the anxiety of the landholding elites returned, stronger than before.

Postscript: dissenting dictionaries

Matichon Press issued a short dictionary in 2000 entitled *Dictionary Outside the Royal Institute* (or perhaps *Dictionary Beyond the Royal Institute*)/*พจนานุกรมนอกราชบัณฑิตยฯ* (Matichon 2543 [2000]). This dictionary was published in a full-length version, *The Matichon Dictionary of the Thai Language*/*พจนานุกรมฉบับมติชน* in 2004. While noting that the Royal Institute dictionary is the foundational dictionary (พจนานุกรมหลัก), they explain that while the Royal Institute dictionary is to ""set" the rules of usage," their project is rather to ""reflect" usage" (Matichon 2547 [2004]: 9, 10). The full-length *Matichon Dictionary* offers a point of comparison, perhaps offering a hint to the sincerity of the definition in the Royal Institute dictionary. Under "bone," the sub-entry definition for "backbone," ends with an illustrative example: "the government **says** that farmers are the backbone of the nation" (Matichon 2547 [2004]: 24, emphasis is added).[45] Exactly.

[45] "รัฐบาล**ว่า**ชาวนาเป็นกระดูกสันหลังของชาติ"

CHAPTER THREE
FROM THE RICE FIELDS TO THE CITY

> "Today's Thai farmers are not the same as last year's farmers, because they have firmly come together" (*Thai Niu* 19 December 2517 [1974]: 3).[1]

Other than an unanswered query from the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok about whether it would be appropriate to decree the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in 1956, the national and provincial governments were largely silent on land tenancy issues in Chiang Mai for nearly twenty years. Land rents continued to be exorbitant across the north, sometimes climbing even as high as two-thirds of the rice harvest (Turton 1982: 28). Compounding problems was a general shortage of land, particularly lowlands suitable for wet-rice cultivation. While rice yields in the Ping River Valley in Chiang Mai and Lamphun were on average over fifty *thang* per *rai*, higher than most in the country, there simply was not enough land to go around.

Further, even those farmers who possessed land increasingly possessed less. In 1963, the agricultural census noted that the average amount of land held by farmers nationally was 21.7 *rai*; in the north the average amount held was 16.1 *rai*. By 1973, the average amount of land held by farmers in the north had dropped to 8.8 *rai*; 27% of farmers possessed less than five *rai*. Another estimate at the same time indicated that approximately one-third of northern farmers owned all of their land, one-third were part-owners, and one-third were tenant farmers. This does not account for those farmers who were completely landless, meaning farmers who neither possessed land nor were able to rent land (*Investor* 7.8 [August 1975]: 15).[2] A number of factors precipitated the growing land shortage, including the shrinking of the once-expanding

---

[1] "ชาวนาไทยในวันนี้ ผิดกับชาวนาเมื่อปีก่อน เพราะชาวนารวมตัวกันเป็นปึกแผ่น"

[2] *Investor* cited a 1974 survey of one district in Chiang Mai province which "found that of 1,437 households, 37 were village landlords, 582 were owner occupiers, 338 were tenants and 531 were landless" (*Investor* 7.8 [August 1975]: 15). Landless farmers were faced with the choice of either working as agricultural wage laborers or migrating to urban areas in search of other work.

land frontier, population growth, disinheritance (as already-small packages of land were subdivided among siblings), and indebtedness (*Investor* 7.8 [August 1975]: 7).

Left to their own devices, Bangkok and Chiang Mai bureaucrats may have remained silent about land rent issues in the north indefinitely. Yet facing a deepening crisis, in 1974 Chiang Mai farmers revived the push for a law stipulating a standardized system of lower land rents. In the changed context engendered by the events surrounding 14 October 1973, Thai state actors and new kinds of farmer subjects encountered one another on a shifting political terrain.

Chiang Mai farmers were not alone – either in facing harsh conditions and injustice or in deciding to seek change through protest. In a review article summing up the changes across the country following 14 October 1973, one progressive newsweekly identified the most significant problems facing by farmers as access to land and loss of land to "capitalist landowners" (นายทุนเจ้าของที่ดิน), followed by low market prices for crops and high land rent prices (*Prachachaat Weekly* 1.48 [17 October 2517 (1974)]: 31). Farmers in the Northeast, who had the lowest average per capita income of all Thai farmers, faced a significant shortage of cultivable land and a lack of sufficient irrigation to cope with the arid environment (Luther 1978: 74). Southern farmers experienced low market prices for their rubber and the increasing growth of commercial plantations (Thomas 1975: 8, 25). Although farmers in the Central region had the highest average per family income, they also had the highest rate of indebtedness (Witayakorn 1983: 98-99). Illustrating the gravity of the problem of debt and astronomical interest rates, one account noted that a farmer may borrow a principle of 2000 baht from a non-bank moneylender and watch it skyrocket to 20,000 baht in a few months. In this manner, many farmers who possessed land and gave their land title as a guarantee lost their land. Unfortunately, as a reporter in *Athipat* noted,

because farmers agreed to these terms, there was often no legal recourse (*Athipat* 29 May – 4 June 2517 [1974]: 1, 16).

This is the context in which farmers across the country became politicized during the 1973-1976 period of open politics. Beginning in March 1974, farmers took to the streets and addressed their demands for redress and justice simultaneously to the Thai public and various parts of the Thai state. Initially, farmers protested in provincial capitals, including Chiang Mai as noted above, and then launched protests simultaneous in provincial capitals and Bangkok. Over the next months, the number of active, progressive farmers grew into an increasingly critical mass. On 19 November 1974, the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย), which I will also refer to by its acronym, FFT, was officially established. The FFT was the first autonomous, national farmers' organization in Thailand.[3] Within the first six months of its inception, the FFT became a significant political and social force whose presence could be felt in villages and cities across the country.

In this chapter I trace both the establishment of the FFT and the revitalization of the struggle for land rent control in Chiang Mai in 1974. I contend that by joining with one another and bringing their protests from the countryside into the city streets, farmers fundamentally transformed themselves into a new kind of dissenting political subject. Of particular concern to me is how farmers then addressed various parts of the Thai state, and how farmers in turn were perceived by state actors as well as their supporters and critics. As the poster quoted in the epigraph illustrates, farmers began

[3] As an independent organization, the FFT stood in direct contrast to the numerous government-sponsored farmers' groups. Following a damaging flood in 1917, the first agricultural cooperative was established in 1919 as a cooperative credit society (National FAO Committee 1950: 90-91). Although some of these cooperatives were established in the early part of the twentieth century, the majority were established in the 1950s. One account suggests that in 1973, "there were 1,076 cooperatives of various kinds in Thailand with 717,521 members and covering almost 20 percent of the farming families" (Turton 1982: 25). Turton also notes that the majority of these cooperatives were simply credit organizations, and were inactive because of their own outstanding debts with the Bank of Agriculture and Cooperatives (1982: 25). He critiques these cooperatives as dominated by local and wealthy elites, rife with corruption, and lacking actual participation from farmer-members.

by trusting and hoping that the state would take action on their behalf. Once farmers instead chose to place their hope with each other and the shared project of organizing, they began to be perceived as dangerous by their critics within and outside the Thai state. The farmers' initial hope, the government's impossible promises, and the ominous signs that farmers were becoming threatening were strikingly evident in the very terms used by each group of actors.

Drawing on a range of newspapers and commemorative accounts, I begin by tracing the string of protests leading up to the establishment of the FFT in November 1974. By bringing their issues and themselves to Sanam Luang in the heart of Bangkok, the farmers made their struggle a visibly public one. As the farmers and the government traded lists of demands and responses, the farmers became increasingly politically savvy and the government's promises increasingly difficult to keep. Then I turn to the land rent situation in Chiang Mai in late 1974. While some farmers from Chiang Mai and the neighboring provinces traveled to Bangkok to join the protests there, many remained in Chiang Mai and firmly demanded land rent relief. As you will recall from the previous chapter, the 1950 Land Rent Control Act was never decreed in Chiang Mai. In 1974, farmers revived the call for the decree of the 1950 Act. For various reasons, the government instead decided to promulgate a new Land Rent Control Act at the end of 1974. I conclude with a close reading of the two different Acts. While the transformative possibilities engendered by the passage of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act soon exceeded the text of the law, I argue that embedded in its provisions was a radical reconfiguration of rural relations of power.

Demonstrations and the accusation of chaos

Among the newly politically-active groups emergent in the post-14 October 1973 landscape, farmers were one of the most quickly and radically mobilized. Over

the course of 1974, the farmers' stance towards the government shifted from one of a beseeching subject to a demanding one. This change was matched by a transformation of farmers from organized in relatively isolated, province- or district-based groups into a nation-wide network and national organization with many allies. Here I trace the demands made by farmers and the government responses to farmers as the protests that coalesced into the FFT progressed.[4] In so doing I aim to understand how we might critically understand the farmers' calls for radical action, and the fantastical and destined to fail promises of the central government.

On 1 March 1974, the first large-scale farmer protest took place when approximately 1000 farmers from the central region assembled on Sanam Luang in Bangkok. Citing the increasing price of basic necessities for living and agricultural production, the farmers called on the government to guarantee the price of paddy rice and take under consideration ways to help the farmers. Two months passed without any concrete action. In May 1974, hundreds of farmers from the central region returned to Bangkok. Citing rampant cheating at the hands of landlords and problems of indebtedness, they appealed again to the government for help (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 138).

In response, the PM Sanya government created the "Committee to Investigate the Problems of Indebted Farmers" (คณะกรรมการสอบสวนปัญหาหนี้สินของชาวนาชาวไร่) to

[4] Andrew Turton, sketching out the development of the farmers' movement in a 1978 essay, notes that "The documentation of the peasants movement 1974-1976 is still far from complete. Much information is contained in ephemeral publications of the time; in newspapers: including *Chao Na Thai, Prachachaat, Prachathipatai, Athipat, The Nation, Bangkok Post;* and periodicals *Caturat, Prachachaat Weekly, The Investor* (Bangkok)" (Turton 1978: 140n). I second Turton's claims here. In the overview that follows, I draw primarily on *Thai Rat* (ไทยรัฐ), a centrist Bangkok daily, *Athipat* (อธิปัตย์), the weekly newspaper of the National Student Center of Thailand (ศูนย์กลางนิสิตนักศึกษาแห่งประเทศไทย), Kanoksak Kaewthep's extensive writing about the FFT (1985, 2530 [1987], 2540 [1997], 2542 [1999]), Nitirat Sapsomboon's (2542 [1999]) timeline prepared for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the FFT, and David Morell and Chai-anan Samudavanija chapter on the farmers movement in their book, *Political Conflict in Thailand: reform, reaction, revolution* (1981). This is only a faint beginning.

examine the situation in the central provinces of Ang Thong, Phichit, Phitsanulok, Phetchabun, and Kamphaeng Phet. However, the Committee was not empowered to take any restorative action. The farmers continued pressuring the government.

As a result, on 4 June, PM Sanya Thammasak's government decided to decree Article 17 in order to give the Committee the power to take action to redress the farmers' grievances. First included in the 1959 Constitution under the dictatorial government of Sarit Thanarat, and included in the constitutions of subsequent military dictatorships, Article 17 provided for absolute, unchecked power. The Constitution containing the version of Article 17 deployed by Sanya to help the farmers remained from Thanom Kittikachorn's regime and was promulgated 15 December 1972.[5] Article 17 read as follows:

> During the enforcement of this Constitution, if the President of the Council of Ministers deems appropriate to prevent, repress or suppress any act subverting the security of the Kingdom, the Throne, national economy or affairs of State, or any act disturbing or threatening public order or good moral, or any act destroying national resources or deteriorating public health and sanitation, notwithstanding such act occurs before or after the day this Constitution comes into force, or occurs within or outside the Kingdom, the President of the Council or Ministers shall, by resolution of the Council of Ministers, be authorized to make any order or take any action accordingly, and such order or action as well as acts performed in compliance therewith shall be considered lawful (Office of the Juridical Council's Welfare Fund 2515 [1972]: 8).

In short, the decree of Article 17 permitted any action – and had the power to make any action legal. As Thak Chaloemtiarana (1979) notes, under Sarit, Article 17 was a dreaded measure used to legitimize the assassinations of hooligans, suspected communists, and other dissenting or criminal actors, among other things. In another political moment, Article 17 might have been used to quash the protests of the

[5] The promulgation of a new, democratic constitution was one of the primary demands of the 14 October 1973 protests. However, the new constitution was not promulgated until 7 October 1974.

farmers. Therefore, what did it mean that it was pressed into service seemingly *for* the farmers? The protection of national security and the maintenance of order were at the core of Article 17. There are many ways that this may have been understood in relation to the farmers' demands. A generous reading may be that farmers' continued subsistence was seen as essential to the national economy. It is also possible, recalling my discussion of hunger and counterinsurgency in the previous chapter, that empty farmer bellies raised concerns of dangers to national security and possible subversion. Similarly, there may have been concern that if the farmers continued protesting, then a threat to the maintenance of public order might have arisen. In this respect, the decree of Article 17 would have been a pre-emptive action intended to avert this possibility. It is, of course, impossible to discern the intentions behind the decree.

In name, the decree of Article 17 in this case meant that the Committee was "empowered to reallocate land and investigate grievances of landless farmers" and "given unprecedented authority to arrest and detain uncooperative land owners" (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 215). Yet arresting uncooperative landlords would require more than the decree of Article 17. Were this to happen, under Article 17 or a less extralegal instrument, it would have entailed a transformation of the concepts of justice, and who it was open to in Thailand. In practice, Article 17 failed to change the farmers' situation. At the most basic level, the Committee was fully overwhelmed with complaints: they received 10,999 petitions in the first month (June), and after that over 14,000 per month, for a total of 53,650 petitions by September 1974. They were only able to settle 1635 of these before the 6 October 1976 coup (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 216). Today the remaining petitions remain uninvestigated, and unresolved.

Given the ineffectualness of the Committee under Article 17, one interpretation might be that it was decreed for symbolic reasons. David Morell and Chai-anan

Samudavanija argue that the absolute measure was deployed out of "fear that the situation would get out of control. Conflicts between local land owners and the farmer-student groups were becoming heated. After decades of apparent rural political passivity, suddenly conflicts seemed to erupting everywhere at once" (1981: 215). Yet, if the measure was designed to pacify the farmers and their supporters, two farmer accounts from June 1974 suggest that it did not. Shortly after the decree of Article 17, *Athipat*, the weekly newspaper of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) carried a photograph of a male farmer plowing a rice field with a buffalo; the caption under the photo read: "What is Article 17? I don't know. I only know that right now the government is trying to use it as an instrument to help us. I don't know if it will help us or not. I only know that there are a lot of bad civil servants, and a lot of capitalists thick with money" (*Athipat* 12-18 June 2517 [1974]: 2).[6] Similarly, another farmer was quoted in *Thai Rat* newspaper in late June explaining why Article 17 would not work:

> We came to petition this time because we really had to. We came to ask for some help for farmers because farmers have never been those who destroy. On the contrary, capitalists are those who destroy. For example, they destroy the forests, they destroy the farmers. The farmers who ask for help are in distress because we are poor. In the past when we have asked for help from civil servants they have not wanted to help because we have nothing with which to reciprocate. But when the capitalists seek them out, they will help because the capitalists are wealthy, they give them ducks and chickens to eat" (*Thai Rat* 27 June 2517 [1974]: 2).[7]

---

[6] "ม. ๑๗ เป็นอะไร ผมไม่รู้ รู้แต่ว่าเวลานี้รัฐบาลกำลังใช้มันเป็นเครื่องมือช่วยเหลือพวกผมอยู่ จะช่วยได้หรือไม่ได้ผมก็ไม่รู้อีกเหมือนกันแหละ รู้แต่ว่าข้าราชการชั่วๆ มันมีเยอะ และนายทุนมันก็เงินหนาเสียด้วย"

[7] "ที่มาร้องเรียนนี้เพราะจำเป็นจริงๆ ขอให้ช่วยชาวนาบ้างเพราะตลอดเวลาที่ผ่านมาชาวนาไม่ใช่ผู้ทำลาย นายทุนต่างหากคือผู้ทำลาย เช่นทำลายป่า ทำลายชาวนา ชาวนาพึ่งใครก็ยากเพราะยากจน เวลาไปขอความช่วยเหลือจากข้าราชการก็ไม่อยากจะช่วยเพราะไม่มีสิ่งตอบแทน แต่พอนายทุนไปหากลับช่วยเพราะนายทุนรวยมีเป็ดไก่ให้กิน"

The farmers' accounts reflect the growing distrust many farmers felt towards the state, as well as their keen understanding of the relationships among some state officials, capitalists, landowners, and themselves. The alliance between some bureaucrats and capitalists was conceived here as starkly material. As I will take up later, the material and ideological came to intersect as the farmers' movement developed.

At the end of June 1974, approximately 10,000 farmers from eleven provinces traveled to Bangkok to protest. From 24 to 29 June, they remained assembled at Sanam Luang (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 138; Kanoksak 1985: 160). *Thai Rat* heralded the beginning of the protests with the headline "The backbone of the nation cries out" (25 June 2517 [1974]: 1).[8] During this protest, a group comprised of a farmer representative from each of the eleven attending provinces was appointed to meet with the government. At this time, they submitted the following six demands to the Prime Minister's office:

1. For the government to allocate land to troubled farmers in order to rent to subsist for this year. For the government to arrange for those farmers who once owned land to use their original land.
2. To establish a committee to investigate the loss of land by farmers. If the evidence indicates that the farmers were cheated by capitalists, for the government to seize the land and return it to the original owners.[9]
3. For the government to investigate the payment of interest in excess of the amount stipulated by the interest rate law; in cases where there has been overpayment, for the government to return it to each farmer involved. In addition, for the government to rent and buy land from capitalists for farmers to then rent and buy from the government at fair prices.
4. For the government to allocate permanent land for landless farmers, but not to allocate land that cannot be used.

[8] "กระดูกสันหลังร้อง"

[9] Although the Thai word used here is often translated as "capitalist" (นายทุน), including in this work, it also refers to creditors. At this time, one of the factors behind growing landlessness was the seizure of land by creditors.

5. For the capitalists to stop seizing land and transferring ownership of seized land, including all the land seized dating from the beginning of the protests.
6. For the capitalists to cease their legal cases (against farmers) that have arisen since the time Article 17 has been in use (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 138).[10]

Once they submitted their demands, the farmers vowed to remain at Sanam Luang until the government responded. They were joined and supported this time by a range of groups, including the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT), the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST), the People for Democracy Group (PDG), and the Hotel and Hostel Workers Union (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 217). By the second day of the protests, *Thai Rat* proclaimed that the farmers on Sanam Luang were "struggling for (their) life" (26 June 2517 [1974]: 1).[11] By the third day of the protest, *Thai Rat*'s language shifted, with a headline reading "Farmers from 11 provinces entered Bangkok and took over Sanam Luang to make 6 demands" (*Thai Rat* 27 June 2517 [1974]: 1).[12] This change turned into an explicit criticism of the farmers came on the fifth day of the protests, in which the headline "Deputy PM explains that the 'chaotic' farmers declare that they are not satisfied" was emblazoned

---

[10] ๑. ให้รัฐบาลจัดที่นาทำกินให้แก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ที่เดือดร้อนให้เช่าที่ทำกินในปีนี้ ส่วนในกรณีที่ชาวนาชาวไร่เคยมีกรรมสิทธิ์ในที่ดิน ให้ได้เข้าทำกินในที่ดินเดิม

๒. ให้ตั้งคณะกรรมการสอบสวนการสูญเสียที่ดินของชาวนาชาวไร่ ถ้าข้อเท็จจริงปรากฏว่าชาวนาชาวไร่ถูกนายทุนฉ้อฉลไป ให้รัฐบาลยึดที่ดินคืนให้แก่เจ้าของเดิม

๓. ให้รัฐบาลสอบสวนเกี่ยวกับการเสียดอกเบี้ยส่วนที่เกินจากกฎหมายคุ้มกับเงินต้นแล้วให้รัฐบาลดำเนินการคืนที่นั้นให้แก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ทุกราย นอกเหนือจากนี้ ให้รัฐบาลเช่าซื้อที่จากนายทุนมาให้ชาวนาชาวไร่เช่าซื่อจากรัฐบาลคืน ในราคาเป็นธรรม

๔. ให้รัฐบาลจัดสรรที่ดินถาวรให้แก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ที่ไม่มีที่ทำกิน แต่ทั้งนี้มิใช่จัดสรรในที่ดินทำประโยชน์แล้ว

๕. นับตั้งแต่การเริ่มร้องทุกข์ ครั้งแรกห้ามมิให้นายทุนเปลี่ยนกรรมสิทธิ์ในที่ดินให้แก่ผู้อื่น

๖. ขอให้นายทุนงดการฟ้องร้องต่อศาลนับตั้งแต่ใช้ มาตรา ๑๗

[11] "สู้เพื่อชีวิต"

[12] "ชาวนา ๑๑ จว. เข้ากรุงยึดสนามหลวงสู้เรียกร้อง ๖ ข้อ"

in large letters across the front page of the newspaper (*Thai Rat* 29 June 2517 [1974]: 1).[13]

Over the course of five days, the protesting farmers went from being "the backbone of the nation," to "chaotic," in the opinion of one widely-read centrist national newspaper. In the next two years, the accusation of creating chaos and unrest (ความวุ่นวาย) would emerge as a widespread justification for various kinds of violence; here I would suggest that its use signals the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable dissent. This protest marked the shift from farmers petitioning, or crying to the government for help, to demanding that the government take action. This shift itself indicated the social and political opening created by the transition from an authoritarian bureaucracy to a more democratic form of rule. In the eyes of Prakob Hutasingh, the Deputy PM, and perhaps others, this was going too far. In an October 1974 article for *Athipat*, Inson Buakiew, a prominent Socialist Party member and MP, observed that there were two kinds of responses to the nearly incessant protests and strikes in the first half of 1974: conservative and progressive. The conservatives (พวกอนุรักษ์นิยม) viewed the protests as indicating that "Everyday our homeland is exceedingly chaotic. This kind of feeling causes them to feel uneasy and to think all the time that if it is like this, it is better to give all the power to a military dictatorship, to deal with everything decisively and tidily" (Inson 2517 [1974]: 7).[14] In contrast, he argued that the progressives (พวกหัวกาวหน้า)

> have the consciousness of enthusiasts of democracy. When they read news about the strikes and protests of different groups, they feel very satisfied that there is haggling between different interest groups emerging in society. This is democracy in the spirit that we exchanged

---

[13] "รองนายกฯชี้แจงชาวนา 'อลเวง' ประกาศไม่พอใจ"

[14] "บ้านเมืองของเราทุกวันนี้ มันช่างวุ่นวายกันเหลือเกิน ความรู้สึกเช่นนี้ทำให้เขาไม่สบายใจและคิดในใจอยู่เสมอว่า ถ้าแบบนี้มอบอำนาจให้รัฐบาลเผด็จการทหารดีกว่า จัดการได้เด็ดขาดเรียบร้อยดี"

> our blood, flesh, and life for on 14 October 1973 (Inson 2517 [1974]: 7).[15]

While I will argue in this and the next chapters that the feelings and actions of many individuals during this period exceeded the formulation of two opposing groups postulated by Inson, his analysis is astute. Even if the actual experiences of many people could not be contained within these two categories, public debate was often posed in these two binary frames. Either one fully supported dissenting politics, or was wholly against it. Very little space was left for those located variously in-between. This lack of a middle ground had grave consequences over the next months and years.

The PM Sanya Thammasak government responded to the farmers' six demands with an executive order on 29 June. The executive order addressed the farmers' demands point-by-point:

1. The government will allocate land for troubled farmers in time for this year's planting season. The government will return land that was originally theirs. However, if that land is currently being used by someone else who has obtained it honestly and justly, it is not just to take it from them. In this case, the government will arrange for adjacent land for the farmers, or will buy land and arrange for farmers to rent-to-buy it within 1974. The Bank of Agriculture and Cooperatives will provide help.
2. For farmers who have been cheated out of their land by capitalists, the Committee established by Soh. Soh Roh 33/2517 [Note: This is the Committee to Investigate the Problems of Indebted Farmers.] will investigate and report the results of the investigation and action to the Prime Minister. This is not only limited to farmers who were cheated during agricultural year 1973, but applies to prior years as well.
3. In the investigation following section 5 of the aforementioned order, if farmers have been forced to pay interest in excess of that stipulated by the law, whether it is a monetary amount or in an amount of agricultural products, the government will examine and return the lost land to the farmers, or have the capitalists pay the appropriate reparations to the farmers.

---

[15] "มีจิตใจเป็นนักประชาธิปไตย เมื่ออ่านพบข่าวการหยุดงานประท้วงและการเดินขบวนของกลุ่มต่างๆ แล้วก็จะมีความรู้สึกพอใจอย่างยิ่งที่ได้มีการต่อรองกันระหว่างกลุ่มผลประโยชน์ต่างๆ เกิดขึ้นในสังคม เป็นประชาธิปไตยตามเจตนารมย์ที่เราได้มีการแลกมาด้วยเลือดเนื้อ และชีวิตเมื่อวันที่ ๑๔ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๖"

4. If the landowners have changed, or tried to change, or transferred land ownership for land that is under dispute during this investigation, the Committee is able to issue an order to halt their action, and can propose that the PM examine and direct further action.
5. The government will allocate permanent land in the form of cooperatives to landless farmers. The government will not allocate land that is already farmed.
6. The government will halt ongoing disputes between farmers who think they have a right to and are using the land belonging to other people through a misunderstanding and the other parties. The government will not arrest or bring charges against the farmers. For those farmers already being prosecuted, the government will halt the prosecution (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 138-139).[16]

As a document, the executive order was remarkable as a gesture of the Prime Minister's intention to resolving the farmers' problems. However, implementation of its promises was fraught with difficulty. To begin with, although the Bangkok-based PM's office made the promises, they had to be carried out by provincial, district, sub-

---

[16] ๑. รัฐบาลจะได้จัดสรรที่ดินทำกินให้ชาวนาชาวไร่ที่เดือดร้อนในฤดูทำนาปีนี้ โดยจะให้ได้ทำกินในที่ดินที่เคยมีกรรมสิทธิ์อยู่เดิม แต่ถ้าในที่ดินเดิมนั้น มีผู้ทำกินอยู่แล้วโดยสุจริตและชอบธรรม จะไปเอาของเขามาก็ไม่ชอบธรรม รํฐบาลก็จะจัดที่ดินที่ใกล้เคียงให้ หรือจะจัดซื้อที่ดินจากเจ้าของที่ดินมาจัดสรรให้เช่าซื้อไปทันฤดูกาลปี ๑๕๑๗ โดยจะให้ธกส. ช่วยเหลือ

๒. หากชาวนาชาวไร่ผู้ได้ถูกนายทุนฉ้อโกงที่ดินไปรัฐบาลจะจัดการตามคำสั่งที่ สสร. ๓๓/๑๕๑๗ โดยให้คณะกรรมการรายงานผลสอบส่วนต่อนายกรัฐมนตรีโดยด่วน ทั้งนี้ ไม่เฉพาะชาวนาที่เคยทำประโยชน์ในที่ดินในปี ๒๕๑๖ แต่ร่วมถึงปีก่อนๆ ด้วย

๓. ในการสอบสวนตามข้อ ๕ ของคำสั่งดังกล่าว หากชาวนาต้องเสียดอกเบี้ยเกินจากอัตราที่กฎหมายกำหนดไว้ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นเงินหรือราคาของผลผลิต รัฐบาลจะพิจารณาให้คืนที่ดินแก่ชาวนาก็ได้ หรือให้นายทุนชดใช้ค่าเสียหายแก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ตามควรก็ได้

๔. หากเจ้าของที่ดินกระทำการหรือพยายามกระทำการเปลี่ยนแปลง หรือโอนกรรมสิทธิ์ที่พิพาทในระหว่างการร้องทุกข์สอบสวนนี้ คณะกรรมการสามารถออกคำสั่งยับยั้งการกระทำนั้น และเสนอให้นายกรัฐมนตรีพิจารณาสั่งต่อไป

๕. รัฐบาลจะจัดสรรที่ดินถาวรให้แก่ชาวนาที่ไม่มีที่ทำกินในรูปสหกรณ์ แต่จะไปจัดทับที่ชาวนาชาวไร่อื่นที่เขาทำกินอยู่แล้วมิได้

๖. ชาวนาผู้ที่เข้าไปทำนาทำไร่ในที่ของผู้อื่นด้วยความเข้าใจผิดว่ามีสิทธิ์ และพิพาทกันอยู่นั้น รัฐบาลจะระงับข้อพิพาทโดยไม่มีการจับกุมคุมขังหรือฟ้องร้อง ถ้ามีการฟ้องร้องแล้วก็จะให้ระงับการฟ้องร้องนั้นเสีย"

district, and village officials who "were reluctant to carry out such unprecedented orders; and either overtly or covertly, they refused to do so" (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 218). Recalling the critiques of the farmers regarding the (in)effectiveness of Article 17 at the hands of civil servants, I would suggest that officials may have had enticements from landowners and capitalists which deepened their reluctance.

In addition, the PM's office and the (expanded, as of this order) Committee to Investigate the Problems of Indebted Farmers lacked the authority to back up the promises made. This functioned to in effect make the promises empty. For example, although the third item promised that the farmers who lost their land due to paying excessive interest would be compensated, there was no stipulation of who will determine the amount and form of compensation. The fifth item, which promised the distribution of land to landless farmers was impossible without an official land reform policy which was not passed until 1975.[17] As regards the unjust transfer of landownership mentioned in the fourth item, "the government in fact had no legal authority to stop citizens from transferring their land ownership rights to others. To do this, a special act of the National Assembly would be required" (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 218).

Given the emptiness of the promises, then why did the Sanya government make them? Morell and Chai-anan repeat their analysis of the decree of Article 17 and argue that at this time the "government had yielded to the farmers' demands out of fear that the students, farmers, and workers would join forces to create more trouble" (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 218). What was the content of this *trouble*, and why might the Sanya government been afraid? Perhaps the influx of *chaotic* actors into the city of Bangkok, bringing chaos (as cited by the Deputy PM) was trouble. Perhaps the fear of the loss of the support of the landowners and other capitalists, and the ducks

[17] The Land Reform Act was passed on 17 January 1975.

and chickens they provided to fill the bellies of willing civil servants was trouble. But perhaps it was not their own empty bellies which were a cause for concern, but, recalling Chapter 1, those of disenfranchised, troubled rural people. The fear of what they might do, when hungry, when hopeless, when angry, when united with students and workers, was never far from the minds of state officials, landowners, and other conservative forces.

Fears of liberation and the establishment of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand

These unspeakable fears of revolution may have seemed to be coming true only a little more than a month later. On 9 August 1974, farmers from nine provinces returned to Bangkok. Critical of the lack of concrete changes in their situation since the 29 June executive order, they held a public debate at Sanam Luang. At its conclusion, they held up their citizen ID cards and proclaimed "This is the last time that we have come to ask for help from the government. If we don't receive justice, we will turn in our citizen ID cards and resign our citizenship" (quoted in Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 139).[18] In response, the Deputy PM, Prakob Hutasingh, accused the farmers of being selfish and falling prey to instigators (*Athipat* 4-10 September 2517 [1974]: 2). Facing a lack of government action, they promised to " …live in a liberated area of their own and refuse to pay taxes" (*Thai Niu* 2 September 2517 [1974]: 3).[19] The phrase "liberated area" (เขตปลดปล่อย) explicitly referenced the Communist Party of Thailand, which divided the country into liberated areas and those still under Thai government control. This claim by the farmers was a powerful threat, but one, not unlike the promises of the government, that was empty. Although unrealized, the

---

[18] "การมาครั้งนี้เป็นการขอความช่วยเหลือจากรัฐบาลครั้งสุดท้าย ถ้ายังไม่ได้รับความเป็นธรรม จะคืนบัตรประชาชนลาออกจากการเป็นราษฎร"

[19] "อยู่ในเขตปลดปล่อยของตนไม่ยอมเสียภาษี"

claim and the responses it provoked reveal and refract anxieties about the body of the Thai nation, the specter of communism, and the return of farmer revolt.

Between August and November 1974, farmers organized protests at many different district and provincial offices across the country. By September, a group of northern farmers had organized themselves into a group (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 139). The district and provincial protests were not intended to only *support* the protests in Bangkok. Instead, as I explicate in the next section, farmer activists frequently protested the central and provincial governments simultaneously, using the tensions between them as a lever.

The protests continued to grow in size and range over the next few months and culminated in a large, extended protest between 19 and 29 November 1974. In Bangkok, approximately 1200 farmers, including representatives from twenty-three provinces assembled on Sanam Luang. In Chiang Mai, approximately 2000 farmers massed at the Chiang Mai provincial building (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 139). Heralding the farmers' arrival in Bangkok, one daily newspaper reported that "Farmers enter the beautiful city in successive groups '(We) cannot depend on anyone else'" (*Thai Rat* 20 November 2517 [1974]: 1).[20] On 19 November, the assembled representatives in Bangkok decided to form the Farmers' Federation of Thailand.

On 19 November, the fledgling FFT submitted nine demands to the government. They were as follows:

1. For the government to allocate land to landless farmers in time for this year's rice-growing season.
2. For the government to create a committee to investigate the loss of land by farmers who were cheated by capitalists. In the event that there is a legal case between farmers and capitalists, the government should arrange for collateral for farmers who do not have resources.

[20] "ชาวนาทยอยเข้ากรุงคราญ 'พึ่งใครไม่ได้'"

3. For the government to allocate permanent land to landless farmers.
4. For the government to pass a law limiting the amount of land ownership. In Isan, to possess ownership of no more than 100 rai. For other regions, to possess ownership of no more than 50 rai.
5. For the government to decree the use of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act and set the rental period at six years. As regards the new Land Rent Control Act, the farmers will compose the draft for government review.
6. In the case of creditors who will allow farmers to redeem the land, the government should provide the entire amount and bring the land back to the farmers, so that they can buy, rent, or lease-to-buy the land, at a just price.
7. In the case of farmers who have occupied public land for at least ten years, to give farmers proof of ownership for that land.
8. In the case of government projects that have created loss or troubles for farmers, and the majority of troubled farmers do not agree (with the government), the government should stop the project. For example, the case of the project to build the dam in Udon Thani province.
9. For the government to guarantee the price of paddy rice to not less than 3000 baht per kwian[21] (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 140).[22]

As the farmers waited for a response from the government, the size of the protests grew. By 28 November, tens of thousands of fliers had been passed out across

---

[21] 1 kwian = approximately 2000 litres.

[22] ๑. ให้รัฐบาลจัดที่นาทำกินให้แก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ที่ไม่มีที่ดินทำกินทันฤดูกาลทำนาปีนี้

๒. ให้รัฐบาลตั้งกรรมการสอบสวนการสูญเสียที่ดินของชาวนาที่ถูกนายทุนฉ้อฉลไป ในกรณีที่เกิดคดีความระหว่างชาวนากับนายทุน ให้รัฐบาลจัดหาหลักประกันให้ชาวนาที่ไม่มีหลักทรัพย์

๓. ให้รัฐบาลจัดสรรที่ดินทำกินถาวรให้แก่ชาวนาชาวไร่ที่ไม่มีที่ดินทำกิน

๔. ให้รัฐบาลจัดการออกกฎหมายจำกัดการถือครองที่ดิน โดยภาคอีสานมีสิทธิ์ครอบครองไม่เกิน ๑๐๐ ไร่ ส่วนภาคอื่น ๆ มีสิทธิ์ครอบครองที่ดินไม่เกิน ๕๐ ไร่

๕. ให้รัฐบาลประกาศใช้พระราชบัญญัติควบคุมค่าเช่านา ปี ๒๔๙๓ และกำหนดระยะเวลาเช่า ๖ ปี ส่วนพ.ร.บ. ค่าเช่านาฉบับใหม่ให้ยับยั้งไว้ โดยชาวนาจะร่วมกันร่างเสนอให้รัฐบาลพิจารณา

๖.ในกรณีที่นายทุนให้ชาวนาไปถอนที่ดินคืน ให้รัฐบาลออกเงินไถ่ถอนที่ดินนั้นทั้งหมดแล้ว นำมาคืนให้แก่ชาวนา เพื่อซื้อหรือให้เช่าหรือเช่าซื้อในราคายุติธรรม

๗. ในกรณีที่ชาวนาได้เข้าครอบครองที่สาธารณะมาเป็นเวลาตั้งแต่ ๑๐ ปีขึ้นไปให้ชาวนาได้กรรมสิทธิ์ในที่ดินนั้น

๘. ในกรณีที่โครงการของรัฐบาลจะก่อให้เกิดความเสียหายเดือดร้อนต่อชาวนา และชาวนาที่เดือดร้อนส่วนใหญ่ไม่เห็นด้วย ให้รัฐบาลระงับโครงการนั้น เช่น ในกรณีโครงการสร้างเขื่อนที่จังหวัดอุดรธานี

๙. ให้รัฐบาลประกันราคาข้าวเปลือกไม่ต่ำกว่า เกวียนละ ๓,๐๐๐ บาท

Bangkok, calling for support of the farmers' demands (*Thai Rat* 28 November 2517 [1974]: 12). On 29 November, the protests swelled to over 8000 people, as the farmers were joined by Buddhist monks and nuns, students, workers, and others (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 140; *Thai Rat* 30 November 2517 [1974]: 1, 2, 16).[23] This was the first time that monks had ever joined a political protest *as monks* (Kanoksak 1985: 160). Their presence on Sanam Luang caused a small uproar, and by early December there were protests both critical of the monks, and in support of them.

At 10:49 a.m. on the 29th, the government replied to the demands of the FFT with the following eight-point response:

1. The provinces will allocate land to landless farmers to use during the 1975 rice planting season.
2. The provinces will make public the results of the investigations into land issues, and whether or not capitalists acquired land in just ways. If the results of the investigation raise doubts, a group of an equal number of representatives of farmers, students, and civil servants will consider whether or not it is appropriate to launch a new investigation.
3. Permanent land will be allocated to landless farmers in the form of cooperative land.
4. Collateral for farmers who do not have resources will be arranged. In the case of accusations of trespassing by farmers, the state will appoint lawyers for the farmers and will help determine a value that is appropriate for the situation.
5. If the Parliament does not pass the (new) Land Rent Control Act proposed by the government by December 1974, the government will promulgate the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces before the end of December.
6. The government will help purchase back land that farmers pawned or mortgaged to capitalists who are willing to sell it back. Help will be provided by the Agriculture and Cooperatives Bank in an amount not exceeding 40,000 baht per case.
7. The government will revoke the land title and Noh. Soh. 3 for land in Dong Rai Fon, Dong Phayayang, Saraburi district, Chainat province. An investigation revealed that powerful people produced

[23] One of the monks at Wat Dusidaram in Thonburi who had joined the protests was removed from the temple; on 1 December, students and monks marched to the temple in protest of his removal (Kraiyudht 1975: 39).

documents of rights to public land. Further, the government will give this land to the farmers who had farmed this land before, along with giving them documents of right, and the harvest from the crops they planted.

8. The government will consider stopping projects that cause the majority of citizens' troubles. If the government is unable to stop the project, the state will pay compensation for (affected) land at a just price. For compensation already paid, if the majority of the compensation was not just, the state will give more. If farmers are unable to find new land, the state will find adjacent land for them (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 140-141).[24]

Following the government's reply to their demands, the farmers and their supporters dispersed and left Sanam Luang. Although the government responded positively to many of the farmers' demands, what may seem initially like concessions emerge as less so upon closer examination. Morell and Chai-anan assert that the government was already in contact with the Lawyers' Association of Thailand to give legal counsel to farmers. They further note that the first demand of the farmers, for land for landless

---

[24] ๑. ให้จังหวัดจัดการหาที่ทำกินให้ชาวนาที่ไม่มีที่ทำกินให้ทำในฤดูทำนาปี ๒๕๑๘

๒. ให้จังหวัดการประกาศผลสอบสวนเรื่องที่ดินว่า นายทุนได้ที่ดินมาโดยชอบธรรมหรือไม่ หากผลสอบสวนรายใดเป็นที่ข้องใจ จะให้ตัวแทนชาวนาชาวไร่ นักศึกษาและเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐมีจำนวนเท่ากันเข้าร่วมพิจารณาว่าสมควรจะมีการสอบสวนใหม่หรือไม่

๓. จะจัดสรรที่ดินถาวรให้ชาวนาที่ไม่มีที่ดินทำกินในรูปของสหกรณ์

๔. จะจัดหาหลักประกันให้ชาวนาที่ไม่มีหลักทรัพย์ในการประกันตัว ในข้อหาบุกรุกรัฐจะจัดหาทนายความในการต่อสู้คดี และช่วยออกค่าว่าความให้ตามควรแก่กรณี

๕. หากรัฐสภาไม่ผ่านพ.ร.บ. ควบคุมค่าเช่านาที่รัฐบาลเสนอภายในธค. ๒๕๑๘ รัฐบาลจะประกาศใช้ พ.ร.บ. ควบคุมค่าเช่านาปี ๒๔๙๓ ที่จังหวัดเชียงใหม่และลำพูนก่อนสิ้นเดือนธค.นี้

๖. รัฐจะช่วยไถ่ถอนที่ดินที่ชาวนาขายฝากหรือจำนองกับนายทุนที่ยินยอมให้มีการไถ่ถอนโดยการช่วยเหลือธกส. ในวงเงินไม่เกินรายละ ๔ หมื่นบาท

๗. รัฐบาลจะเพิกถอนโฉนดและนส.๓ที่ดิน ที่ดงไร่ฝน ดงพญายาง อ.สระบุรี จ.ชัยนาท ซึ่งงสอบสวนได้ความว่าผู้มีอำนาจได้ออกเอกสารสิทธิ์ทับที่สาธารณะ แล้วนำที่ดินมาให้ชาวนาที่ครอบครองอยู่ก่อน ร่วมทั้งออกเอกสารสิทธิ์ให้และให้เก็บเกี่ยวพืชผลที่ชาวนาชาวไร่ปลูกได้ด้วย

๘. รัฐบาลจะพิจารณาระงับโครงการที่ทำให้ประชาชนส่วนใหญ่เดือดร้อน หากไม่สามารถรังับได้ รัฐจะจ่ายค่าทดแทนที่ดินให้ตามราคาที่เป็นธรรม ถ้าเงินทดแทนส่วนใหญ่ไม่เป็นธรรม ก็จะเพิ่มให้ และหากชาวนาไม่สามารถหาที่ดินใหม่ได้ รัฐบาลก็จะหาที่ใกล้เคียงให้

farmers in time for the 1974 rice-planting season was the only one that the government could not resolve (1981: 221). Rice is typically planted between May and August, and harvested between October and January. Therefore the government literally could not meet the demand for the 1974 calendar year. Kanoksak Kaewthep (1985) argues that the most significant benefit of the protest was to put FFT members onto the Committee to Investigate the Problems of Indebted Farmers in each province. This was significant because farmers became a decision-making presence at the official problem-solving table, rather than only subject to decisions made at it.

As regards land rent issues, the government kept its promise and passed a new Land Rent Control Act on 16 December 1974 (*Ratchakitchanubeksa*, Vol. 91, Part 215, 16 December 2517 [1974], Pages 591-607). As I explore later in this chapter, for the farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun primarily targeted by this action, the passage of the Act was only the beginning of a much more protracted struggle among farmers and their allies, landowners, and state officials. Within the context of this struggle, the political and historical importance of the FFT is starkly visible.

Further, in considering the farmers' protests at the end of November 1974, I want to stress that rather than any of the government promises, the establishment of the FFT was the most important outcome. Addressing the formation of the FFT, Phinit Jarusombat, the vice secretary of the NSCT, explained that

> The farmers have come together to struggle this time because they have experienced a lot of troubles. But as for the government, they don't pay attention to them or think about ways to help them at all. This is because the government doesn't understand the real lives of the farmers, the people who carry the sickle (*Thai Rat* 28 November 2517 [1974]: 12).[25]

---

[25] "ชาวนามาร่วมกลุมกันต่อสู้ครั้งนี้ก็เพราะได้รับความเดือดร้อนอย่างมาก แต่ทางรัฐบาลกลับไม่เหลียวแลหรือคิดหาทางที่จะช่วยเหลือเลย เพราะรัฐบาลไม่รู้ถึงชาติแท้ของชาวนาผู้ถือเคียว"

The FFT was established with Chai Wangtrakul, a farmer from the central region, as the president, and six regional vice-presidents, including Intha Sribunruang as the northern vice president, Daeng Hundee as the northeastern vice president, Wichai Phikulkhaw as the central vice president, and Chamrat Muangyam as the eastern vice president (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 140). Organizing itself in parallel to the state administrative structure, the FFT organized itself with regional, provincial, district, sub-district and village levels. At each level, the governing structures were composed of member-elected representatives (Turton 1982: 35). Members were required to pay a 4 baht yearly membership fee; this fee was used to fund the FFT's activities (Kanoksak 2530 [1987]: 87).

In addition to paying the fee, FFT members were encouraged to attend FFT protests and other activities whenever possible (Kanoksak 2530 [1987]: 87). By supporting each others' struggles and being visible in the streets of Bangkok and in front of provincial offices across the country, leaders and members of the FFT hoped to improve the lives of Thai farmers. Their specific goals were: "1. To protect the farmers' interests; 2. To mitigate the farmers' troubles and hardships; 3. To educate the farmers in the Land Rent Control Act of 1974" (Karunan 1984: 48).

Between November 1974 and the 6 October 1976 coup which halted its work (as the FFT, at least), the FFT raised the issues of various kinds of farmers from all different regions. As for the composition of the FFT, one estimate suggests that 60% of the farmers were poor farmers, including many tenants, 20% were landless workers, and 20% were slightly better off farmers, some perhaps owning a small amount of land (Turton et al. 1987: 38). Andrew Turton divides the concerns taken up by the FFT into a range of categories:

> Some were demands for immediate action, such as grants of land for the coming planting season, price regulation, reduction of farm rents, suspension of court cases involving farmers, release of those arrested

> for trespass, and help for flood victims. Others were longer-term demands, such as those for land reform and permanent provision of land to the landless, and a solution to the problems of indebtedness and high interest rates. Some demands were more immediately political, such as the lifting of martial law in the outlying provinces, which prevented farmers from demonstrating. Over time, the demands escalated which seems to indicate a growing political consciousness and perhaps confidence (1982: 34).

He then clarifies the significance of this range of actions by asserting that the FFT "spoke for the rural poor, the landless, those with smallholdings, tenants, and in a wider sense for all those who experienced injustice and denial of democratic freedoms. In other words, it claimed to speak for the majority of the rural population" (Turton 1982: 35). Ascertaining whether or not the FFT really spoke for "the majority of the rural population" is impossible, but there is widespread evidence of the significant effects of the FFT on rural peoples' lives, consciousness, and concrete political power.

The sheer size of the Federation indicates the breadth of its significance. Between November 1974 and the October 1976 coup, the FFT established a presence in forty-one of Thailand's seventy-two provinces. During the same period, the FFT was estimated to have 1.5 million members nationwide (Witayakorn 1983: 181). The FFT grew particularly rapidly in the three northern provinces of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang and was headquartered in Chiang Mai (Morell and Chai-anan 1981). In Chiang Mai province alone, the FFT had branches in every district, and was reported to have over 100,000 members (Turton 1978: 122). I turn now to Chiang Mai, and how the struggle over land rent and growth of the farmers' movement became mutually constitutive in 1974.

Foregrounding land tenancy

Although the region with the highest rate of land tenancy has historically been the central region (Witayakorn 1983), the rate of tenancy in the lowland river valley

around the Ping River in Chiang Mai province was very high during the 1970s. In 1973, 39.27% of agricultural land was tenant-occupied in the Central Plains, 15.74% was tenant-occupied in the North, 4.42% in the South, and 3.27% in Isan. Within the Northern region, Chiang Mai had the highest rate of tenancy in 1973 -- 35.13% (353, 221 rai) of the total agricultural land (1,005,468 rai) was tenant-occupied (Kroekkiat 2521 [1978]: 416). Figures for 1976 indicated a similar rate of tenancy in Chiang Mai province, but put it in different terms: out of 139,556 farming families in Chiang Mai province, 39.42%, or 54,225 families, rented their land (Kroekkiat 2521 [1978]: 420).

However, within the number of total tenants, determining the precise number of farming families paying high and unjust rents, and in what amounts, is nearly impossible. Rental agreements were often verbal, and there is not even a comprehensive record of all of the landlords who let land – whether they were large, Chiang Mai-based landowners such as those discussed in the previous chapter, absentee landlords, or family members or neighbors.

Although many have pointed out that the high rate of land tenancy contributed to the rapid growth of the FFT in Chiang Mai (Anan 1984: 363; Bowie 1997: 102), others have suggested that tenancy was only one factor among many, including "increasing commercialization of agriculture, in conjunction with limited alternative sources of earnings, low incomes" (Ramsay 1982: 1080) that led to the growth of the farmers' movement. Further, there were many other important struggles ongoing in Chiang Mai and the neighboring provinces of Lamphun and Lampang at this time. Not least among these were the Mae Liang mine dispute and many conflicts over forestry use.[26]

---

[26] I am indebted to John Dennis for this critique. His M.A. thesis (Dennis 1982) contains the best English-language account of the Mae Liang mine dispute.

Therefore, rather than arguing for a direct connection between the number of tenant farmers facing unjust conditions in Chiang Mai and the importance of the political action they took around land rent control, I want to offer a different optic on the significance of the land rent control struggles. On the surface, the struggle was about the amount of rice or money paid as rent. Yet this material struggle signaled a much deeper symbolic transformation. In the remainder of this chapter and in the next, I will trace how the new relations and subjects of law which emerged through contention over land rent in northern Thailand. The land rent struggles reconfigured the relations among tenant farmers, landowners, and the various state officials, students, and others who stood with and against them. Further, the struggles over land rent in Chiang Mai between 1974 and 1976 witnessed the development of new kinds of farmer and student activist subjects, brought farmers and their allies into direct confrontation with landowners and different Thai state actors, and challenged everyone involved -- including farmers, students, lawyers, landowners, bureaucrats, elected officials, newspaper editorialists, and right-wing actors -- to comprehend the new kinds of subjects and their actions.

You will recall that the fifth demand of the FFT during the 19 November 1974 protests was "For the government to promulgate the use of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act and set the rental period at six years. The government should defer the new version of the Act so that the farmers can draft a proposal [for the Act] for the government to consider." The government responded with the promise that if the new Act was not passed by December, then they would decree the 1950 Act for use in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces. The government did promulgate the new Act in December 1974, therefore bypassing the addition of farmers' inputs into the new Act. I begin here by examining the protests in Chiang Mai behind the fifth demand. As farmers from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang came into Chiang Mai city, their

actions were variously scrutinized, belittled, and critiqued. Simultaneously, their actions prompted unease among government officials, landowners and some observers.

Beyond the edge of hope in Chiang Mai

Approximately one month after the first set of farmer demands were issued in Bangkok, and amidst growing protests across the country, on 20 July 1974, the Deputy Minister of Interior, Police Lieutenant General Chumphon Lohachalah, sent each governor and district officer an urgent document urging them to solve the troubles (เดือดร้อน) of the farmers locally. In his words, "local problems should be dispensed with and solved, they shouldn't be solved by the center giving orders" (*Thai Niu* 20 July 2517 [1974]: 3).[27] Although Chumpon's words may be read as an early call for decentralization before structural adjustment made it in vogue, given the tensions I recounted in the last sections when the farmers came into Bangkok, I suggest that they must also be read as a request to keep the farmers out of Bangkok. After all, if farmers' problems could be resolved by district or provincial officials, then they might not feel compelled to travel to the capital. The presence of farmers in the city represented a crisis which had to be addressed. In addition, their presence enacted and represented a growing displacement. What I suggest was displaced was the former status quo, where farmers, as the backbone of the nation, performed an important political role as producers of food in 1950s-era counterinsurgency rhetoric. Despite their essential role, within this rhetoric, farmers were not imagined to be political themselves. By 1974, their presence in the streets confirmed their irrefutable status as political, and politicized, public actors.

---

[27] "ปัญหาในท้องที่ควรจะแก้ไข ให้ลุล่วงไปได้ ไม่จำต้องให้ส่วนกลางสั่งการ"

The next day, *Thai Niu*, a conservative, in Inson Buakiew's terms, Chiang Mai daily newspaper, ran an editorial in response to the communiqué from the Ministry of Interior. The unnamed author began by cautioning that although the problems between farmers and capitalists in other provinces were also present in Chiang Mai, the severity of drought in the north might further deepen the tensions. The author noted that even though they did not have enough water, the farmers had not started protesting – *yet*. The author urged state officials to help the farmers because "farmers who have lost hope might protest for their livelihood, this could arise one of these days" (*Thai Niu* 21 June 2517 [1974]: 3).[28] What was at stake for this author was not the sheer presence of farmers en masse in the city, but the *meaning* of that presence. In addition, in this the moment, hunger again became political. While in the 1950s, preventing hunger was an important anti-Communist measure, here hunger was posed as the possible catalyst of protest. However it is not only hunger that is critical here, but hope. *Hope* and the possibility of *help* from the government were continuously intertwined in the language used by farmers as well as those writing about them. Farmers hoped that the state would help them. When farmers lost hope, then they protested. Or so the narrative went. Yet not unlike the use of natural causes to explain farmer revolt, the emphasis on *hope* is problematic. Like natural disasters, the reference to losing hope in government action as the reason why farmers protested places the impetus for farmers' actions with someone other than farmers themselves. In other words, it elides the possibility that farmers chose to protest because they saw it as a productive way to attain their demands. Yet, to think again about the constitution of politics, this emphasis on *hope* and *fear* also refuses the idea of farmers as *political* actors.

---

[28] "ชาวนาที่หมดหวังอาจจะเคลื่อนไหวเพื่อปากท้องของคนขึ้นมาวันหนึ่งวันใดก็ได้"

The editorial author asked the governor and district officers to inspect all rice-growing areas immediately and to provide every kind of help possible to the farmers. They should use all of their power and resources because, the editorialist warned,

> It is uncertain how much longer they can endure. It is certain that now they are troubled. The severe farmer threat has come to many areas already. They are waiting, to see how the homeland is going to come help them. And when, or if, they will be abandoned to march in the city (*Thai Niu* 21 June 2517 [1974]: 3).[29]

For this writer, farmers were perpetually waiting, or so s/he hoped. It was not only farmers who were locked into a particular kind of role, but as the reference to "abandonment," indicates, those within the state or outside it who might come to their aid. In this case, the word used by the author for city was *muang* (เมือง), which could refer to Chiang Mai city, not only Bangkok. The "farmer threat" was not specified further – but it seems to be constituted by the presence of protesting farmers in the city. At times, such as reflecting on this editorial, ensuring that the farmers remained hopeful seemed to be as important, if not more, as changing the material conditions of their lives. While the editorial was unsigned and there was no indication of the author's position, I am going to caution a guess that s/he represented conservative interests, either within the state or landholding interests. Although the editorial began with a discussion of the threat the drought posed to farmers' lives, it closed with the re-writing of *farmers* as the threat. The object of this threat was left unsaid.

A few months later, exhausted of hope, the farmers did march in Chiang Mai city. In the late morning of 5 November 1974, a group of farmers assembled in Sanpakoi sub-district and marched to Tha Pae gate in Chiang Mai city. By the afternoon, they had been joined by farmers from every district in Chiang Mai and

---

[29] "ไม่แน่นอนว่าจะยืดเยื้อยาวนานออกไปอีกนานเท่าใด ที่แน่นอนก็คือขณะนี้ความเดือดร้อน ได้คุกคามชาวนาหนักหน่วงอยู่หลายท้องที่แล้ว พวกเขากำลังรอคอยอยู่ ว่าทางการบ้านเมืองจะยื่นมือมาช่วยเหลือเขาอย่างไร และเมื่อใดหรือจะปล่อยให้พวกเขาต้องเดินขบวนมาในเมือง"

Lamphun provinces. At this time the farmers called for the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. The headline of an article describing the protests noted that the farmers "Call for government to deal with the capitalists" (*Thai Niu* 7 November 2517 [1974]: 1).[30] Farmers "came to protest together to call for the government to decree the Land Rent Control Act because every day they suffer at the hands of the capitalists until they cannot take it anymore" (*Thai Niu* 7 November 2517 [1974]: 1).[31] The farmers justified their demand by nothing that the act had been in use in the central provinces for over twenty years.

The article reporting on their protest contained a puzzling reference in the article to an unknown, outside agitator as the force behind the protest. Without revealing the name of the source, the author noted that, "a representative of the farmers made public to the people assembled that the reason they assembled this time is that someone named 'Sant Seni,' who no one knows, sent the letter to incite people to assemble this time" (*Thai Niu* 7 November 2517 [1974]: 12).[32] This assertion raises a number of important, recurring questions. The accusation that an "agitator" (นักปลุกระดม) from outside was involved in any given protest was a frequent one in the coming months. After the establishment of the FFT and various student groups who worked in alliance with the farmers, student and farmer activists were frequently labeled agitators or instigators. Let's consider the designation of *outside*, or in this case, *someone who is not known*. This presumes that the group in question is wholly bounded and that each member fully knows each other member. This is rarely the

---

[30] "ตัวแทนชาวนาทุกอำเภอเชียงใหม่ลำพูนชุมนุมกลางเมือง เรียกร้องรัฐบาลจัดการกับนายทุน"

[31] "ร่วมชุมนุมเรียกร้องให้รัฐบาลประกาศใช้กฎหมายควบคุมค่าเช่านาเพราะทุกวันนี้ถูกนายทุนกดขี่จนทนไม่ไหวแล้ว"

[32] "ตัวแทนชาวนาได้เปิดเผยว่าการที่พวกเขามาชุมนุมกันครั้งนี้ ได้มี่คนชื่อ 'สันต์ เสนีย์' ซึ่งไม่มีใครทราบว่าบุคคลผู้นี้เป็นใครได้เป็นคนส่งจดหมาย ยุยงให้มีการชุมนุมขึ้นครั้งนี้"

case, and even more unlikely in a group as large and dispersed as farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces. Further, if an individual was unknown to all farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces, how could s/he send a letter to all or some of them? I would caution that in the unlikely event that this was the case, the only entity capable of doing so one would be one of the branches of the Thai state security forces.

In a far more significant sense, I suggest that this also may be read as an attempt to delegitimize the farmers' protest and their call for justice. The idea that poor rural farmers could choose to protest, and to challenge landowners and the state, seemed at times inconceivable to their critics. While I am not interested in denying that there may have been Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) or other forces aiding in the protests, it is important to also consider that the farmers may have chosen to protest. Even if a Communist organizer was involved, the farmers still *chose* to go out into the streets.[33]

Two days later, *Thai Niu* ran an unsigned editorial about the farmers' protest entitled "The lament of the farmers" (*Thai Niu* 9 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[34] The author began by recapping the actions of the farmers, and then noted that they were forced to protest because the government could not help them because "the capitalist side stood firm."[35] Sidestepping the issue of the at-times cozy relations between some state officials and some landowners, the author noted that "The homeland couldn't help them, since there was no law from which to derive power."[36] For this reason, the farmers came together to come up with a solution together and decided to call for the use of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. The logic

---

[33] Although I feel compelled to note possible CPT action, I would contend that it came later in the farmers' struggle. It seems unlikely that the CPT would be interested in land tenancy reform at the level of law.

[34] "เสียงเพรียกของชาวนา"

[35] "ฝ่ายนายทุนยืนกราน"

[36] "และทางการบ้านเมืองช่วยอะไรไม่ได้เนื่องจากไม่มีกฎหมายใดให้อำนาจเอาไว้"

behind this was “in order to give the civil servants of the homeland an instrument to use and a way for the tenant farmers to appeal to land owners, in order to create some justice.”[37] The law here is imagined as a lever to force a change, at least officially, in the relationships between landlords and tenant farmers, as well as their interlocutors, civil servants. As became clear, the implementation of land rent control measures in Chiang Mai first exceeded, and eventually fell short, of the official changes engendered by the Land Rent Control Act.

Upon returning to the unsigned editorial, one is greeted with two surprising, and almost-conflicting concluding statements. First the author commented that the 1950 Land Rent Control Act is “behind the times already. It has many provisions that are not appropriate for the situation of the current government” (*Thai Niu* 9 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[38] According to the author, this was the apparent reason why the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives was in the process of drafting a new law, with provisions s/he asserted that “will not allow the landowners to take too much advantage of the farmers. The price of the rent will be determined by the tenant farmers, the landowners, and the local officials together.”[39] While I will reserve a comparison of the terms of the 1950 and 1974 Acts for later in this section, I want to stress the use of the phrases *behind the times* and *appropriate for the situation of the current government*. Over the next month, there was slippage between the 1950 Act as “behind the times” and the farmers as such. As for the phrase “appropriate for the

[37] “เพื่อให้เป็นเครื่องมือของเจ้าหน้าที่บ้านเมืองและเป็นหนทางที่ชาวนาผู้เช่านาจะได้ใช้ต่อร้องกับเจ้าของนา ให้เกิดความเป็นธรรมขึ้นมาบ้าง”

[38] “ล้าสมัยไปแล้ว มีบทบัญญัติหลายอย่างไม่เหมาะสมกับสถานการณ์รัฐบาลปัจจุบัน”

[39] “ไม่ให้เจ้าของนาเอาเปรียบผู้เช่านาเกินไป การกำหนดอัตราค่าเช่าก็ให้ผู้เช่าและเจ้าของที่ดิน ร่วมกับเจ้าหน้าที่ท้องถิ่นเป็นผู้กำหนดขึ้น”

situation of the current government," I would suggest one begin by asking *who* was the government? What constituted a law *appropriate* for the government?

The editorial closed by at once insisting that the farmers must protest in larger numbers in order to achieve their goals, while also issuing a warning about the effects that might follow from such protests:

> The coming together of Chiang Mai and Lamphun farmers is too small-scale. Its not strong enough to push the government and the national legislative assembly to hasten their examination of the law and issue it. But the beseeching voice of the farmers in these two provinces – at the very least it should indicate to all **rice eaters** that they should know that **people who grow rice** are troubled and do not receive justice. They are joining together to make demands. If there are no people who listen to what they say and help them it is certain that the beseeching voice will not simply stop there (*Thai Niu* 9 November 2517 [1974]: 3, 10, emphasis is added).[40]

For the first time in the commentary on the 1974 protests, "rice eaters" are mentioned as a category of individuals. In Mister Bumbam's 1951 editorial on the difficulties faced by farmers, he implores his rice-eating readers to pay attention to the difficult lives of the farmers so that the farmers will continue growing enough rice for them to eat (*Prachathipatai*, 22 June 2494 [1951]: 2). In 1974 rice eaters were again being asked to comprehend the injustices faced by farmers. In 1974, as in 1951, although farmers grow rice, critics seemed to forget, or at least forgot to mention, that they also need to eat rice in order to survive.

---

[40] "การรวมตัวกันของชาวนาเชียงใหม่ลำพูนอาจจะเป็นส่วนย่อยเกินไป ไม่แข็งขันพอที่จะพลักดันให้รัฐบาล และสภานิติบัญญัติแห่งชาติ เร่งรัดพิจารณากฎหมายนั้นออกมาได้ แต่เสียงร่ำร้องของชาวนาในสองจังหวัดนี้ อย่างน้อยก็บ่งบอกให้คนกินข้าวทั้งหลาย ได้รับรู้ว่า คนปลูกข้าวยังเดือดร้อนและไม่ได้รับความเป็นธรรม พวกเขาจึงร่วมตัวกันมาเรียกร้อง หากไม่มีผู้ใดยอมรับฟังและช่วยเหลืออย่างเป็นการแน่นนอนว่าเสียงร่ำร้องนั้น จะไม่จบลงเพียงเท่านั้น"

Legal debates in the streets

Despite many wishes otherwise, farmers' protests in Chiang Mai city appeared inevitable in 1974. On 15 November 1974, Chiang Mai and Lamphun farmers threatened a protest of 30,000 people in Bangkok if the government did not take action to decree the 1950 Land Rent Control Act. In response, the Deputy Minister of Interior, Atthasit Sitthisunthorn, urgently called the governor of Chiang Mai, Asa Meksawan, and the governor of Lamphun, Bunlom Phuchongsakul, to Bangkok. He wanted to explain to them in person how to "bring the policy of the state back to explain to the farmers to wait for the new law, one that will have better results" (*Thai Niu* 16 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[41] The farmers wanted the new law to be in effect before the harvest season (October to January) was finished, i.e., before the landowners came to collect the rent. Farmers were continuously asked to wait – first for the government to help them, and then for the new law. However, how could the Deputy PM's assurance that the new law would be better help the farmers today, when the landlords came calling?

The farmers were not satisfied with this assurance from afar, and went to Bangkok themselves in an attempt to meet with the PM and Deputy PM. They were unable to meet with them, but met with Suthi Akatkrit, one of the state officials on the staff of the Committee to Investigate the Problems of Indebted Farmers. Suthi again told them that the 1950 Act had provisions "inappropriate" for the present moment. They should wait for the new law, because they would "get better results than from the old law" (*Thai Niu* 17 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[42] Again, *what* was inappropriate about the 1950 Act was left unspecified.

---

[41] "เพื่อมอบหมายให้สองผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดนำนโยบายของรัฐบาลกลับมาชี้แจ้งกับชาวนาให้รอกฎหมายใหม่ซึ่งจะมีผลดีกว่าต่อไป"

[42] "ได้ผลดีกว่ากฎหมายเก่า"

When appealing to the farmers to be patient and wait for the kindnesses of the government did not work, one writer tried practical fact. But his/her numbers were not quite right. The editorial, entitled "Farmers and Old and New Laws," began by explaining that now the terms have changed, and "representatives of the Chiang Mai and Lamphun farmers are standing firm in the demand to the government, to ask them to follow their desires," rather than the landlords standing firm.[43] A threat by the representatives of the farmers that 30,000 farmers would protest in demand for the decree of the 1950 Act had caused the government "to be worried and anxious."[44] The author then castigated the farmers for wasting time and money traveling to Bangkok rather than waiting for the two governors to return. The author then urged the farmers to wait for the new, better law. However, s/he made a blatantly erroneous claim. Writing about the 1950 Act, s/he noted "if we speak truly, the 2493 [1950] Law has provisions for controlling the price of rent for large areas, from 100 rai and bigger."[45] But the opposite was true: the 1950 Act applied to broadcasted paddy land *less* than 100 rai and transplanted paddy land *less* than 50 rai (Translation and Secretarial Office 1951: 1). Perhaps the writer read the 1950 Act in error. However, perhaps the reversal was intentional. Most, if not all, of the tenant farmers who were protesting rented well under 50 or 100 rai; the terms of the 1950 Act, therefore, were sufficient. The writer concluded the editorial with the following plea:

> When the Chiang Mai and Lamphun farmers came together to demand that the government use the old law, it was a demand without any benefit. As for every small group of tenant farmers who might receive a benefit, the farmers from the two provinces ought to restrain themselves and wait until the new law comes into force. The new law will have greater effects. When the governors of the two provinces

---

[43] "ตัวแทนชาวนาเชียงใหม่ลำพูนก็ยังคงยืนกรานเรียกร้องรัฐบาล ให้ทำตามความต้องการของพวกตนให้ได้"

[44] "ทำให้รัฐบาลหวงใยและร้อนใจ"

[45] "ว่ากันที่จริงแล้ว พรบ. ควบคุมค่าเช่านา ๒๔๙๓ มีบทบัญญัติควบคุมการเช่านาขนาดใหญ่ ตั้งแต่ร้อยไรขึ้นไป"

> receive the policy to bring it back they will see the different parts of the old and new laws. It will make the farmers understand clearly that they should not be panic-stricken and go incite the people who don't really know and then have them go and waste time and money without any benefit (*Thai Niu* 17 November 2517 [1974]: 3, 11).[46]

Without any benefit to whom? By uniting, the farmers appealed to one another. By protesting, they appealed to the Thai public. Through these actions, and by bringing their troubles from the rice fields into the city streets, and into the streets of the capital, Thai farmers created a new page in history.

The author urged the farmers to restrain themselves, and to be less panic-stricken. As I read this urge to the farmers to restrain themselves, I want to stress that the farmers were protesting, not looting. Yet clearly, some observers were threatened by the outpouring of farmers into the streets and their demands for justice. Further, what was meant by the phrase "people who do not really know"? Farmers *did* know about the laws and their right to protest. More than anything, this editorial revealed the anxiety and panic felt by other people – in an attempt to cast the farmers as panic-stricken, the fears of others were revealed. Less than two weeks later, the government promised either the use of the 1950 Act or the promulgation of a new one in time for this year's rice harvesting season.

Upon returning from Bangkok, the farmer representatives conveyed to other troubled farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun the government's advice to wait for the new law. According to *Thai Rat* newspaper, then, "Some farmers threatened to burn and abandon the rice in the fields in many districts, if the state officials and the government don't help with the disputes over land rent between the farmers and the

---

[46] "เมื่อเป็นเช่นนี้ การที่ชาวนาเชียงใหม่ลำพูนพากันไปเรียกร้องให้เอากฎหมายเก่ามาใช้ จึงเป็นการเรียกร้องที่ไม่เป็นประโยชน์ สำหรับผู้ที่เช่านาส่วนน้อยที่จะได้รับประโยชน์เราจึงเห็นว่า ชาวนาทั้งสองจังหวัดน่าจะอดใจรอคอยกฎหมายใหม่ออกมาบังคับจะมีผลมากกว่าและเมื่อผู้ว่าราชการสองจังหวัดรับนโยบายกลับมาก็น่าจะเห็นตรงจุดแตกต่างของกฎหมายเก่า และใหม่ให้ชาวนาเข้าใจแจ่มแจ้ง จะได้ไม่ตื่นตัวไปตามแรงยั่วยุของคนไม่รู้จริงทำให้เสียทั้งเวลาและเงินไปโดยเปล่าประโยชน์"

landowners" (*Thai Rat* 21 November 2517 [1974]: 1).[47] Approximately fifty farmers went to the Provincial Office to meet with Asa Meksawan, the Chiang Mai governor. They warned that without immediate help from the government, they "would have to burn the rice in the fields, but the burning would be in the fields of the wealthy capitalists" (*Thai Rat* 21 November 2517 [1974]: 16).[48] When *Thai Rat* contacted Asa for his perspective on the meeting, he confirmed that 50 farmers met with him on 20 November at the provincial hall. He commented that, "Manop Manochai, the leader of the farmers, said that they might proceed in any which way. But in the instance of them going to burn the rice in the fields, I don't believe that it is possible, and I didn't hear anyone say that" (*Thai Rat* 21 November 2517 [1974]: 16).[49] Like the threat of the farmers in Bangkok to turn in their citizen ID cards, the threat of the Chiang Mai farmers to burn the unharvested rice still in a the fields was a serious one. Given that a portion of the rice would belong to them under the terms of tenancy once it was harvested, it was also a radical one. The farmers were placing their own bellies on the line. Yet also like the threat to turn in the citizen ID cards, the threat to burn the rice in the fields never came to pass.

Instead, the farmers decided to continue protesting. As noted earlier, the establishment of the FFT on 19 November 1974 inaugurated simultaneous protests in both Chiang Mai and Bangkok. On the morning of 22 November, thousands of farmers flooded into Chiang Mai city on trucks and buses from different districts (*Thai Niu* 23 November 2517 [1974]: 1). Over 3000 farmers assembled in Chiang Mai in

---

[47] "ชาวนาบางคนขู่จะเผาข้าวในนาทิ้งในท้องที่หลายอำเภอ หากเจ้าหน้าที่ทางการและรัฐบาลไม่ช่วยเหลือเกี่ยวกับการพิพาทระหว่างชาวนากับนายทุนเจ้าของที่ดินในเรื่องการเช่านา"

[48] "ก็จำเป็นต้องเผาข้าวในนา แต่เป็นการเผาข้าวในนาของนายทุนที่ร่ำรวย"

[49] "นายมานพ มโนชัย หัวหน้าชาวนากล่าวว่า พวกเขาอาจจะดำเนินการอย่างใดอย่างหนึ่ง ส่วนที่ว่าจะเผาข้าวในนานั้น เชื่อว่าเป็นไปไม่ได้และไม่เห็นมีใครพูดอย่างนั้น"

front of the provincial office, and vowed to remain there until the nine demands presented to the government in Bangkok were answered. As long as the demands of those waiting on Sanam Luang in Bangkok were not met, they would not disperse either (*Thai Rat* 22 November 2517 [1974]: 16). In addition to signs and placards, they brought cooked and uncooked rice, fish, and blankets (*Thai Niu* 23 November 2517 [1974]: 1). The farmers were prepared to wait.

Using megaphones, the farmers appealed to all of the people around them to join in the call for the immediate decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. Not surprisingly, although they supported all of the nine demands shared by the FFT, their primary concern was land rent relief. Those who spoke "called for sympathy with the farmers who grow rice with our own hands, and are taken advantage of by capitalists all the time, until we have become like slaves who cannot raise our heads, since the times of our grandfathers to the times of our children" (*Thai Niu* 23 November 2517 [1974]: 1).[50] The posters carried by the farmers similarly appealed to those around them to join the demonstrations. For example, one poster carried by a group of farmers from Mae Taeng district in Chiang Mai province simply read "The struggle of the farmers will grow, will win" (*Thai Niu* 23 November 2517 [1974]: 12).[51] When the government failed to take action to affect their lives, farmers turned to their fellow citizens for sympathy and support.

In the middle of the protest, *Thai Niu* ran another article criticizing the demands for the decree of the 1950 Act. Marut Bunnag, the president of the Lawyers' Society of Thailand, again stressed that the terms of the 1950 Act were no longer appropriate for Thailand in 1974. Reiterating earlier critiques, but (again) without

---

[50] "ขอร้องให้เห็นใจชาวนาที่ทำนาด้วยมือตัวเองแต่ถูกนายทุนเอารัดเอารัดเอาเปรียบตลอดเวลา จนตกเป็นทาสของนายทุน อย่างโงหัวไม่ขึ้น ตั้งแต่ชั่ว ปู่ ย่า ตายาย และ ลูกหลาน"

[51] "การต่อสู้ของชาวนาจงขยาย ชัยชนะ"

explaining them fully, he said “It is behind the times to use now. It won’t create any benefits for the farmers” (*Thai Niu* 26 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[52] However, he also said “The anxious worry of the farmers is a main problem of the country. If we don’t hurry to solve and make it go away, there will be a movement that will cause many difficulties and will not have an end” (*Thai Niu* 26 November 1974: 3).[53] Although Marut asserted that the farmers’ demands were out-of-step with time, he also foresaw that their struggle might extend indefinitely if their demands were not met.

Then the official stance of at least one part of the state shifted. What was initially worry transformed into anger – towards farmers they perceived as ungrateful. Rather than admitting the government’s failure to help the farmers, the Minister of Interior “criticized farmers’ demonstrations of being selfish. It is not right. The government has given the best assistance within the limits of the law, which has to consider justice without favoring any side” (*Thai Niu* 27 November 2517 [1974]: 3).[54] Whether it was the threat of the farmers to burn the rice in the fields, their sheer presence on Sanam Luang and in front of the Chiang Mai provincial office, or something else altogether, the Minister’s rebuke was telling. There were no reports or evidence of the farmers carrying out destructive or violent actions – at worst was their alleged threat to burn the rice in the fields of wealthy Chiang Mai landowners. The “selfishness” cited by the Minister of Interior was therefore primarily constituted by speech and demonstration in the streets. In the minds of some, farmers were expected to be grateful, quiet, and hidden (or at least in the fields, outside the city). What

---

[52] “จะนำมาใช้อีกจึงผิดสมัย จะไม่เกิดผลต่อชาวนา”

[53] “ความเดือดร้อนของชาวนา เป็นปัญหาหลักของบ้านเมือง ถ้าไม่เร่งรีบแก้ไขให้ลุล่วงไป จะเป็นขบวนให้ยุ่งยากไม่รู้จบ”

[54] “ตำหนิ การชุมนุมเรียกร้องของชาวนาว่าจะเอาแต่ใจตนเองนั้น ไม่ถูกต้อง รัฐบาลได้ให้การช่วยเหลือ อย่างดีที่สุด แล้วภายในขอบเขตของกฎหมาย ซึ่งต้องดำเนิน ถึงความเป็นธรรมไม่บีบบังคับฝ่ายหนึ่งฝ่ายใด”

seemed selfish to the Ministry of Interior was not the farmers' protests *qua* protest, but the gap between the farmers' protests and the expectation that they would not protest.

This sentiment was reinforced the next day, when a threatening letter was sent to the Chiang Mai farmers. On 28 November, farmers in Chiang Mai and Bangkok burned puppets of the Deputy PM, Prakob Hutasingh. He had been appointed the president of the internal government committee to help the farmers, and puppets of him were burned as a criticism of his ineffectiveness (*Thai Rat* 29 November 2517 [1974]: 16). On the same day the protesting farmers in Chiang Mai received a threatening letter signed by someone, or a group, named either "encircle the city," or "1000 cities."[55] The letter threatened that the protests would be bombed. The author cautioned:

> You cannot come to assemble and occupy the area of the provincial hall, because we cannot work. It's better if you please go occupy the rice fields and look for support there. If you don't believe this, there will be an awful event. Watch out for death. (Bombs) It is neutral. It's cute. Old people will die because of students (*Thai Rat* 29 November 2517 [1974]: 16).[56]

Although the author of the letter used a pseudonym, the reference to not being able to work because the farmers were occupying the area around the provincial office suggests that the author might be a state official. Again, given the explicit suggestion that the farmers should return to the rice fields, the tension seems to be caused by the presence of farmers in the city. Who are the "young people" the author refers to? Are these meant to refer to the leaders of the FFT, or the university students who joined their protests? Andrew Turton notes that of the leaders of the FFT, "Most were married men with families aged between 30 and 45, with a few of over 60" (1982: 35).

---

[55] "พันเมือง"

[56] "การที่ท่านมาชุมนุมยึดศาลากลางนั้นไม่ได้ เพราะเราทำงานกันไม่ได้ ขอให้ท่านไปยึดท้องนาหาเสียงดีกว่า ถ้าไม่เชื่อจะมีเหตุร้ายระวังตาย (ระเบิด) มันไม่เข้าใครออกใคร น่าเอ็นดู คนแก่จะมาตายเพราะเด็ก"

Rather than young, most were middle-aged. Instead of dispersing in fear following the letter, the farmers vowed to fight even harder. They continued to protest in front of the provincial office and posted fliers critiquing the government which read “Brothers and sisters, dear farmers, have you seen help from government already or not yet? The state has not accepted to help the problems of the farmers. Why have tyrants been allowed to trample on Thai soil again?” (*Thai Rat* 29 November 2517 [1974]: 16).[57] For the Minister of Interior, the farmers were selfish because they refused to wait for the help from the government and protested in the streets instead. The farmers, for their part, identified the lack of action or help from the government, and the abuses this facilitated, as tyrannical.

When the government responded on 29 November to the nine demands of the FFT, the farmers in Chiang Mai dispersed along with their colleagues in Bangkok. Their primary concern, for land rent relief, was addressed in the fifth response: “If the Parliament does not pass the (new) Land Rent Control Act proposed by the government by December 1974, the government will promulgate the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces before the end of December.” On 16 December 1974, the government promulgated the new Land Rent Control Act.

Possible justice between two Acts

With the promulgation of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, the 1950 Act was immediately repealed. The 1974 Act was more extensive and differed significantly from the 1950 Act in terms of its application, rates and terms of rent, and terms of enforcement. Yet, as I will explain here, the rental rates stipulated by the 1950 Act were in use for the 1974-1975 harvest. In order to think critically about both the

[57] “พี่น้อง ชาวนาที่รัก เห็นการช่วยเหลือชาวนาจากรัฐบาลหรือยัง ปัญหาชาวนารัฐไม่ยอมช่วย แล้วทรราชทำไม ให้เหยียบ แผ่นดินไทยได้อีก”

assertions that the 1950 Act was "behind the times," as well as the significance of the passage of the 1974 Act, here I compare the terms and provisions of the two Acts.

In contrast to the 1950 Act, which required royal decree for each province in which it was going to be used, the 1974 Act applied immediately to the entire country. The 1950 Act envisioned land rental as a relationship between tenants and landlords, with the rare interference of the district officer. In contrast, the 1974 Act stipulated the establishment of provincial and district committees to oversee the administration of the Act as well as any disputes arising from it. Under the 1950 Act, the district officer was only needed if there was a dispute regarding land rent. In that case, the 1950 Act stipulated that the tenant and the landowner were both to contact the local district office, and the district officer would have the final word on the dispute. Either party could appeal if dissatisfied with the ruling, but had to do so within 60 days after the first decision was made. In contrast, the 1974 Act stipulated that provincial and district-level committees were to be established across the country for the express purpose of implementing the new Act.

The provincial committees were to be headed by the governor and to include as members the public prosecutor, the agricultural officer, the land officer, one director from each of the other authorities of the province, five tenant farmers, and three landowners appointed by the governor. The provincial committees were charged with determining rules for setting the maximum rice land rental rate and yield for use by the district committees in each province, determining if any kinds of agricultural crops needed to be banned in the interests of economics or land or water conservation, compiling yearly data on land rent in the province, assigning the beginning date of the season for the cultivation of rice in each area, and serving as the arbiter of appeals made by tenants or landowners under the Act.

The district committees were to be headed by the district officer and to include as members the district agricultural officer, the district land officer, the headmen from each sub-district where there was land tenancy, the chief officer of district authorities, five tenant farmers, and three landowners appointed by the district officer. The district committees were responsible for determining the maximum rice land rental rate for the district, examining and arbitrating disputes brought by either tenant farmers or landowners, and any other duties determined either by the Act or the provincial committee.

As for the collection of land rent, both acts specified that land rent could only be collected after the harvest, rather than before the planting season as preferred by some landowners. Regarding the amounts of land rent required, the 1950 Act standardized rice paddy land rents to between 5-25% of the yearly rice harvest. Under the act, the amount of rent charged for a given area was determined by the yearly yield. Land with a greater yield commanded a proportionately higher rent, while land with a lower yield commanded a lower rent. For example, for rice paddy with a yearly yield of more than forty thang per rai, a landowner could charge up to ten thang per rai, or 25%; for rice paddy with a yearly yield of less than twenty thang per rai, a landowner could charge up to only one *thang* per rai, or 5%.[58] The act also offered rent adjustments for low yields and unforeseen problems. If weather or other natural disasters reduced a tenant's yield to less than a full crop, the act stipulated that the *tenant* could reduce the amount of rice s/he paid as rent. If the yield was less than one-tenth of the usual crop, then the tenant did not have to pay rent at all.

In contrast, under the 1974 Act the district committees were responsible for determining the maximum rental rate. In doing so, they were to take into account the quality of the land in their district. In addition, before determining the final rent

[58] 1 *thang* = 20 liters.

amount, the tenant was to deduct not less than one-third of the yield in order to cover the cultivation expenses. Then, after this deduction, the rental rate could be not more than one-half of the remaining crop. In the case of damaging weather or other natural disasters, it was up to the district committee to determine the amount of rent to be paid. In Chiang Mai, the amount set by the 1974 Act had the potential to be far less than the amounts landowners had been able to command in prior years. This amount was also often far less than one out of three parts of the yield, which was the basic suggestion for the determination of the rental rates in the 1974 Act. However, until each district committee determined the appropriate rental rate under the 1974 Act, the maximum rates stipulated by the 1950 Act were to be used. As I discuss in Chapter Five, this caused some concern and anger on the part of many landowners.

The 1950 Act fixed the rental period at a period less than five years; the only recourse farmers might have to arbitrarily cancelled rental contracts was the district officer (as noted above). In contrast, the 1974 Act fixed the rental period at six years; this was intended to counteract the arbitrary cancel of rental contracts at the whim of landowners. Under the 1974 Act, the contract could only be cancelled by the landowner if the tenant did not pay rent for two consecutive years or committed a variety of other dishonest or harmful acts. [59] If the landowner intended to terminate the contract, then s/he was required to write a letter explaining the reasons to the tenant, and to send a copy to the chairperson of the district committee. Once the tenant received the letter, s/he had thirty days to protest the termination to the district

[59] Included among these acts were the following: the tenant sub-let the land to someone else without the landowners' knowledge, the tenant used the land for something other than agricultural purposes without the landowners permission, the tenant causes the degradation of the land, the tenant cultivated a banned crop, the tenant did not use the land for over one year, the tenant cultivated less than seventy-five percent of the land for two consecutive years, the tenant concealed the yield from the land in order to keep the full amount of the rent from the landowner, the tenant did not follow the advice of local agricultural authorities or permitted the deterioration of the land such that the yield is decreased by more than one-third of the usual yield.

committee (Translation and Secretarial Office 1951; *Ratchakitchanubeksa,* 16 December 2517 [1974], Book 91, Part 215, Pages 591-607).

For farmers in Chiang Mai, the passage of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act was the product of a struggle for relief from high land rent process that dated back to 1950. While their concerns in 1950 were dismissed within the walls of the provincial office, their protests in 1974 could not be so easily refused. To return to the question of whether or not the 1950 or 1974 Act was better … again, we must ask, for who/m? The terms of the Acts are different in two primary areas: who is involved in land rent relations and the actual price of land rent. Under the 1950 Act, the landlord and tenant were the two main parties involved; only in the case of a problem might the district officer interfere. The 1974 Act, on the other hand, stipulated the proliferation of committees to oversee and monitor the Act. Whether or not this was a good thing, for either farmers or landowners, depended largely on the actions of the civil servants and other members of the committees. I have already mentioned the differences in land rental prices – and rather suspect that the knowledge that the 1950 rates would almost certainly be lower than the 1974 rates may have been behind some of the admonitions to the farmers to wait for the 1974 Act. Similarly, this may have been why the farmers were so eager for the decree of the 1950 Act and the deferral of a new act. However, a Land Rent Control Act, no matter the terms, was better for the farmers than nothing. Although the passage of the 1974 Act was the culmination of a struggle spanning twenty-four years, farmers and their student allies soon learned that the promulgation of the new Land Rent Control Act was the beginning of another long struggle to make its provisions concrete in farmers' lives.

Threatening language

One of the other important changes contained in the 1974 Land Rent Control Act was that tenant farmers were stipulated as one of the groups of actors on the district and provincial committees created by the act. Not only were they included in the committees, but a greater number of tenant farmers (five) than landowners (three) were stipulated. The district committees, not all of which were off the ground before the 6 October 1976 massacre created another seismic shift, were intended to mediate the relationships among landlords, tenant farmers, and government officials. In 1951, as you will recall from my discussion in Chapter Two, tenant farmers and landlords never sat down together at the same table to make decisions about how to address land rent control in Chiang Mai; the significant, i.e. decision-making, conversations were between landlords and provincial officials. Of note, you will also recall that although the outcomes of their conversations negatively impacted the lives of the farmers, the archival record did not indicate that landlords and provincial officials were actively plotting against farmers for their own gain. Instead, although it seemed at odds with what solutions they proposed, the landlords seemed to have farmer interests in mind, and to perceive their own relationship to the farmers as that of "family members." The landlords perceived themselves as the fathers, uncles, and older brothers of farmers; the farmers' demands for the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai challenged their material wealth, but also stood as a critique of the form of interdependence practiced by the landlords. At the very least, the farmers' demands indicated that the landlords were failing as wealthy, almost-familial patrons; perceived in a more radical form, the farmers' who called for the decree of the Act indicated that the system which landowners claimed was interdependent was instead a system of exploitation and oppression.

As I have illustrated in this chapter, by the 1970s, the status of this system was becoming less ambiguous. The committee rooms populated by the 1974 Land Rent Control Act were not the only places where rapid transformation could be felt. In the months leading up to the Act's promulgation in December 1974, landless and tenant farmers became a visible presence in the streets. They camped out on Sanam Luang in Bangkok and in front of the provincial hall in Chiang Mai. Their presence was heralded by the worries of various state officials and pundits; among other things the farmers were warned that protesting in the streets was not an efficient way for them to reach their goals. When appeals to economy did not work, then outright intimidation and name-calling were employed.

The public presence of the farmers in the streets and the visible tensions caused by this were indications of the significant reconfigurations of power that were taking place in both rural spaces and articulated across rural and urban spaces. Yet there was a far more subtle register in which transformations could be perceived as well. This register was the use of words, which is nearly always a careful act. The word in question: **capitalist (นายทุน).**

In 1951, the farmers from Saraphi and Doi Saket used the term *landlord* (เจ้าของที่ดิน) to refer to the people who owned the land on which they grew rice. The power of the farmers' critique at that time was in their insistence that they be part of making policy decisions which affected their lives. Their use of the term *landlord* allowed for a continued perception of a relation of interdependence.

By June 1974, farmers and their supporters were using the term **capitalist,** often in combination with or interchangeably with *landlord*. In the lists of demands submitted to PM Sanya Thammasak by the farmer that I discussed earlier, **capitalists** were presented as those who cheated farmers out of land, charged exploitative interest

rates, and otherwise stood in the way of justice. In their responses to the farmers' demands, the PM Sanya government adopted the same usage.

The Royal Institute defines a **capitalist** as "a person who owns the capital to use for manufacturing products, a person who invests in production, or gives capital to others for production" (Royal Institute 2542 [1999]: 577).[60] Yet how it was used by the farmers and even the PM Sanya government in response far exceeded this definition. In their usage, **capitalists** were those who owned land, provided credit and lent money. Initially, the farmers cast doubt on the means and intentions behind these three actions. Later, the most radical elements of the progressive forces called into question the sheer ethics of land possession and personal profit. Not only did the use of the **capitalist** at this time signal the social and political transformation that was underway, but also, I suggest, contributed to it. Once labeled as such, and lumped in with creditors, landowners were forced to confront a new image of themselves, or perhaps an image of their new selves. Some responded with injury. Some responded with fear and anger.

---

[60] "ผู้ที่เป็นเจ้าของทุนที่ใช้ในการผลิตสินค้า, ผู้ลงทุนประกอบกิจการหรือออกทุนให้ผู้อื่นประกอบกิจการ"

CHAPTER FOUR
FROM THE CLASSROOMS TO THE RICE FIELDS

"1974, 1975, those were good years. It was my second year of university, but I rarely sat in a classroom. I spent all my time out in the villages, living and learning with the farmers."[1]

M., a former Chiang Mai University (CMU) student and caretaker of *Ajarn* (Professor) Angun's house and garden explained to me how her life changed after the 14 October 1973 movement ended nearly forty years of continuous dictatorship in Thailand. During the period of unprecedented open politics between 14 October 1973 and the 6 October 1976 massacre, she was one of thousands of people whose life became oriented around political action and work for justice. Sitting on the porch of *Ajarn* Angun's former house drinking tea on a very wet afternoon in the middle of the rainy season, we talked about her experience as a student activist at CMU during that period.

M. was born into a farming family in Khon Kaen, in the northeast. In the early 1970s, she was sent to live with her aunt in Bangkok to complete secondary school. She lived in Thonburi, on the opposite side of the Chao Phraya River from Thammasat University. When we met, she gave me a copy of a mimeographed essay she wrote on the twentieth anniversary of the 6 October 1976 massacre. She began the essay by recounting her experiences during 14 October 1973:

> I had a close friend who led a team of about 40-50 friends from our school. We walked from the school at Wat Suwannaram, in Bangkok Noi. We crossed the railway tracks, we crossed Pinklao Bridge. We went to Thammasat and joined the demonstrations there until the evening. I had no desire to return home, at all. The university student leaders led the protests from Thammasat up Ratchadamnoen Road and

---

[1] "ปี ๑๗ ปี ๑๘ ก็เป็นช่วงดีมาก พี่เรียนปี่ที่สอง แต่ไม่เคยนั่งเฉยในห้องเรียน ก็ไปอยู่ในหมู่บ้าน ไปอยู่ไปเรียนด้วยชาวนา"

> then to the front of Chitralada Palace. I marched in the protests to that point, and remained there until the early morning. Then I decided to go home to take a bath. In my heart I thought that I would return to join the protest again. As soon as I got onto the bus, not even a few minutes had passed and I heard the loud sound of a gun. "Bang." I was surprised, and wondered what had happened. But I didn't get off to return. I remained seated on the bus until I arrived at my residence near Siriraj Hospital. When I arrived home I listened to the news on the radio, and realized that there had been fighting between police and soldiers and the students and people who were protesting in front of Chitralada. There were injuries, and deaths also (M. n.d.: n.p.).[2]

M. finished secondary school in early 1974. At that point, she chose to leave Bangkok and go north to continue her education at Chiang Mai University. She entered the Faculty of Humanities and majored in English. She chose English because she liked languages and literature. When I asked her which authors were most influential in her life at that time, she immediately cited Sriburapha.[3] She remembered that she was frequently late to the meetings of the Women's Group, which she described as "like an early feminist group,"[4] during her first year because she often went to the Huay Kaew waterfall near the CMU campus to read Sriburapha's novels after classes ended for the

---

[2] "มีเพื่อนสนิทของข้าพเจ้าเป็นคนนำทีม มีเพื่อนร่วมโรงเรียนอีกประมาณ 40-50 คน พวกเราเดินจากโรงเรียนวัดสุวรรณาราม บางกอกน้อย ข้ามทางรถไฟ ข้ามสะพานปิ่นเกล้า ไปธรรมศาสตร์ ร่วมนั่งชุมนุมประท้วงจนถึงเย็น ไม่มีใจจะกลับบ้านเลย ผู้นำนักศึกษาพาเคลื่อนขบวนจากธรรมศาสตร์ผ่านถนนราชดำเนินไปหน้าสวนจิตรดาก็เดินตามขบวนไปอีกอยู่ที่นั้นจนรุ่งสว่าง จึงตัดสินใจกลับบ้านเพื่อไปอาบน้ำ ในใจคิดว่าจะกลับมาร่วมชุมนุมอีก พอข้าพเจ้าขึ้นรถเมล์ได้ไม่กี่นาทีก็ได้ยินเสียงปืนดัง *"ปัง"* ก็ให้นึกแปลกใจว่า มีอะไรเกิดขึ้นหรือเปล่า แต่ข้าพเจ้าก็ไม่กลับลงไป คงนั่งรถเมล์ไปเรื่อยๆ จนถึงบ้านพักซึ่งอยู่แถวโรงพยาบาลศิริราช เมื่อถึงบ้านก็รับฟังข่าวจากวิทยุ จึงได้รู้ว่ามีการปะทะกันระหว่างตำรวจ ทหารและนักศึกษา ประชาชน ที่ชุมนุมหน้าสวนจิตรฯ มีการบาดเจ็บและล้มตายด้วย"

[3] Sriburapha was one of the pennames of Kulap Saipradit. Kulap lived between 1905 and 1973, and published many novels, essays, and other writing between the late 1920s and his death. By the late 1940s, he was writing on explicitly politically progressive topics. During the 1970s, his writing enjoyed renewed interest at the hands of intellectuals and came to be seen as early examples of "literature for life" (วรรณกรรมเพื่อชีวิต). For more information on Kulap's life and writing, see Witayakorn (2516 [1973]), Rungwit (2522 [1979]), Batson (1981), and Smyth (1991). For insightful analysis of the "literature for life" movement, see Chaisiri (2524 [1981]).

[4] "เป็นแบบกลุ่ม feminist แรกๆ"

day. She laughed as she relayed the story to me -- she grew so absorbed in his writing about a possible socialist future that she forgot the time and was late to the feminist meetings about injustice in the present.

Yet as M. narrated it, by far the most important and influential (for the rest of her life) experience during her years at CMU was her involvement with the Farmer Project (โครงการชาวนา). As I address further below, the Farmer Project was a group of high school and university students who worked in alliance with the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) (สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย) in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang provinces. After she mentioned being involved, I asked if the Project was part of the Northern Student Center (NSC) or a separate organization at CMU. Neither, she said, the Project was a special group outside the structure of either of these. The organizers of the Farmer Project divided each province into different areas (เขต). With a few other students, she was responsible for Hang Chatr district, in the western part of Lampang province.

She spoke of swapping her university uniform of a black skirt and pressed white shirt for the uniform of student activists of the time: jeans, a t-shirt or indigo-dyed cotton farmer's shirt, a pair of flip-flops, and a woven *yam* (satchel) bag. While the university uniform is often worn by students outside of classes to reference their status as university students and future professionals, the clothing of student activists in the 1970s seemed to reflect their ambivalence about this immediate conferral of status.[5] However, as emerges again and again, even within this story, changing clothing was not enough to strip students of their status. Even so, it remains significant primarily as a visible indication of their dissidence.

---

[5] For a thoughtful and insightful analysis of clothing and student activism in the context of post-1998 Indonesia, see Doreen Lee (2005).

Thus dressed like the many other student activists she joined, she left the classrooms to organize with tenant and landless farmers to demand justice from landowners and Thai state officials. Many professors, including Ajarn Angun, allowed her and other students to miss class and awarded grade points for her and others' work "helping society."[6] When she missed math classes, her friends in the Women's Group tutored her and helped her pass the exams.

When she was in villages in Hang Chatr district of Lampang province, M. explained that the farmers fed and "treated us, we didn't have to use money."[7] When I asked what it was like to be a female activist, surrounded by male activists in the Northern Student Center, she commented that when she was in the villages with the farmers, "It was like I was a district officer."[8] If the meetings held were large, then all the residents of the village attended; if the meeting was only a small, planning meeting, she explained to me, then only the (male) leaders attended. She commented that even though she was a woman, she was treated well because she was a university student. Her explanation is significant in multiple registers. It reveals the profound gendering of the categories of both *university student* and *district officer*. She was aware that she was respected and taken seriously because her position as a university student carried with it an assumption of male power. The lack of farming women at the small, planning meetings indicates that this ability to assume male power was only accessible to particular women. Although students may have changed out of their pressed uniforms into jeans and shirts as a sign of solidarity with the farmers, their classed status was not shed nearly as easily.

---

[6] "ช่วยเหลือสังคม"

[7] "เลี้ยงไม่ต้องเสียเงิน"

[8] "เป็นแบบเป็นนายอำเภอ"

She reflected on that period and commented, "Ay, *nong*, then I knew my life had value, I knew the work was important … Those years were so happy. I went everywhere, to every village where farmers were organizing across the north …"[9,10]

She paused for a moment, and so I asked, "And, then what happened, *phii*?"

M. looked at me and said, "By the middle of 1975, by 1976, even before 6 October, everything was changing. Farmers were being assassinated. It was dangerous everywhere. I even carried a small pistol, even though I never used it. I didn't know how to use it."[11]

*

What is striking about this fragment of M.'s life story is the palpable excitement and sense of possibility that she felt. When she reflected on her experience organizing with farmers in the mid-1970s, she recalled the concrete nature of their work together around land rent control and other issues, as well as the joys of sharing meals and life across their different identities. The friendship and camaraderie built between students and farmers transcended their class origins and imagined class futures. For her, and many farmers, workers, slum-dwellers, teachers and others, the three years between October 1973 and October 1976 were marked by transformations that far exceeded the significance encapsulated in the 14 October 1973 event. As individual change became social, it simultaneously became political.

In this chapter I analyze the emergence of student-farmer solidarity in Chiang Mai in the period of open politics. Through their work with the Farmer Project, M. and her fellow activists learned how to work across differences of class and space in

---

[9] "เอ น้อง ช่วงนั้นพี่ก็รู้ได้ว่าชีวิตมีคุณค่า มีความสุขมาก ไปทุกที่ ทุกหมู่บ้านทางเหนือที่มีชาวนาชาวไร่จัดตั้ง"

[10] *Nong* means "younger (sister, brother)" in central Thai and *phii* means "older (sister, brother)."

[11] "แต่มาถึงกลางปี ๑๘ ปี ๑៩ แม้แต่ก่อน เหตุการณ์ ๖ ตุลา ทุกอย่างก็เปลี่ยนไป ผู้นำชาวนาถูกสังหาร เกิดมีความอันตรายทุกที่ พี่ถือปืนสั้นเล็กๆ แต่ไม่เคยใช้ พี่ก็ไม่รู้วิธีการใช้"

order to struggle side-by-side with farmers. Adapting a formulation of Paulo Freire's, I will use the term *pedagogy of solidarity* to refer to the knowledge built through the farmers' and students' shared struggle and its implications. By pedagogy, I mean the negotiation and production of meaning through teaching and learning (McLaren with Giroux 1995). By solidarity, I refer to the practice of acting in alliance with another in pursuit of a shared vision or project. The *pedagogy of solidarity*, therefore, also signals the process by which the farmer-student alliances not only changed the lives of the individuals involved, but also challenged the prevailing political and social order.

In his well-known book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire drew on his experience as a literacy educator in slums in Brazilian cities in order to offer a vision and methodology of liberation through radical humanization. At the heart of Freire's analysis is a recognition that everyone -- whether one is a privileged university student or an impoverished, illiterate slum dweller or a tenant farmer – suffers from oppression. It is only when all people, those who are oppressed and those who oppress, or benefit from oppression, realize that their lives are bound up together that liberation can begin. The process of liberation "cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis" (Freire 1970: 47).

I will begin by providing a context for the development of the pedagogy of solidarity in Chiang Mai by examining how education and progressive politics were imbricated in one another in 1970s Thailand. Then I will examine two predecessors to the Farmer Project: the Volunteer Development Assembly, a student volunteer development program at CMU active from the late 1960s, and the official Return to Rural Areas Program supported by the Sanya government in 1974. While both the Volunteer Development Assembly and the Return to Rural Areas Program were critiqued for their lack of concrete impacts on rural peoples' lives, I locate them as

creating a foundation and point of departure, literally and imaginatively, for later student solidarity with farmers. Next, I turn to the Farmer Project and the other organizing work students and farmers engaged in together in late 1974 and 1975. As students left the classrooms to struggle side-by-side with the farmers, they learned not only about another way of life, but how to be responsibly political in a new era.[12] Throughout the analysis that follows, I trace the shifting meanings of *politics* and the *political.* Not unlike who determines the rightful owners of particular spaces, who determines what constitutes politics, and who can participate in it, is a question shot through with power, domination, and potential liberation. I conclude by examining the limits of the pedagogy of solidarity.

The politics of education: new roles for students after 14 October 1973

Despite the importance of 14 October 1973 as a "political as well as an intellectual revolution" (Thongchai 1995: 99), it was by no means the *beginning* of progressive student and intellectual political consciousness. Thanet (2546 [2003]) and Prajak (2548 [2005]), to give two examples, have painstakingly traced the varied developments of the (often urban) student and intellectual progressive movements since the 1932 revolution. Although often restricted or surveilled under various dictatorial regimes, students at Thammasat and other Bangkok universities published magazines and books, organized and at times protested. As I made clear in Chapter One, this was not limited to Bangkok. Nisit Jirasophon and others involved in student organizing at Chiang Mai University (CMU), including publishing the journal

[12] By learning how to be responsibly political I refer to the process by which students came to understand that their actions with farmers could be helpful, and at times dangerous, for farmers. As the identity 'student' became increasingly charged in 1975 and early 1976, and as 'student' became synonymous with 'agitator' or 'Communist,' the presence of students in villages could place the villagers who lived there in danger – while students could leave at any time.

Walanchathat, actively questioned and critiqued Thai society and political institutions throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s.

As part of these efforts, in October 1970 a group of six young men, many whom were involved in *Walanchathat*, published a collection of short stories under the name "young men in the flats at the edge of the mountain" (ชาวหนุ่มที่ราบริมดอย).[13] Throughout the stories the authors expressed their dissatisfaction with the present moment and imagined a range of solutions to it – one called for a return to the past, another called for a simpler way of living, and others wrote towards a different future. Common across the six stories was a pervasive questioning -- of Thai society, the university, their peers, and most of all, themselves. *Who am I? What is my role in what is going on around me?* Commenting on the stories in an introduction to the book, historian Nidhi Eoseewong (then a young lecturer) wrote that "They are perhaps a small ripple, without meaning at all. If they are six people, I think that they are very interesting people. If they are one thousand people, I think we have to be interested" (2513 [1970]: n.p.).[14]

In the changed atmosphere opened up by 14 October 1973 this small ripple grew and morphed into a series of formidable waves. Therefore, while it would be a grave error to locate the event as either the beginning or the peak of progressive political and social consciousness and change in Thailand, its effect on what was imaginable, possible, and permissible was undeniable. Between October 1973 and October 1976, the students and other intellectuals (including professors, former students, and writers) intensified their questioning and critique of various forms of injustice in Thai society – and their own roles in perpetuating or eliminating it. Out of

---

[13] The Chiang Mai University campus backs up to a mountain, Doi Suthep.

[14] "เขาอาจเป็นละลอกน้อยๆ ที่ไร้ความหมายเท่านั้นเอง ถ้าเขาเป็นหกคนข้าพเจ้าก็เชื่อว่าเป็นคนที่น่าสนใจอยู่ไม่น้อย ถ้าเขาเป็นพันคน เราต้องสนใจอยู่แล้ว"

this recognition, they wrote and translated hundreds of books, overhauled existing political, social and literary organizations and established new ones, protested endlessly, and allied themselves with other people and groups searching for justice. The changes in what kinds of relationships and actions could be dreamt and carried out were particularly evident in students' growing concern and passion for rural areas and the people who inhabited them – farmers.

In making this claim, I do not want to erroneously suggest that all students were urban. They were not – as the example of the life of the M., who was from Khon Kaen province, with which I began this chapter makes clear. However, universities *were* urban; even CMU, one of the relatively new regional universities, was firmly located within Chiang Mai city. Although the residents of Chiang Mai city may have been closer, in terms of physical distance, to rice fields than their Bangkok counterparts, this did not mean that they had ever ventured into them. Similarly, resonant with how I have been explicit about the range of class positions experienced by farmers, I want to be clear that not all students were middle or upper-class. Many were, but many were not. Instead, despite their class origins, what students shared due to their access to higher education was the possibility of a middle or upper-class future. Citing the effect of the expansion of universities, including the foundation of regional universities such as CMU, under the Sarit regime, Benedict Anderson noted that with more young people attending universities, "It was possible to *imagine* within the confines of a single household a successful dry-cleaner father and an embryonic cabinet secretary son" (1977: 171, emphasis is in original). This possibility was not one that every student chose, however. Instead, many chose to work with farmers, simultaneously imagining a different, more just (if not more prestigious for themselves), shared future. Although this movement soon exceeded the university walls, I first turn to its origins within them.

In an introductory essay to a book published in 1975 by the Thammasat University Students' Association, *People of the New Generation* (คนรุ่นใหม่), Thak Chaloemtiarana wrote that

> In conclusion, the primary goal of Thammasat University must be to produce graduates who are responsible to society as a whole. The secondary goal is to produce people who go enter the job market. **The relationship between students and professors must stand on a foundation of the exchange of knowledge and the practice of reason.** Professors' academic duties and service must have meaning for society and the desires of students. This service is not to make the "exalted title" of the professors go down into an inferior one. But it is to make the professors serve a function that has meaning for society and students. Students are not "children" and professors and students should acknowledge that **the university is an institution of higher education that is located to serve society and has a responsibility to society as a whole**. In this institution it is not appropriate to receive "children" or to be a place with "teachers" as supervisors. But it should be a center that tries to search for knowledge and truth of society. Therefore, every person who comes within the walls of Thammasat has an equal role" (Thak 2518 [1975]: n.p., emphasis is in original).[15]

In his essay, Thak called for a reorientation both of life within the university, and of the university's orientation to, and within, Thai society. In the remainder of the book, students and professors alike contributed articles taking these ideas further. With titles such as "Ideas about the new kind of students," "How can women join the revolution?," "Education for the masses," and "Power of the people," the authors each

---

[15] "สรุปได้ว่ามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์จะต้องผลิตบัณฑิตที่มีความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมส่วนรวมเป็นจุดประสงค์แรก และผลิตคนไปตอบสนองตลาดอาชีพเป็นอันดับสอง **ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างนักศึกษาอาจารย์จะต้องตั้งอยู่บนพื้นฐานของการแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้และฝึกฝนการใช้เหตุผล** อาจารย์มีหน้าที่บริการทางวิชาการนั้นจะต้องมีความหมายต่อสังคมและความต้องการของนักศึกษา การให้บริการนี้จะไม่ทำให้ "ตำแหน่งสูงส่ง" ของอาจารย์ด้อยลงไป แต่จะทำให้อาจารย์ทำหน้าที่ที่มีความหมายสำหรับสังคมและนักศึกษา นักศึกษาจะไม่ใช่ "เด็ก" และอาจารย์กับนักศึกษาเองควรจะยอมรับว่า **มหาวิทยาลัยเป็นสถาบันการศึกษาขั้นสูง เป็นแหล่งที่ทำหน้าที่บริการแก่สังคม และมีความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมส่วนรวม** และในสถาบันเช่นนี้ไม่สมควรที่จะรับ "เด็ก" หรือเป็นแหล่งสะสม "ครู" ผู้ปกครองแต่เป็นศูนย์ที่พยายามแสวงหาความรู้และสัจจะแห่งสังคม ซึ่งเมื่อทุกๆ คนที่ได้เข้ามาอยู่ในรอบรั้วธรรมศาสตร์แล้วจะมีบทบาทเท่าเทียมกัน"

engaged specific questions relevant not only to university students, but to those outside the university as well. Peppered with images of material hardship, poems about freedom, and photographs of recent protests, the articles may be read as a affirmation of Thak's call for greater participation of university students and professors in Thai society.

The Thammasat University Students' Association book was not an anomaly, but one of many publications filled with resonant questions. Cultural critics, professors-cum-translators, and socialist and CPT intellectuals interrogated the rule of education, and often by extension, the roles of students and young people in Thai society. In articles with titles such as "Universities and the role they should fill in the present society," and "Study for life? Whose life?" authors critiqued the status quo and attempted to find solutions to the problems they identified.[16] Their writing ranged from explicit criticism of the Ministry of Education to blueprints for revolutionary subjects. In a broad sense, their combined efforts may be seen as trying to shift education in Thailand from a narrow system of schools producing future elites and masters (not unlike Althusser's (1971) Ideological State Apparatuses) to a Freirian (1970) idea of education as a shared process of liberation, and perhaps beyond. Not irrelevant, Paulo Freire's manifesto, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was translated into Thai in 1974 – twice (2517a [1974a]; 2517b [1974b])! While an exhaustive analysis of the various perspectives that emerged is beyond the scope of this project, I turn to a few of them now in order to illustrate the depth of their critique of Thai society as well as the lengths they walked, figuratively speaking, to imagine a different society.

The distance between real, lived experience and education as practiced in schools was paramount for some critics. In an essay entitled "Who does the present

[16] "Universities and the role they should fill in the present society" was published in *Athipat* (12-18 June 2517 [1974]); "Study for life? Whose life?" was published in *Prachachaat Weekly* 1.33 (4 July 2517 [1974]).

system of education serve?" published in *Athipat*, the newspaper of the National Student Center of Thailand, the unnamed author argued that the current system of education only served to widen the gaps between wealthy, educated people and workers. Critical of the Ministry of Education, the author called for reform of the primary and secondary school curricula and suggested that

> If we analyze every book that we study, especially Thai literature and history, it is appropriate to discard and burn all of them. Don't use them further as textbooks because those books don't have any usefulness – they only cram the thinking of the masters into us (*Athipat* 16-22 October 2517 [1974]: 3).[17]

Instead, the system of education "must touch the reality of society," it must reflect the range of experience in society (*Athipat* 16-22 October 2517 [1974]: 3).[18] Resonantly, in a piece entitled, "Education and democracy," Chaiyong Pornmuang challenged people to think about education as something that happens everywhere, not just within the school walls. He called for a national vision of education that could create people who believed in the value of themselves and had the ability to discuss social, political, economic and other issues of import to their lives (*Prachachaat Weekly* 1.11 (31 January 2517 [1974])). While Thak urged those within the university to bridge the gaps between themselves and the rest of the people, these two authors called for the institutions themselves to change in order to close the gap.

In contrast, a CPT intellectual and another socialist writer both offered far more drastic criticisms and suggestions for change. Writing under the penname Amnat Yutthawiwat, Phin Bua-on, a longtime CPT member and intellectual, published a book

---

[17] "ถ้าเราวิเคราะห์หนังสือแต่ละเล่มที่เราเรียนมานั้นโดยเฉพาะวรรณคดีไทย-ประวัติศาสตร์สมควรจะเผาทิ้งได้แล้ว อย่าเอามาเป็นแบบเรียนอีกเพราะหนังสือเหล่านี้ไม่ได้ให้ประโยชน์อะไรแก่เราเลยยัดเยียดความคิดแบบเจ้าขุนมูลนายให้กับเรา"

[18] "ต้องสัมผัสกับความเป็นจริงของสังคม"

entitled *Education Revolution: following the path of socialism.*[19] He began his introduction with the following summary of the problem at hand:

> The center of the problem of the arrangement of education is this: who is education arranged for, what kind of education is arranged, and how is education arranged. The heart of the history of the arrangement of education is the history of class struggle, the history of the struggle of ways of thinking, and the history of the struggle of the paths [of struggle?]" (Amnat 2519 [1976]: 1).[20]

Critiquing the current system of education in Thailand as one by and for the capitalist class, he analyzed education reforms in China and Tanzania to bear on the state of education in Thailand and offered a set of possible changes. Appended to Amnat's writing was a collection of recent articles in *Athipat, Prachachaat Weekly, Prachachaat Daily, Sieng Mai,* and *Prachathipatai* critiquing the Ministry of Education, various curricula, the oppression of students in the classroom, and the system of education in general. A box of text on the next to last page of the book proclaimed: "Youth must dare to destroy old things (that are backward and reactionary) and dare to create new things (that are progressive). Youth have the strength and the ability to destroy the old and create the new" (Amnat 2519 [1976]: n.p.).[21] While Amnat's assessment of education as deeply imbricated in class politics is astute, and echoed across this dissertation, I wonder if the lines between reactionary and progressive can always, or ever, be made clear.

---

[19] See Kasian (2001) for more information on Phin's life and the development of his and other CPT intellectuals' work.

[20] "ศูนย์กลางของปัญหาการจัดศึกษาคือปัญหา: จัดศึกษาเพื่อใคร, จัดศึกษาอะไร, และจัดศึกษาอย่างไร. เนื้อแท้ของประวัติ การจัดศึกษา ก็คือประวัติ ของการต่อสู้ทางชนชั้น, ประวัติของการต่อสู้ทางความคิด, และประวัติของการต่อสู้ทางแนวทาง"

[21] "เยาวชนจะต้อง กล้า ทำลาย สิ่งเก่า (ที่ล้าหลังและปฏิกริยา) และกล้าสร้างสิ่งใหม่ (ที่ก้าวหน้า) เยาวชนมีกำลังและมีความสามารถที่จะทำลายสิ่งเก่าและสร้างสิ่งใหม่"

An even more strident Marxist-Leninist take on young peoples' roles was coupled with essays about 14 October 1973, imperialism, and class structure in a collection published by the three regional student unions (Northern Student Center, Northeastern Student Center, and the Southern Student Center). In an essay entitled "The roles of young people and students in the present situation," an author writing under the name Niwet Tongkwao suggested the modifications students and young people should make to their behavior in order to be proper revolutionary subjects (Niwet 2519 [1976]). They must not separate themselves from the people, laboring people must be at the forefront of the struggle, there must be equality between women and men, they must be confident in collective work and methods, they must study in a scientific manner, they must oppose thinking like masters, and finally, they must oppose the kind of work where one's goal cannot be seen (Niwet 2519 [1976]: 164-169). Offered almost as a formula, there seemed to be no space to question the construction of the proper revolutionary youth.

Leaving the city: return, politics, and personal change

Although there was a proliferation of writing about farmers and an upsurge in projects linking students with rural people in the relatively open political space following 14 October 1973, student interest in rural life and its problems began years before. Inspired variously by the need to *develop* the countryside (not least to prevent its inhabitants from becoming Communists) and the examples of the lives of other young people, especially the work and death in 1971 of Komol Keemthong, many young people went on what may roughly be called "volunteer development camp" (ค่ายอาสาพัฒนา) trips to the countryside in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Komol Keemthong was a 1970 graduate of the Faculty of Education at Chulalongkorn University. Rather than accept a lucrative job in Bangkok upon graduation, he chose to

take up a position as a teacher in a remote village school in Surat Thani province in southern Thailand. Tragically, along with another teacher, Ratana Sakulthai, Komol was assassinated on 22 February 1971 by Communist forces. In an article about the development of the student moment, Thanet Aphornsuvan recalled that while Komol was working in Surat Thani, on trips to Bangkok Komol would often tell his colleagues and friends about the difficulties faced by the villagers, who were caught between the Communist forces and the Thai military. Surachai Phiphatsurisak, who was close to Komol, explained that

> …all the time that I was with Komol, I felt that he was the hope of all young people. He was a representative of one young person of all of the developing countries who didn't want to use radical methods of revolution to build the nation. He believed that if the foundation was good, what went on top would also be good (Surachai qtd. in Thanet 2546 [2003]: 78).[22]

Komol's ideas about the need for students to respond to the gulf between poor and wealthy, and rural and urban people in Thai society were very influential with many young people.[23] H., a former CMU student and activist, located his interest in social change as beginning during high school. Inspired by Komol, in 1972 a group of students from H.'s elite private boys' high school in Bangkok organized a development camp in Pathumthani. They helped the villagers dig ponds and simultaneously learned about their lives. In addition to digging ponds, on trips of typically a few weeks duration, students built schools, constructed roads, and provided

---

[22] "... ตลอดระยะเวลาที่อยู่กับโกมล ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกว่าเธอเป็นความหวังของคนหนุ่มร่วมสมัย เป็นตัวแทนของคนหนุ่มคนหนึ่ง ในประเทศด้อยพัฒนาทั้งหลาย เธอไม่ต้องการสร้างชาติวิธีรุนแรงขนาดปฏิวัติ เธอเชื่อว่าถ้าพื้นฐานดี ยอดจะดีด้วย"

[23] Komol Keemthong's life deserves far more attention than I can give it here. See Komol Keemthong Foundation (2515 [1972]), Phra Santisuk (2522 [1979]), Komol (1982), Phot (2540 [1997]), and Pipob (2001) for more information on Komol's life and writing.

basic medical and dental care. The results of the programs were contradictory. On the one hand, many critiques resonate with John Dennis' analysis of the projects that

> Students often failed to evoke villager participation or advice, and what programs the students initiated were often short-lived and unsatisfactory. Free medicine ran out soon after students departed; toilets built by students were left unused because the water supply was too scarce to flush them; new schoolhouses remained empty because the government could not provide teachers (Dennis 1982: 47).

While long-term, concrete changes in villagers' living conditions may have been few, many students were affected as a result of their work and the relationships they built with rural people. As Kanoksak Kaewthep notes, these programs "…gave the students particularly the progressive ones the opportunity to contact local people. Thus was laid the groundwork for their later activities among the grassroots" (1985: 166).

While an examination of every project completed by students during this period is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, in the remainder of this section I examine two specific programs: the activities of the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly between 1969 and 1971 and the official, government-sponsored "Return to the Rural Areas" Program in 1974. I examine the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly as the forerunner, in terms of geographic location and critical question, of the later Farmer Project in Chiang Mai. In contrast, I examine the Return to Rural Areas Program as a contemporary of the Farmer Project; although nearly simultaneously operating, they were radically different. Examination of each of these programs raises a series questions about the relationships between students and villagers, the role(s) of the Thai state, and the possibilities and limits of the various projects. The work of the students of the Farmer Project, who worked with the FFT between 1974 and 1976 around land rent control, was both an extension and a refutation of these programs. By reflecting on the early CMU program and the massive Return to the Rural Areas Program, I intend to build the context for

understanding the transgressive nature and significance of the Farmer Project. Simultaneously, I aim to outline a series of concerns and questions that might be usefully asked about the Farmer Project as well.

Contained tensions: the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly

In 1971, the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly (ชุมนุมอาสาพัฒนา) published a book documenting their activities between 1969 and 1971. In my analysis in this section I am interested in the way the Assembly presented its work as much, if not more, as I am interested in their actual work. The Assembly was a project of the CMU Students' Association (สโมสรนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่), and as such, was officially sanctioned by the university and advised by a group of professors. The very first lines of the introduction explained the Assembly's purpose:

> The general idea of the volunteer development camp is to cooperate with one another to improve the conditions of existence of communities in the rural areas with the strength and abilities they already have. The target of the development camp is the better existence of the rural people, who are the majority of citizens in the country (Volunteer Development Assembly (VDA) 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[24]

The Assembly was established in 1966 and since then its members had, among other things, built a health station in Samoeng sub-district of Chiang Mai province, built a permanent wooden bridge in Mae Hong Son province, and built schools in many different places. The Assembly's work was funded by the CMU Students' Association and donations from state agencies, business associations, and foundations (VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.). At any given time, the Assembly was able to support the work of 80-100 volunteers. The remainder of the introduction was devoted to a

---

[24] "อุดมการณ์ทั่วๆไป ของงานค่ายอาสาพัฒนา คือการร่วมมือกันและกัน เพื่อปรับสภาพความเป็นอยู่ของชุมชนในชนบทให้ดีขึ้นกว่าเดิมด้วยกำลังความสามารถที่มีอยู่ เป้าหมายของค่ายอาสาพัฒนา คือ ความเป็นอยู่ดีขึ้นของชาวชนบท ซึ่งเป็นพลเมืองส่วนใหญ่ของประเทศ"

further explication of the purpose and goals of the organization, and a listing of rules adhered to by the members.

Following the introduction, the CMU Students' Association and the president of the university each contributed a short piece. The Students' Association placed the Volunteer Development Assembly within the broader context of extracurricular activities. Although the membership of the Assembly was small in comparison to the entire university population, because the members came from many different faculties, they were "able to bring knowledge and true determination to help impoverished rural people, who live in areas very far from progress" (CMU Students' Association in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[25] Mary Beth Mills argues that along with *development* (การพัฒนา), *progress* (ความเจริญ) has long been part of the modernizing strategy and rhetoric in Thailand (1999: 10, 13). Yet as the teleology of development has played out in Thailand, although the lives of some have improved, it has not been universal. The lives of others, largely poor, rural people, have been further marginalized, economically and politically (Mills 1999: 59). Therefore, while the precise meaning of *progress* here could be questioned, what is significant here is that the student volunteers were seen as bringing the university, or at least the knowledge transmitted within its walls, to the villagers.

In his essay, the president of the university, Dr. Yongyut Sujjavanich, contrasted the consumer goods and materialism found in Bangkok with the relative backwardness and poverty found in the countryside. He insisted that the students of the Assembly were doing very important work because they are fulfilling their responsibility to society

---

[25] "ก็สามารถนำความรู้และความตั้งใจจริงที่จะช่วยชาวชนบทที่ยากไร้ ซึ่งอาศัยอยู่ ในท้องถิ่นที่ห่างไกลความเจริญ"

> especially to the rural areas that in the past were forgotten. The people there are Thai people, who dwell on Thai land that our ancestors preserved with their flesh and blood, and gave it as the legacy to all of us Thai people. It is appropriate already that we must help and tend to our brothers and sisters with care, and protect our land for us (Yongyut in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[26]

The use of the pronoun "our" created a palpable ambiguity in Dr. Yongyut's writing. In his marked insistence that the rural people are (also) Thai people, one wonders who he envisioned as included among those to whom the land and country belonged. His comment is infused with a sense of urgency, almost an overdue need to attend to the forgotten rural people. The threat of communism may have made preserving the land even more important at that moment. In the second half of his essay, he explained that the volunteer development work also taught students about their own strengths and helped built community among them.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a meticulous accounting of the work of the VDA from 1969 to 1971. A summary of each trip made by the members is listed, including the date, location, number of students involved, and the precise development work they undertook. We learn, for example, that between 3 and 23 March 1970, forty-eight male students, forty-five female students, and six advisors went to Rong Dah sub-district, Wang Nua district, in Lampang province. Their primary projects included building a school and a dam. In the evaluation following the volunteer camp, both the male and the female students were faulted for lacking group unity; the suggestion was made that older students should take the lead in making younger students feel welcome. In addition, between 10 and 30 March 1970, a group of volunteers went to Si Thoy sub-district, and Pa Daed sub-district, Mae Toy district, in Chiang Rai province. One of their primary projects was to offer basic healthcare;

---

[26] "โดยเฉพาะในแดนชนบทซึ่งในอดีตเคยถูกลืม เขาเหล่านั้นเป็นคนไทย อาศัยอยู่ในดินแดนไทยที่บรรพบุรุษเรารักษาไว้ด้วยเลือดและเนื้อ มอบให้เป็นมรดกแก่เราคนไทยทุกคน สมควรแล้วที่เราจะต้องช่วยกันทำนุบำรุงพี่น้องเรา และปกป้องดินแดนของเราเพื่อพวกเรา"

the number of aspirin tablets (1000), multivitamins (5000), and other medical and pharmaceutical supplies taken with them were meticulously listed.

I could continue conveying details for each of the trips undertaken by the Volunteer Development Assembly between 1969 and 1971. However, I am far more interested in the pages interspersed between each major report section in the book. There are four sets, of three pages each. In my initial reading of the book, I almost missed them – flipping quickly past them because I imagined them simply as filler or dividing pages. Perhaps the in-between pages were intended as such, but they function as far more. Each set of three pages is comprised of the following: one page with a grainy drawing depicting an aspect of rural life, one page with a paragraph signed by someone calling him/herself "the sacred hand of the countryside" (บุญมือชนบท), and then an additional page. In one case, the additional page was filled with a reproduction of a poster advertising the camp, in another it contained an unsigned snippet of writing, and in the other two cases, signed pieces of writing. I want to suggest that the poems and quotes interspersed between the development camps functioned as a counter-narrative, calling into question the camps, and the university and state apparatuses behind them. I begin with "the sacred hand …"

"The sacred hand …" seemed to address the students involved in the Assembly, and young people more generally, in his/her writing. The most striking of his/her pieces, however, was one that I read as a manifesto for Thailand's sovereignty in development. Referencing the recent increase in available agricultural machinery[27], s/he exclaimed:

> To buy a tractor to use is not strange
> **But we must follow our own path**
> When we come to this point, we must ask

[27] For an insightful analysis of the mixed effects of the Green Revolution, see Cleaver (1972). For an analysis of the Green Revolution in Thailand, see Yotopoulos (1975) and Trebuil (1995).

Is our Thai path our own, or not?
Who are we following?
We have come [this way] how many tens of years?
Would [they] listen?
[They] don't listen
The people who follow the [American] ass policy should resign first
(The sacred hand … in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p., emphasis is in original).[28]

This is a straightforward critique of development's mandates to follow a standard path set by someone else. The call for Thailand to follow its own path is not unusual. What is unusual and courageous is the presumed addressee of the writing, and the criticism made in the final, small-printed line. The book was published in 1971, and Thanom Kittikachorn was prime minister until 17 November, when he and Praphat Jarusathien staged a coup and installed themselves as military dictators. Thanom and Praphat both enjoyed close ties to the United States. I can only assume that the piece was written and the book published before the coup.

Even more thought-provoking than the sacred hand's writing, however, were the other selections. The first was an excerpt from a speech given by King Bhumipol to police and army in June 1971. In it, he urged everyone to work together to protect the country. Everyone shared the duty to do so, and if anyone did not accept his/her duty, it could be dangerous. In his words: "If any which group does their duty

---

[28] Special thanks to Thak Chaloemtiarana for help with translating this statement.
"แล้ว จะซื้อหารถแทรกเตอร์มาใช้ด้วยก็ไม่แปลก

แต่ต้องเดินไปตามเส้นทางของตัวเอง

เมื่อถึงตรงนี้ ก็เห็นจะต้องถามกันเสียแล้วละว่า

ไทยเรามีเส้นทางเป็นของตัวเองไหม?

เดินตามกันใครอยู่?

เดินมากี่สิบปีแล้ว?

ฟังไหม?

ไม่ฟัง

ถ้าผู้ที่กำหนดนโยบายเดินตามก้นลาออกไปเสียก่อน"

weakheartedly, it will be a danger. It may cause the nation to break into pieces" (qtd. in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.). In light of the knowledge that Thanom and Praphat staged a coup in November, the King's June words are almost eerie in their foresight.

The second was a Thai translation of Mae Tse-tung's poem, "Snow." The poem, written in February 1936, began with a reference to the northern land. Although the north Mao referred to was of course northern China, one can see how the reference might have also made sense within the context of Chiang Mai and northern Thailand. Mao praised the beauty of the land during the cold season, when it was blanketed with the white of the snow. Then, in the second half, he referenced prior emperors of China, including Chin Shih-huang and Han Wu-ti, who, in his assessment, lacked poetry. The time of the emperors was past, and the new generation would soon come into its own:

> But only today …
> You people who have distant vision
> We must see the new
> From the people of the new generation (Mao in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[29]

Read one way, Mao's poem may only be an homage to the beauty of the north, which could be imagined to be northern Thailand, and to the strength of the young people, or in this case, the development volunteers. One English-language commentary on the poem notes that Mao wrote it in February 1936, four months after the Long March and two months after "the policy of a national united front of resistance against Japan was formally adopted and the creation of a 'People's Republic' envisaged" (Lin 1980: 42). Nancy Lin argues that this poem must be ready within this context. Returning to

---

[29] "เหลือแต่เพียงวันนี้ .....
เธอผู้มีสายตาไกล
เราจะต้องมองหาเอาใหม่......
จากคนรุ่นใหม่"

northern Thailand, and considering the juxtaposition with the earlier critique of development, the inclusion of Mao's poem is also a critique of the old leaders in Thailand, in this case the ruling leaders Thanom and Praphat.

I translate the final unsigned snippet of writing contained on the in-between pages in full here:

> We hope very much that
> The heaping flames of ideals and purpose
> Such that all of us together have ignited
> Is ready to be ignited anew, and become better, and bigger
> (anonymous in VDA 2514 [1971]: n.p.).[30]

Left unspecified, the reader does not know what precisely constitutes these ideals. One place we might have learned more was the "rural life" issue of *Walanchathat,* for which an advertisement was placed in the back of this book. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, the notoriety of the previous issue of the *Walanchathat* on the "green danger" (military) and the coup ensured that that issue of *Walanchathat*, or any future issues, were never released.

Instead, as a conclusion I offer the following speculation. Based on the majority of the material in the book published by the Volunteer Development Assembly, they may have been the ideals of helping villagers improve and develop their lives. Yet, based on the in-between pages, they may have been critiques of the dominant form of development and hope for a new day. Perhaps it was both.

---

[30] "เราหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่า
กองเพลิงแห่งอุดมการณ์และศรัทธา
เช่นที่เราทุกคน ได้ร่วมกันจุดขึ้นนี้
พร้อมที่จะถูกจุดขึ้นใหม่ ให้ดีกว่า ยิ่งใหญ่กว่า"

A narrow conception of politics: the Return to Rural Areas Program

The Volunteer Development Assembly at Chiang Mai University was one of many small groups and clubs organized at various Thai universities to do small-scale development projects since the late 1960s.[31] Following 14 October 1973, the Sanya Thammasak government founded and heavily supported an expansion and national institutionalization of this program. The new program was given the title "Return to the Rural Areas Program," (โครงการกลับสู่ชนบท) and placed in a new Center for Democracy Propagation (ศูนย์ส่งเสริมการเผยแพร่ประชาธิปไตย) under the administration of the Bureau of Universities. The Program was given a generous budget and a committee of academics, students and bureaucrats was appointed to oversee it. While many of the earlier programs, such as the CMU Volunteer Development Assembly, were largely focused on material development, the Return to Rural Areas Program was instead focused primarily on *political education*. In the aftermath of the changes wrought by the end of dictatorship and the beginning of a kind of democracy, Sanya Thammasak "believed that the new constitution by itself would be inadequate to help the people understand their roles as public citizens. He contended that a massive political education program would greatly benefit the rural populace whose experience with self-government was so limited" (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 151).

The program began with an initial pilot launched in February 1974 covering fifty districts. In April 1974, the program was expanded to cover the entire country. Supported by a budget of 12 million baht, approximately 3000 students traveled to 580 districts across the country (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 152). All participating

---

[31] The Thammasat University Center for Volunteer Development was founded in 1967. Between 1967 and 1973, they had taken development camp trips to twenty-three places, including Chiang Rai and Narathiwat. Their work was extensively supported by Professor Puey Ungphakorn, the rector of Thammasat University between 1970 and 1976. See Thammasat University Volunteer Development Center (2516 [1973]) for photos, recollections, and self-critiques of the first six years of their action. Students at Mahidol University in Bangkok was also very active in rural development projects, see Sanguan (2546 [2003], 2547 [2004]), for accounts of their activities.

students underwent initial training and then the students traveled in mixed-gender groups of eight people to the countryside. Like earlier programs, this one had mixed results and many critics questioned if the program was relevant for the rural participants. For example, although they were only in the countryside for a few weeks, many students grew ill from eating the food and drinking the water (*Prachachaat Weekly* 1.21 (11 April 2517 [1974]: 12-13). Another critic noted that some of the students hoped to run for MP in the future and used the program as an early campaigning opportunity. Simultaneously, local influential figures and at times, military or law enforcement figures, sometimes spread rumors about the student volunteers being communist or other agitators (*Prachachaat Weekly* 1.24 (2 May 2517 [1974]: 12). Clearly both the logistics of 3000 students traveling to the countryside, as well as the potential problems when what were essentially 3000 strangers entered close-knit communities were not insignificant.

Yet in my assessment, a far more significant problem was that of precisely what constituted the *political* education at the heart of the program. To begin, how can politics or political consciousness be taught? How can it be taught in a few weeks? On this topic, one critic made the observation that:

> But the hope that students are going to propagate democratic thinking successfully and rapidly, like snapping a finger – it is something that is very hard to do. Because feelings and thinking about politics of the citizens in any county is not something that can be built in a short time. If anything, it is one kind of culture whose accumulation must take a long time (*Prachachaat Weekly* 1.24 (2 May 2517 [1974]: 13).[32]

---

[32] "แต่การหวังว่าจะเอานักศึกษาไปเผยแพร่ แนวความคิดแบบประชาธิปไตยให้สำเร็จรวดเร็วดั่งลัดนิ้วมือนั้น คงเป็นสิ่งที่เป็นไปได้ยาก เพราะความรู้สึกนึกคิดในทางการเมืองของประชาชนไม่ว่าในประเทศใด ไม่ได้เป็นสิ่งที่เราจะสร้างให้มีขึ้นมาได้เพียงชั่วระยะเวลาอันสั้น แต่หากมันเป็นวัฒนธรรมอย่างหนึ่งที่จะต้องใช้ระยะเวลาในการสั่งสมมาเป็นเวลานาน"

At best a few weeks might allow for an introduction to an idea of politics. It is to the idea of politics conceived and practiced by the Return to Rural Areas Program that I now turn to question.

Most strikingly, given the rapid growth of the farmers' movement throughout 1974, the idea of *politics* used by the Return to Rural Areas Program seemed divorced from issues of livelihood. One explanation may be that in fact it was the *farmers* who made livelihood, and the accompanying concerns of hunger and justice, *political* through their protests in the second half of 1974. In addition, one of the problems identified through the program was a lack of interest in politics by many rural inhabitants. Yet the Return to Rural Areas Program was almost concurrent with the beginning of the protests that eventually led to the establishment of the FFT. While there were many rural inhabitants who were not part of the FFT, it is still surprising that a lack of interest in politics could be identified as a problem. In order to consider these questions further, I next examine the official summary report of the program.

Upon the conclusion of the Return to Rural Areas Program, the Bureau of Universities conducted two seminars to evaluate the program. The first was held from 2-3 May 1974 at Chulalongkorn University and was attended by all of the professors who had served as advisors. The second, much larger meeting was held from 4-5 May 1974 at a Department of Police facility in Chonburi province and was attended by the student heads of each unit as well as the advisors. The bulk of the report was dedicated to a summary of the major problems found in rural areas. These problems were divided into three categories: politics and administration, economics, and social/education/health. Finally, the obstacles faced by the student volunteers and possible plans for future programs were detailed.

The problem of "interest in politics" (ความสนใจทางการเมือง) was listed as a sub-field of politics and administration. Fourteen specific observations were made about

this problem. The very first observation was "People in rural areas are interested in economic issues that are close to them, about their mouths, their stomachs, and their livelihood more than political issues" (Democracy Propagation Center 2517 [1974]: 6).[33] Here economics and survival are directly counterposed to politics. Yet, as I am attempting to show throughout this dissertation, material survival was nearly always intertwined with politics, particularly for farmers and other rural people. Of the remaining observations, seven were concerned with some aspect of elections, including a general lack of knowledge about elections, critical attitudes towards MPs generally due to the misconduct of a few in the past, lack of experience in different voting methods, and dissatisfaction with vote-buying. Although the preponderance of observations related to elections may reflect the frequent equation of democracy with elections in Thailand, surely politics is not only constituted by them? Of the remaining observations related to a lack of interest in politics, one cited was a lack of understanding of the meaning of democracy. Another addressed the problem of the domino effect of local leadership not being interested in politics, and so other people being uninterested as well. Yet another identified as a problem poor people who were interested in communist ideas because they saw them as a way to improve their lives. Another observation reported that in some areas with at-large criminals, some citizens were interested in the use of dictatorship to discipline the criminals. The final observation cited as a problem the people who think the administration of Thailand should be a mixture of socialism and democracy (Democracy Propagation Center 2517 [1974]: 6-7).

Of the fourteen suggestions for future action to take to resolve these problems, ten dealt directly with the issue of elections. The remaining four suggestions offered

---

[33] "ประชาชนในชนบทสนใจเรื่องเศรษฐกิจใกล้ตัวเกี่ยวกับปากท้องและการทำมาหากินของตนมากกว่าเรื่องการเมือง"

strategies for disseminating information about *politics*: promoting the knowledge of people about their rights and responsibilities in a democracy; including a curriculum about politics and administration in schools at various levels; promoting education about politics and administration in various kinds of media in simple, easy-to-understand language; promoting the peoples' interest and understanding about different political systems (Democracy Propagation Center 2517 [1974]: 7-8). While these strategies are exciting possibilities which might lead to a productive widening of the sphere of political participation in Thailand, it is clear that the definitions of *politics*, and the *political* envisioned here were very narrow.

Knowing that the primary form of rural political participation was conceived officially as voting, the alarm over farmers' protests in the cities acquires another level of meaning. Addressing the repeated comment that rural people lack political consciousness, Thanet Aphornsuvan asks, but how does one then explain the many farmers who went to the streets and protested? For many of their opponents, he explains, the response was to either label them as causing chaos or being the instruments of another force (Thanet 2521 [1978]: 117). Already in the early months of the farmers' protests and the foundation of the FFT we have seen these strategies leveled against the farmers. These accusations would only continue to grow as farmers and their student allies made material life political over the next months and year.

The pedagogy of solidarity: farmers and students teaching and learning against the grain

On a hot, sticky morning in late April 2005 I met with L., a former FFT activist in the garden of a sympathetic retired professor who often opens his house and garden to artists and activists as a safe (read: free from the watchful eyes or intervention of the *santiban*, the intelligence police) space. This professor's actions

today recall *Ajarn* (Professor) Angun Malik's in the 1970s. His gate is always open, and those aware of the space know that they are welcome.

I began the conversation by reminding L. that I was not recording the interview and would not use his name in my writing. Then I gave him a xerox of my contact information, along with that of my advisors at Cornell University in the U.S. and at Chiang Mai University. This was my attempt at responsibility – and came out of the recognition that many former activists remain wary of talking to outsiders about a past that remains unresolved. In my case, not only am I *farang* (foreign), but I carry a U.S. passport. Amidst lingering, unanswered questions about U.S. involvement in violence in Thailand in the 1970s, my interest in talking to former activists was nearly always met with initial suspicion. More than once, a conversation began with a joking inquiry as to whether or not I worked for the CIA. Then I was often asked about my family background and my reasons for interest in the 1970s and in activism. I always answered that my mom is a math professor and my father a retired labor negotiator who worked on the side of the capitalists. The reasons why I became interested in the activism of the period in Thailand is a longer story, but at the most basic level, my interest grows out of my own involvement in labor solidarity work as an undergraduate student. Organizing with housekeeping and groundskeeping workers at the University of North Carolina in the mid-1990s, I came to consciousness about injustice and the possibilities and limits of my position as a student. Later, interested in the possibilities of alliances between Thai and U.S. feminists, I worked as a health education volunteer and language teacher with Thai sex workers in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. In a variety of different contexts, I have continually been interested, as an activist and a scholar, as to how people differently located – in terms of class, race, nationality, space, gender, and sexual orientation – can meet across difference to work for justice together. And yet, given what is unknown about the involvement of the

U.S. government in the recent Thai past, and indeed, the present, the concerns of former activists from the 1970s are well-founded. I attempted to honor them through my research practice, and I write with them always in mind.

L. picked up the package of carrot-flavored sesame candy that I had brought as a small thank you gift. The candy was divided into six pieces in a translucent wrapper. We began by talking about the Land Rent Control Act, and he used the candy to illustrate to me how the Act changed the distribution of rice between landowners and land tenants. Placing his finger along the edge of the second piece of candy he explained that after the act was passed, landowners could only take one-third of the rice.

"Did the Act work, did landowners really take only one-third?" I asked.

L. responded that Act worked because "in some places because the land owners were afraid of the Communist Party – but in some areas they weren't afraid. In other situations they tried to create fear and anxiety. Many different groups organized against the three links – the students, farmers, and workers – including the Red Gaurs. They were right-wing university students. Also the Nawaphon, who included some farmers – the kind of farmers who were headmen and in other related high-up positions."[34] That the Land Rent Control Act was the law was quite immaterial. Once it reached districts its implementation was inconsistent, varying from one locality to another. The irony of the landowners adhering to the terms of the Land Rent Control Act due to fear of the CPT is that in L.'s assessment, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) wasn't involved in the land rent struggle because they did not see it as regime

---

[34] "ในบางที่เพราะเจ้าของที่ดินก็กลัวพคท. แต่ในบางที่ก็ไม่กลัว ในบางสถานการณ์พวกเจ้าของพยายามวาดเกรงวาดกลัว หลายๆกลุ่มก็เกิดจัดตั้งต่อต้านสามประสาน – นักศึกษา ชาวนาชาวไร่ กรรมกร – ประกอบด้วยกระทิงแดง ที่เป็นนักศึกษาขวาจัด ด้วยนวพล ประกอบด้วย ชาวนาบ้างคน ชาวนาแบบที่เป็นกำนั้นหรือสภาพสูงอย่างอื่นๆ"

or structural change. Yet, as he pointed out to me, the land rent struggle was the most important struggle for the farmers, especially those in the north.

L. was a teenager during the 1970s, and his father and uncles were also involved in the FFT. As he talked about his life as a young FFT activist, I was struck by the energy with which he spoke – the sharpness with which he believed another future might have been possible, had it not been crushed by the string of assassinations of FFT leaders and the 6 October 1976 massacre. His longing for this unrealized future was most acute in his comparison of material life in the mid-1970s to the present moment. Referencing the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, he said,

"Na, *nong*, thirty years ago, in the fields there was rice, in the rivers there were fish."[35]

Surprised, I said, "Really, *phii*?"

"Really. But now, there is not. Because the chemicals kill everything. There is a kind of snail that eats the rice – people want to kill the snail – but it kills everything. There are no more fish in the rice fields. People have to sell all their rice – or another product – for the market. Maybe they can sell it for 100,000 baht. But then you have to

---

[35] "น่ะ น้อง ๓๐ ปีมาแล้ว ในน้ำมีปลา นามีข้าว"; Although its authenticity is contested, the Ramkhamhaeng inscription dates from 1292 C.E. (see Chamberlain (1991) for an exhaustive treatment of the various perspectives in the debate). The entire first verse from which this statement is drawn reads:
"In the time of King Ramkhamhaeng the land of Sukhothai is thriving.
There are fish in the water and rice in the fields.
The lord of the realm does not levy toll on his subjects.
They are free to lead their cattle or ride their horses to engage in trade;
Whoever wants to trade in horses, does so;
Whoever wants to trade in silver or gold, does so."
The inscription is attributed to King Ramkhamhaeng and used in many different ways. Perhaps most indicative of its continuing relevance are the critical reworkings of it by various activists. For example, during the May 2000 protests against the Asian Development Bank in May 2000, anti-privatization activists printed posters and t-shirts with the following re-inscription:
"There is a price on the water (ในน้ำมีราคา)
There are meters in the fields (ในนามีมิเตอร์)
Whoever wants to market hospitals, does so (ใครใคร่ค้าโรงพยาบาลค้า)
Whoever wants to market universities, does so (ค้ามหาวิทยาลัยค้า)."

use that money to buy food, to pay school fees, to buy medicines, all with that amount of money. For a whole year. It's impossible," he explained.[36]

Now, even if there were fish alive in the rice fields, the use of pesticides and other chemicals would make them dangerous to eat.[37] But it wasn't only the changes in the availability and safety of food that he cited as important differences of the intervening thirty years. L. continued talking, and said "Another thing that is different is that the next generation of farmers have been able to study further. So now they work in the city as soldiers or police, or if they are women, they work as teachers. Now they have more money, more things, a bigger house."[38]

I asked him if many of the younger generation were involved in the current struggles of the farmers over landlessness and community forestry.[39]

"Some, but not very many. They aren't farmers anymore, their parents are farmers," he said.[40]

"Do you think their lives are better, because of your struggles?" I asked. After the 6 October 1976 massacre, L. fled to the jungle to join the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) along with many other student and farmer activists. He came out in 1983, as the CPT was dissolving. In his view, it was often harder for the farmers to return from the jungle than it was for the students. Students were able, although with some difficulty, to re-enter universities and continue studying. Then they graduated,

---

[36] "จริง แต่ตอนนี้ไม่มีแล้ว เพราะว่าสารเคมีจะฆ่าทุกอย่าง มีหอยชนิดหนึ่งที่ทำลายข้าว คนก็ต้องการฆ่าหอย แต่ก็ฆ่าทุกอย่าง ในนาไม่มีปลากิน ทุกคนต้องขายข้าว – หรือผลิตผลอื่นๆ ทั้งหมดในตลาด – อาจจะได้ ๑๐๐,๐๐๐ บาท แต่ต้องใช้เงินจำนวนนี้สำหรับอาหาร สำหรับค่าเรียน สำหรับยา เพื่อหนึ่งปี ไม่ไหวหลอก"

[37] See Anat and Hudak (2000) for analysis of the dangers of residual pesticides in Thailand.

[38] "อีกหนึ่งอย่างที่เปลี่ยนก็คือรุ่นหลังของชาวนาได้เรียนต่อ ทำงานในเมือง เป็นทหาร ตำรวจ หรือสำหรับผู้หญิงไปทำงานเป็นครู มีเงินมากว่า มีของเยอะกว่า มีบ้านใหญ่กว่า"

[39] See Northern Farmers' Federation (2543 [2001]) for an introduction to the current issues and groups organizing in the north.

[40] "ก็มีคนบางคนแต่ไม่มีกี่คน รุ่นหลังไม่ใช่เป็นชาวนาแล้ว พ่อแม่เป็นชาวนา"

and had a degree and could go to work easily. When farmers came out they had to find a new piece of land to use. If they had a family, they had to find a piece of land large enough to support their entire family.

L. laughed and said, "Is their life better? I am not sure. Perhaps more comfortable, perhaps easier. But better, I am not sure. I am not sure."[41] After listening to and thinking about his answer, I remain uncertain if the second part of my question went across. Instead he seemed to compare his life to theirs – and despite the material difficulties and deprivation he faced in the FFT and later in the Communist Party, and after returning from the jungle, he assesses their lives of relative ease as somehow lacking. What constitutes this lack? Perhaps it is the possibility of a different future. Perhaps it is the shared life of struggle. Perhaps it is something else.

While students who worked with farmers often spoke about their experiences in the villages as a time of awakening and shared lives with farmers, I wondered if farmers perceived the experience similarly. Concerned with the dangers of romanticizing either the farmer-student relationships, or farmers themselves, I continually attempted to ask questions about sources of tension and conflict among farmers and students.[42] In one of my attempts to address this, I asked L. if the students

---

[41] "ชีวิตเขาดีกว่าไหม่ พี่ไม่แน่ใจ อาจจะสบายกว่า อาจจะง่ายกว่า แต่ดีกว่า พี่ก็ไม่แน่ใจเลย"

[42] The dangers and pitfalls of romanticizing resistance are well-known (Abu-Lughod 1990). I offer Derek Sayer's words here as a preliminary caution: "I would also insist on a further rider, which is not irrelevant to twentieth-century history and some of its more characteristic tragedies. The presumed progression from unarticulated, latent revolutionary sentiment – the subversive subscripts – into a political project makes me deeply suspicious. What is going on here is a translation and a totalization. I want to ask, by and for whom? Usually it is intellectuals in positions of power, who articulate that what they *claim* is already there as *vox populi*. Nevertheless, to translate is to traduce, to betray. There are ways of constituting popular culture – of constituting resistance – from the diversities we are trying to make sense of, which disturbingly mirror the way "the state" is itself ideologically constituted. And the implications of this totalization are not merely epistemological" (Sayer 1994: 372). My concern is slightly different. In my desire to celebrate the transformative effects and potential of the new alliances between farmers and students, I do not want to elide the inequalities between farmers and students and how they may have operated within the alliances. In refusing this elision, I am not discounting the significance of the alliances, or attempting to render them as ineffective in any way, but rather taking them as seriously and rigorously as I do the forms of violence which attempted to destroy them.

who came to the villages, either with the Return to Rural Areas Program or the Farmer Project, helped to buy the food they ate while in the village. He seemed almost offended, or at least surprised by my question.

"Oh no, no, the students were like the children, the grandchildren, of the farmers. One day they ate at this house, and then the next day they ate and slept at another house."[43] Further, he noted, when one of the FFT leaders had to flee to the jungle following repeated assassination attempts in 1975, he stayed with students in the city to avoid detection by state or right-wing forces for two or three months before he was able to go to the jungle (Interview with former FFT activist, Chiang Mai, 25 April 2005).

I later realized that many factors, including the time of my research – and perhaps the workings of nostalgia, particularly as they emerged in the neoliberal present – and perhaps the reticence to share negative or critical reflections with an outsider, a young (I was born in 1976), middle-class American one at that -- affected the kinds of memories and responses people shared with me. This recognition only came months later when I began to write. In response, I draw on other sources in order to trace potential tension and conflict.

*

The passage of the new Land Rent Control Act on 16 December 1974 was the *beginning* of a new phase of struggle, not the end of the struggle for land rent relief in Chiang Mai province. First, the Act inaugurated a brief liminal legal moment. As you will recall, the 1950 Land Rent Control Act was never decreed outside of central Thailand, and in fact was repealed in the first lines of the 1974 Act. Yet, until the district and provincial committees stipulated to determine the rental rates in the 1974

---

[43] "ไม่ใช่ นักศึกษาเป็นแบบลูกเป็นหลานของชาวนา วันหนึ่งจะกินในบ้านนี้ แล้วในวันหน้าไปกินและนอนที่บ้านอื่น"

Act were set up, the rental rates from the 1950 Act were in force. Second, although the 1974 Act applied immediately to the entire country, farmers did not necessarily immediately learn about or benefit from the Act. Standing in their way was the general bureaucratic slowness affecting the Thai (and many other) bureaucracies as well as intentional refusals by some civil servants and landowners to spread information about and adhere to the Act. Both of these things – the liminal legal moment and the slowdowns in spreading information about the Act – created situations in which landowners, farmers, and their allies found themselves in new and transformed positions.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue that these positions were deeply political. My definition of *political* differs greatly from that used by the Return to Rural Areas Program. When I contend that they were in newly *political* positions, I mean that the relations among landowners, farmers, and their allies were constituted by and constitutive of contention whose meaning and effects exceeded each single relation between any two individuals. As the events of the year following the passage of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act illustrated, this contention was not only about the price of land rent, but also shot through with matters of life and death.

*

On 29 December 1974, just over ten days after the Land Rent Control Act was signed, the governor of Chiang Mai, Asa Meksawan, sent a copy of the new Act to every district officer in Chiang Mai. He requested that they immediately distribute copies to every sub-district and village headman in their districts. The important thing, he noted, was that the citizens in each district learn immediately about the Act (C.M. 1.2.2/20: n.p.). The provincial land rent committee was established in Chiang Mai on 3 March 1975. Elections for the district committees were held on 9 and 10 March 1975 (*Thai Niu* 9 March 2518 [1975]: 3). On 18 August 1975, a manual about

the implementation of the Act, including additional guidelines created by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, was sent to each district officer. Each district officer was then asked to share it with the district land rent committee and any district officials who might be involves (C.M. 1.2.2/22: n.p.). Despite all of these measures, implementation of the Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai was uneven. Some farmers knew about it the day it was passed, and others had to wait for many months to learn about their new right, I address both sides of this unevenness in turn below.

Much to the consternation of landowners, some tenant farmers began using the rental rates stipulated by the 1950 Act almost immediately. When landowners came to collect the rental payment in late December and early January, farmers refused to pay the high rates they requested. The FFT in Chiang Mai and Lamphun reported in mid-December that there had been “600 cases of successful resistance to ‘landlords’ bullying’ and 100 cases of refusal to pay rents above the new legal maximum” (Turton 1982: 36). In response, the landowners adopted the tactics of the farmers and organized and took to the streets. On 7 January 1975, at 11 a.m., a group of approximately 200 landowners from various districts in Chiang Mai marched to the provincial office to meet with Asa Meksawan. They were very angry and believed that the new terms of land rent were unfair and unjust (ไม่เป็นธรรม).

The tenant farmers were offering them ten *thang* per *rai* as payment, which was the maximum rate stipulated by the 1950 Act. Thon Chaichompoo, a landowner from Saraphi district who rented out twenty-two rai to tenants, was upset that his tenants were only offering this amount. He expected that they would pay the former amount, which he did not specify precisely but claimed was one out of three parts of the entire harvest.

No matter the reason, Asa Meksawan's response to the landowners and their representations was to inform them that at this time, as the provincial and district committees were not yet set up, they could not yet follow the terms of the new act, and so were compelled to follow the terms of the 1950 Act. Addressing landowners, he said that he would " … rather that you compromise with goodwill. If they have to cite the Act, it will destroy the goodwill between you" (*Thai Niu* 8 January 2518 [1975]: 12).[44] Unlike many other state officials, over the next year, Asa continued to support the farmers, even when it caused him to be criticized.

Although some farmers knew immediately about the changes in land rent, many did not. In addition, many were afraid to push landowners to adhere to it and face the potential anger of landowners. Part of the problem was that although the Land Rent Control Act contained specific provisions for its implementation and enforcement, many sub-district and village heads simply chose not to cooperate and not to inform farmers of their new rights.[45] Therefore, the farmers decided to organize and inform one another. In collaboration with students and lawyers, the FFT engaged in a massive legal rights education campaign.

Students supported the farmers' organizing efforts from an early stage by raising money for their protests, accompanying them to speak with government officials, and joining the farmers' protests on Sanam Luang in Bangkok and in front of the Chiang Mai provincial office. However, this support took a new form following the passage of the Land Rent Control Act. In Chiang Mai, M. and other students concerned about farmers' issues organized themselves the Farmer Project (โครงการชาวนา).

---

[44] "อยากให้ออมซอมมีน้ำใจกันมากกว่า เอาตัวบทกฎหมายมาอ้างกันจะทำให้ขาดน้ำใจรักใคร่กัน"

[45] According to 1976 administrative categories, in Chiang Mai province alone, there were nineteen districts. These nineteen districts were comprised of 179 sub-districts, which were further subdivided into 1462 villages (National Statistical Office 1981: 5).

Working with the FFT, the students of the Farmer Project spread information about the Land Rent Control Act and helped farmers use the committees established by the act to dispute unjust landlords. I argue that through these alliances, students and farmers began learning from and teaching each other. In a Freirian (1970) sense, both students and farmers came to consciousness. For farmers who learned about the Act, this knowledge marked the possibility of a more just land tenant-landlord relation and also a new position as political subjects who could exercise rights. As students left the classrooms to struggle side-by-side with the farmers, they learned about the realities of injustice and another way of life. Through their work together, both farmers and students became aware of their positions vis-à-vis one another – and later, how these positions were implicated in danger.

In their early actions together, students remained in the role of teacher. One former activist with the Northern Student Center and the Farmer Project explained that following the passage of the 1974 Act:

> I and the other CMU students who were activists copied the bill by mimeograph. Then we distributed it to farmers in Lamphun – 3000 copies. Then in each district, the farmer leader spread the news. They set up a meeting and would invite the students to come to the meeting. They used the students to explain the bill to farmers in each district.

Not only students, but activist lawyers were deployed to decode the new act and what it meant for farmers' lives. Pradap Manurasada, a noted human rights lawyer, was one of these lawyers. Writing in his father's funeral book, one of his sons who attended CMU recalled:

> I can remember a clear picture of my father sitting in a meeting with farmers, educating the farmers in Hang Dong – Mae Rim – Mae Taeng until it was night-time in the middle of the rice field. It was good, there was a table, one chair, and a lamp. He explained the land rent control

> act, their rights, and the development of different laws (Panrat 2537 [1994]: 127).[46]

A colleague of Pradap's offered that while he was involved in advocating for farmers who launched cases under the Land Rent Control Act, Pradap often traveled between Chiang Mai and Bangkok, where he lived. Pradap did not receive any money for the work, and in fact, he paid for his own food and lodging. The owner of a bus company that traveled the Chiang Mai-Bangkok route supported the movement and allowed him to ride for free (Sansern 2537 [1994]: 61-62).

The dynamic between farmers and students shifted as a result of the work of the FFT and the Farmer Project. While the idea behind the Return to Rural Areas Program had been that students would teach rural people about democracy and politics, in this case students and farmers began learning from each other, and teaching each other together. The rice fields were one literal site where farmers learned about their new rights. Once farmers understood their rights under the Act, they could, at least in theory, demand fair rent prices. The rice fields, and the villages that bordered them, were also places where students learned the meanings of politics and political responsibility. Former student activists in Chiang Mai have commented to me that their lives were changed by going to work in the villages with the farmers. With support from sympathetic professors who excused their non-attendance, activist students such as the CMU student with whom I began this chapter began learning from farmers, rather than in the classrooms.

I want to be clear that this process was not seamless, and power was not necessarily shared equally. In a study completed nearly ten years after the 6 October 1976 coup forced the farmers and students to either disband or take their struggle

---

[46] "ผมจำภาพได้ดี ที่คุณพ่อนั่งประชุมให้การศึกษาแก่ชาวนา หางดง-แม่ริม-แม่แตง จนค่ำมืดกลางทุ่งนา อย่างดีก็มีโต๊ะเก่า ๆ กับเก้าอี้ 1 ตัว กับตะเกียงเจ้าพายุ อธิบายกฎหมายเช่านา สิทธิและขบวนการทาง กฎหมายต่างๆ"

underground, Andrew Turton raised many critiques of their collaboration. Chief among them was that the students took too strong a role in setting the agenda and strategies of the FFT (Turton et al. 1987: 42). While I am mindful of this concern, I am reluctant to wholeheartedly agree that it was students who radicalized farmers through their sharing of the writings of Mao and Che Guevara. First, students were not the only group of individuals who chose to join the CPT, even before the 6 October 1976 coup made it imperative for many. L., the younger FFT activist I discussed earlier, commented that the CPT's idea of surrounding the cities with the countryside came more easily to the farmers than the students. More important, however, is that I assess the impact of working side-by-side with farmers as a far more radicalizing event for students than the effects of students on farmers.

Commenting on the rising wave of violence against farmers, which I will take up fully in the next chapter, one farmer activist commented that in the months before 6 October 1976, "it was a well known fact that if you had students at your house who wore glasses, and officials or the headman came around, you had to hide them inside your house and not let them be seen" (Notes from CPT reunion, 7 May 2005, Chiang Mai).[47] Resonantly, a former student activist explained that, "I didn't make myself known in the village. Because I could leave, but the villagers couldn't leave. I didn't want to cause problems for the people. This was my responsibility to the people" (Notes from CPT reunion, 15 May 2005, Chiang Mai).[48] His learning to be responsible involved an appraisal of his own mobility and status in contrast to those of the villagers. To learn to be responsible in this moment was to learn how to be in

---

[47] "เป็นข้อเท็จจริงว่า ถ้ามีนักศึกษาที่ใส่แว่นอยู่ที่บ้าน แล้วมีเจ้าหน้าที่รัฐหรือกำนันมา ต้องไว้นักศึกษาในบ้าน ไม่ให้ดู"

[48] "ผมไม่ปรากฏตัวอยู่ในหมู่บ้าน เพราะผมไปได้ก็ได้ แต่ชาวบ้านไปไม่ได้ ไม่ต้องการให้ ประชาชน เดือดร้อน อันนี้เป็น ความรับผิดชอบต่อประชาชน"

alliance, how to struggle together with the knowledge of what this struggle means for the lives of all involved.

I framed this chapter by beginning with a reflection on the ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In the heady atmosphere of questioning the educational system following October 1973, interest in Freire's ideas emerged in Thailand. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was translated into Thai in 1974, twice (Freire 2517a [1974a], Freire 2517b [1974b]). Both Thai translations of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* were published in 1974, within months of each other. One was published by the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) and the other by the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST). The publishers' introductions to both translations focus overwhelmingly on education as a possibly liberating and humanizing process (Freire 2517a [1974a]; Freire 2517b [1974b]). While a comparison of the two translations might offer insight into the tensions between the two student organizations, here I choose to temporarily elide the differences between the translations and celebrate the demand for Freire's ideas the two translations indicate.[49] In a note to the readers following the text of the FIST translation of Freire, the translator, Cho Khiewphumphuang, explained that in the world there were two kinds of people: the oppressed (ผู้ถูกกดขี่) and the oppressors (ผู้กดขี่).[50] Cho further noted that people must choose to stand with either the oppressed or the oppressors, and the person who says s/he is "in the middle" ("ความเป็นกลาง") is lying (Cho 2517 [1974]: 196). When student activists and farmers worked together to demand the rights

---

[49] Although I must do so cautiously – despite my excitement at learning of the two translations, I did not meet a former activist who had actually read it at the time. Although many people mentioned having heard of the book, it was not cited by anyone I spoke with as important to their lives.

[50] Cho Khiewphumphuang, the pen name of a Chulalongkorn University professor, also translated Everett Reimer's *School is Dead* (Reimer 2517 [1974]) and Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 2517 [1974]). Between 1973 and 1976, hundreds of progressive books on a wide range of topics were written in Thai and translated into Thai. See Akagi (1978) for an annotated bibliography of many of these books.

promised by the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, they learned to see in the two grave categories of oppressor and oppressed.[51] As their solidarity deepened throughout 1975 and became further implicated in the grave matters of life and death, this education could be nothing but political for farmers and students.

[51] This formulation belongs to Doreen Lee (personal communication, 8 August 2004). This recognition, she notes, is the site of risk and learning – as well as the home of errors. I bracket these errors for further consideration in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE
VIOLENCE AND ITS DENIALS

> "Rather than view violence, then, simply as a set of discrete events, which quite obviously it also can be, the perspective I am advancing seeks to unearth those entrenched processes of ordering the social world and making (or realizing) culture that themselves are forms of violence: violence that is multiple, mundane, and perhaps all the more fundamental because it is hidden or secret violence out of which images of people are shaped, experiences of groups are coerced, and agency itself is engendered" (Kleinman 2000: 239).

In the last chapter, I traced the disparate protests leading up to the establishment of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) in November 1974. Simultaneously, I historicized the emergence of student alliances with farmers in the form of the Chiang Mai-based Farmer Project by noting its departures from earlier development-oriented endeavors and concurrent state-sponsored programs. When farmers and students came together in solidarity in 1974 and 1975 to first pass and then implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act in the north, I argued, they catalyzed a political and social transformation. Farmers brought their demands to the city streets and became vocal advocates for their own rights. Students learned about rural life, the struggles of farmers for livelihood and justice, and their own places alongside farmers in those struggles.

Working together, farmers and students effectively accomplished their goal of spreading information about the standardized and lowered amounts of land rent required under the new Act. Yet, extending beyond their immediate action around land rent issues in 1974 and 1975, I argued that through their work together, farmers and students actively imagined and created the possibility of a different, shared future. At the center of their solidarity, and the acute possibilities for change it foreshadowed, was transgression. The possibility for a different future emerged precisely out of the risks and pleasures experienced by farmers and students coming together across often

disparate class origins and futures and across rural and urban spaces to work for shared goals.

This transgression came with a price. In the short-term, farmer-student organizing around land rent issues threatened to reduce the financial profits of the landowners. Far more significant, however, farmers and students together represented a force which could transform the very social and political order which underpinned landowners' elite and powerful positions. The farmers' organizing was soon met with a range of violent acts which I argue constituted a backlash. Farmers and their allies faced intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, and ultimately assassination at the hands of state and para-state forces.

In total, between March 1974 and September 1979, thirty-three farmer leaders were assassinated, eight were seriously injured, and five were disappeared (Kanoksak 2530 [1987]: 161-166).[1] At the height of the assassinations, between March 1975 and August 1975, twenty-one FFT leaders were killed (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 226). The assassinations were particularly concentrated in Chiang Mai, where eight FFT leaders were assassinated in the two months between June and August 1975 alone (Bowie 1997: 155).[2] The assassinations of farmers were committed openly and seemingly without fear of consequence. In late 1975 and 1976, the Farmers' Federation of Thailand largely disappeared from public sight and farmers and students took their struggles underground.

---

[1] These numbers reflect the assassinations, injuries, and disappearances which made it into the news at the time. See Appendix C at the end of this dissertation for a listing of the names and dates of the known events.

[2] Farmers were not the only group targeted during this period – students, workers, journalists, and socialist party members were also assassinated. See "Kathakaam Kanmuang"*[Political Killings]*, *Prachachaat Weekly* 18 March 2519 [1976], pages 29-39 for biographies of different activists who were assassinated.

Many activists and critics that I spoke with offered a range of theories linking the assassinations in the north to conflict over the Land Rent Control Act.[3] Unfortunately, this assertion, which informs my writing here, has never been proven or disproven. Given that there have been no prosecutions for the assassinations, the precise *cause* of the assassinations must remain unknown. Further, the identities of the assassins, or the larger forces behind the assassinations, have never been confirmed. Speculation identifies a combination of elite landholding interests as well as state and right-wing forces. Thirty years after the assassinations of the FFT leaders, the assassins have still not been named. When I asked one former CMU activist in 2005 if he thought it would be possible to name the assassins in his, or my, lifetime, he didn't hesitate before replying with a definitive **no** (Author interview with former CMU activist, Bangkok, 15 June 2005).

In response to this unnameability, here I offer one version of the events leading up to and surrounding the assassinations. I take as a starting premise that among the issues that the FFT was active around in the north, the struggle for land rent control was the most materially, socially, and politically contentious. At once, land rent control raised the ire of landowners and some of their state allies and also offered farmers and their student allies tangible opportunities to change both their own lives and Thai society. Therefore, the story that I tell in this chapter is at once one of the brutal violence that racked farmers' lives, and also the profound social and political transformation that this violence signaled.

[3] In an article written shortly after the assassinations of Intha Sribunruang, a leader and intellectual of the FFT, in late July 1975, Katherine Bowie and Brian Phelan observed that the villages where FFT leaders were killed were those with both a high rate of tenancy as well as many farmers who belonged to the FFT (1975: 5). Kanoksak Kaewthep cited the Land Rent Control Act as a factor that obstructed "the exploitation of local landlords and capitalists. As a result, severe conflict arose between the peasants and the FFT on the one hand, and the landlords, capitalists and local officials who joined the landlords to protect their interests, on the other hand" (1985: 162). Intha Sriwongwan, a northern FFT leader, asserted that the assassinations were carried out by hired gunmen, and happened "because landlords were scared that the farmers' activities would erode the stranglehold the landlords have on the land tenure in the North" (quoted in *Bangkok Post* 11 July 1975: 1).

Although the effects of the backlash soon exceeded them, I begin with two stories of contention between tenants and landlords that sprung up shortly following the passage of the Land Rent Control Act on 16 December 1974. Hasawut Withitwichaikul, a Thammasat University law professor, commented that the Act "created an opportunity where landowners and tenants really had to confront each other face-to-face" (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 35).[4] At once tense, these meetings were also rife with the possibility of betrayal. I then foreground the violence with which the FFT's organizing was met by examining the heightened fears of communist revolution in Thailand following the falls of Saigon and Phnom Penh in April 1975. At the height of this anticommunist fervor, in early May 1975 the FFT returned to Bangkok to protest for what would be the last time. Shortly after the farmers vowed never to return to Bangkok again, the assassinations of FFT leaders intensified.

Then I place the assassinations of FFT leaders within the context of a range of violence against farmer activists and other new political actors. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's (1990) work on political killing, I show that the assassinations were, and remain, a grave threat to parliamentary democracy. Next I examine a range of state responses to the assassinations of farmer leaders. In so doing, the lack of action by various state actors emerges as a *threat* both to farmers and, referencing Anderson, the possibility of a parliamentary system.

I then turn to the life and death of one important FFT leader, Intha Sribunruang. Intha was at the forefront of the fight to implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and the neighboring provinces. By tracing his murder as an act of violence that tore through his family, I highlight how the political became devastatingly personal. Through exploring his life and death, I also cast the

---

[4] "เปิดโอกาสให้เจ้าของที่นากับผู้เช่านาทำกินต้องประจัญหน้ากันอย่างมาก"

assassinations of FFT leaders as part of a concerted attempt to subjugate dissenting views and actors. Throughout this chapter, I am mindful of the activist actions taken in response to the indifference, denials, and dissimulation of some state actors. The peaceful protests initiated by the farmers' movement and farmer-student alliances following Intha's death functioned to interrupt state, para-state, landholding, and other elite influence and violence. Finally, as a conclusion, I consider the political and analytic implications of the inability to name the assassins of the farmers.

Immediate tensions of implementation

As you will recall from my discussion of the terms of the 1974 Act, the amount of the required land rent payment was to be determined by district committees. However the process of even determining the membership of the committees extended well into 1975. Until the committees set the new amount, the rates stipulated by the 1950 Land Rent Control Act were to be used. The maximum allowed under the 1950 Act was ten *thang* of rice per *rai* of paddy land.[5] In the Ping River basin (including many parts of Chiang Mai and Lamphun), which has very high rice yields, this could amount to even less than one-quarter of the total rice harvest.

One Chiang Mai landowner, Saengkaew Waelayen, that I mentioned in the previous chapter noted that prior to the passage of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, he required his tenants to pay him twenty-five *thang*, or one-third of the total harvest of seventy-five *thang* of rice. Following the passage of the Act, his tenants refused to pay him the prior amount, and offered him only ten *thang* per rai. He was upset with this – not least he said, because when he requested the previously-agreed-upon twenty-

[5] 1 thang = 20 liters. 1 rai = 0.4 acres.

five *thang*, he was "accused of wanting to fleece" the farmers (*Thai Niu* 8 January 2518 [1975]: 12).[6]

Eiakiew Chalermsuphakul, a landowner in Lamphun, faced a different situation. On 23 December 1974, one week after the Land Rent Control Act was signed into law, he met with fifteen farmers who rented land from him to divide the year's rice harvest. When he sat down with his tenants, he demanded half the rice harvest. This group of farmers had rented from him for many years, and he expected the usual rental amount. But the farmers only offered one-third of the harvest (likely already high above the ten *thang* ceiling that they were now required to pay under the law). Eiakiew and the farmers argued for many hours. They were unable to come to an agreement.

Eiakiew began to feel displeased with the situation. He pulled out a gun. He fired four shots. Luckily, the bullets did not hit anyone. Immediately, the farmers left the meeting and went to the police station to report his actions.

Eiakiew was called to the police station. He confessed that he shot his gun four times into the ground. He was charged with three offenses: intimidating and frightening other people, carrying a gun in a community, and discharging a gun in a community. He was assessed 1600 baht for his crimes. Upon paying his fines, Eiakiew left the police station (*Thai Niu* 26 December 2517 [1974]: 1, 12).

In the newspaper report about the event, the inability to reach an agreement with the farmers was cited as the trigger for Eiakiew's anger. The Land Rent Control Act brought with it not only standardized, reduced rental prices, but also the support for farmers to hold landlords to the new prices. If the landlords didn't follow the new Act, farmers could, and did, sue them. Nearly overnight landlords lost their prerogative to set the terms of paddy land rental. Land rent instead became a relation

[6] "ถูกกล่าวหาว่าเป็นผู้ขูดรีดใคร"

between two parties, who, even if not equal per se, met on a shared terrain. This, perhaps, was part of what made Mr. Eiakiew angry.

Yet not all landowners expressed their displeasure with the new land rent regime with the same criminal flair as Eiakiew Chalermsuphakul. Instead, many landowners simply refused to divide the rice. Leave the rice in the fields, some large landowners reportedly said, let it rot. While large landowners could do this, this spelled hunger and suffering for tenant farmers and their families. Some tenant farmers sued the landowners for not following the law; these cases made their way through the courts slowly.

In other cases, farmers used the forces of public scrutiny and electoral politics to pressure landowners to follow the new Act. This strategy worked particularly well with Worasak Nimmanan, who ran as a Democrat Party candidate for MP in the third zone of Chiang Mai province in the 26 January 1975 election.[7] Worasak was one of the outspoken opponents of the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai that I discussed in Chapter Two. Notably, Worasak opposed the 1950 Act because he claimed that if he received anything less than half the rice harvest from his tenants, his family would starve (CM 1.2.2/3: 37). His words, along with those of other major Chiang Mai landowners, were powerful enough to keep the 1950 Act from being decreed. In 1975, the Northern Student Center identified Worasak as one of the two largest landowners in Chiang Mai province (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 34). Despite his firm status as a wealthy landowner, by 1975, Worasak faced a dramatically different political landscape than that of the early 1950s.

One of the districts in which Worasak rented out land was Sanpatong. In late December 1974, he went to meet his tenants there to divide the rice harvest. At their

---

[7] The third zone included Sanpatong, Hang Dong, Chomthong, Doi Tao, Hod, Mae Chaem, and Omkoi districts. Two MPs were to be elected from this zone (Prachachaat Daily 2518 [1975]: 415).

first meeting, he was evasive with the farmers. He claimed to have no knowledge of the newly-passed Land Rent Control Act. He left Sanpatong without reaching an agreement with the farmers. However, Worasak pledged to return on the first day of 1975 with new years' presents for the farmers and to properly divide the harvest. Despite his promise, 1 January 1975 came and went without Worasak's return to Sanpatong (*Thin Thai* 3 January 2518 [1975]: 1, 10).

Worasak finally returned to Sanpatong at 10:30 a.m. on the morning of 2 January. This time he did not claim ignorance of the new Act, he simply refused to follow it. Instead, he tried to reach a compromise with the farmers. The farmers responded by requesting that he follow the law and adhere to the rental rates outlined in the new Act. Tensions between Worasak and the farmers grew heated enough that the police were called to observe the meeting.

After failing to reach an agreement with the farmers, on 2 January Worasak again left Sanpatong without dividing the rice harvest. He said to leave the rice in the fields. When the farmers came to plead and beseech him to divide the rice, then he would listen to them.

However, the farmers didn't see a need to implore Worasak to divide the rice. Instead, they told a Chiang Mai daily newspaper, *Thin Thai*, of the events that had transpired and his refusal to divide the rice harvest according to the law. The farmers said that with holdings of over 1000 *rai*, Worasak's behavior was like that of other capitalists. The farmers believed that the delay in dividing the rice would be temporary one. With the election coming up, he couldn't afford to lose votes (*Thin Thai* 6 January 2518 [1975]: 1, 10).

The farmers were right. As soon as the farmers' story was printed in *Thin Thai*, Worasak Nimmanan sought out the editor of the paper in order to tell his version of the story. First of all, he claimed that there were only 500-600 *rai* of land in Sanpatong

for which he was responsible, not 1000 *rai*. Further, of the 500-600 *rai*, only 80 *rai* belonged to him. The rest belonged to his wife's family; he simply administered it.

Then, in a tactic that reappeared again and again throughout 1975, Worasak claimed that those who claimed to speak for the farmers were not farmers in Sanpatong, but were actually politicians.[8] Nevertheless, Worasak said that he would be happy to accept the legally stipulated rent of ten *thang* of rice per *rai* of paddy land cultivated. If the yield for any given *rai* was less than forty *thang*, he would accept six *thang* as rental payment (*Thin Thai* 7 January 2518 [1975]: 1, 10). Despite his quick acquiescence, Worasak lost the election for MP to Songsuk Phakkhesem, a fellow Democrat, and Inson Buakiew, a Socialist Party candidate from Hang Dong district.[9]

Worasak's loss in 1975 was a far cry from his experience in the early 1950s. When he and other landowners were threatened by the possible decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act, they simply denied the veracity of the protesting farmers' claims about their hunger and impoverishment to the provincial representative of the Ministry of Interior charged with making a recommendation about the decree. The farmers were not given a chance to refute Worasak's assertions. They likely did not even learn of the precise content of them, since the meeting between landowners and provincial officials was a closed, by-invitation-only meeting at the provincial hall. The only accusation that the farmers heard from the landowners about the never-decreed Act was that it was "a communist law" (*Kittisak* 7 September 2494 [1951]: 6).

---

[8] In 1950, Worasak claimed that the farmers from Saraphi district who called for the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai were not *really* poor (C.M 1.2.2./3: 38). Instead, in 1975, he denied that the farmers who called on him to follow the law were farmers at all.

[9] Perhaps Worasak was unconcerned about his relations with his tenants in Hang Dong (where he also owned rice paddy land) because it was apparent even before the election took place that Inson had widespread support in his home district. Whatever the reason, Worasak refused to divide the rice harvest according to the terms of the Land Rent Control Act in Hang Dong. In July 1975, over thirty farmers brought a case against him for his refusal to follow the law (*Thai Niu* 19 July 2518 [1975]: 1, 12; *Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 35).

In 1950, Worasak exercised power behind closed doors to ensure that there was no change in the land rent regime. Instead, in 1975, the farmers brought their disagreement into full public view in the newspaper. Worasak was forced to respond to their accusations. At once a productive strategy for forcing Worasak to follow the law, the efficacy of the farmers' actions also indicated the breadth of social change occurring of which the actual amount of land rent collected was only a material marker.

May 1975: warning signs and communist dominos

In the previous chapter I examined how as farmers left their villages to protest in the cities and students left university classrooms to work with farmers in the rice fields, rural-urban relations were dramatically reconfigured. The stories of how Eiakiew Chalermsuphakul and Worasak Nimmanan dealt with their tenants' demands to follow the 1974 Land Rent Control Act indicate that rural relations themselves were undergoing transformation as well. I contend here that farmers' actions to hold landowners accountable radically challenged rural relations of power and authority. In his thesis, *The Role of the Thai Student Movement in Rural Conflict, 1973-1976*, John Dennis argues that by urging rural people to take their issues to first provincial cities and then Bangkok, the students transgressed "the logic and discipline of the administrative of patron-client axis of authority" (1982: 65). This transgression was one that was at once material and symbolic. Dennis further notes that

> In retrospect the student movement clearly underestimated the ability of provincial authorities to block Bangkok-approved rural reforms, but I would be hesitant to speculate to what extent this was prompted by the protection of actual material interests, rather than out of anger at the violation of traditional status relations. But whatever the case, there was probably the assumption that the former would suffer, if the latter were disregarded" (1982: 65).

The argument which I explore in this chapter, and throughout the dissertation, is resonant with that which John Dennis makes in his thesis. The cause of the contention surrounding the struggle to pass and implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai and the surrounding provinces far exceeded the disparity in the number of *thang* of rice landowners received as rent before and after the passage of the Act. Prior to the Act, the relationships between landlords and tenants were private, even intimate relations in which the parameters were set largely, if not wholly, by the landlords. In the space of a few months, not only did farmers initiate contentious negotiations with the landlords, they did so publicly. When their negotiations failed to come to resolution, farmers, at least initially, were willing to enlist the force of the state to pressure the landowners to adhere to the law. I argue in this chapter that the contention over land rent was largely responsible for the backlash to the FFT and farmer-student solidarity because it brought farmers and their allies into direct conflict with landlords. To be clear, I am not arguing that land rent control was necessarily the most important or primary issue facing activists in the north; other important rural issues in the north at the time included mining, forestry, and the rights of agricultural laborers, for example. What I am suggesting, however, is that the struggles to implement the 1974 Land Rent Control Act were those in which existing relations of power, influence, authority, and even compassion, were most forcefully challenged. Although Bowie (1988) has challenged the representation of beneficent landlords taking care of those who worked the land, it is clear from my analysis in Chapter Two of the Chiang Mai landowners' responses to the proposed decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act and Saengkaew Waelayen's comments noted above that many landowners perceived themselves as beneficent and kind. In the struggle surrounding the passage and the implementation of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, they came face-to-face with public accusations of themselves as capricious and greedy. These

accusations were backed up with the many reports of landowners who refused to adhere to the new law, such as Eiakiew Chalermsuphakul. At this moment, landowners' transgression of their own assumed moral code was revealed.

Complicating matters significantly were the political transformations that some of Thailand's neighbors underwent in 1975. The communist and genocidal Khmer Rouge seized Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975. Not even two weeks later, on 30 April 1975 Saigon fell to the Vietnam People's Army. The Pathet Lao established the Lao People's Democratic Republic on 2 December 1975. Although Ne Win was firmly entrenched as the military dictator of Burma and Malaysia's coalition government was successfully battling insurgency, the communist revolutions in neighboring countries made many nervous that Thailand would be the next country to become communist.

Amidst reports in May 1975 that wealthy Thais were leaving the country, Buntheng Thongsawat, the Minister of Interior, insisted that "We will not become Communist. Instead of fleeing, the rich should remain behind, make sacrifices and help the government improve the economy of the country and the living conditions of the people" (quoted in *Bangkok Post* 8 May 1975: 1). Responding to the concerns of those inside and outside Thailand, in an interview in June 1975 Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj refuted the possibility that Thailand would be the next "domino" to "fall" to Communism: "I believe in the domino set …. But a domino set has limited pieces of dominoes. It doesn't cover the whole world. We (Thailand) are not dominoes" (quoted in *Bangkok Post* 29 June 1975: 5). Despite the reassurances of Buntheng and Kukrit, for many in Thailand the fears of a communist future were palpable. One long-time resident of Chiang Mai told me that a relative sold land in Sanpatong district in 1975 due to concern that it would be seized by the Communists. The landowner preferred to sell the land before that day had a chance to pass (Author interview with Chiang Mai resident, Chiang Mai, 25 February 2005).

Within this context, tensions between progressive activists, including students and farmers, and various conservative forces, including some landowners and state officials, became pronounced. Katherine Bowie describes this period as one marked by "rapidly metamorphosing relations between the state and those who opposed it" (Bowie 1997: 55). In Chiang Mai, students and farmers were accused of being "agitators" (นักปลุกระดม) who "incited" (ยุยง) the people.[10] In addition, rumors flew about the supposedly seditious actions of farmers, students, workers, and other activists. In June 1975, the Provincial Police Commissioner, Police Lieutenant General Sanan Narindarasorasak, alleged that students were giving villagers in the North and Northeast M16 automatic rifles and M79 grenade launchers along with training about how to use them to fight the government. The National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) refuted his allegations and said that although students had visited many villages, they did so in order to educate the villagers, not arm them (*Bangkok Post* 11 June 1975: 3). As 1975 wore on, not only could spreading knowledge be conflated with providing weapons, but certain kinds of knowledge became perceived as dangerous. Farmers and students, particularly those active in the north, learned firsthand the material consequences of this perception.

Theorizing assassination (when the killers remain unnameable)

Facing a host of problems, not least lingering questions about the implementation of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, in early May 1975 the FFT organized a large protest in Bangkok.

---

[10] For example, the work of the FFT was described by one Chiang Mai daily newspaper as: "bringing groups of farmers together for meetings in different places, it is agitation of the masses" ("นำกลุ่มชาวนาชาวไร่ไปเปิดประชุมที่ต่างๆ เป็นการปลุกระดมมวลชน") (*Thin Thai* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 12). For a similar example of characterization of student organizing as such, see another Chiang Mai daily paper, *Thai Niu*, 9 July 2518 [1975]: 1. These are only two of innumerable examples.

Supported by the "three links" (สามประสาน) of farmers, students, and workers, over 2000 farmers massed at Thammasat University and Sanam Luang. Concurrent protests took place in regional capitals (*Athipat* 2-5 May 2518 [1975]: 1, 12; *Athipat* 6-8 May 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). They submitted eight demands to the Kukrit government on 6 May, primary among them was for the government to ensure that farmers had rice land to use before planting season commenced. This was to be done by setting up a committee comprised of equal numbers of state, farmer, and student representatives to investigate landlords and force those who didn't adhere to the Land Rent Control Act or otherwise caused problems for farmers to appear before the committee (*Bangkok Post* 3 May 1975: 3).[11] The Kukrit government turned down this and their other demands, explaining that they had no authority under which to forcibly compel landlords or other capitalists to appear before a committee (*Bangkok Post* 7 May 1975: 3). Upon hearing of the denials of their demands, one of the regional vice-presidents of the FFT, Vichai Pikulkhao said that the farmers would leave Bangkok and not return, or in his words, "We won't come back but will fight in the provinces, using our own methods" (quoted in *Bangkok Post* 8 May 1975: 1). When the farmers first left their villages to protest in the cities only a year before, it was because they had lost hope in the ability to achieve change while remaining there. The decision to return to struggle at the village level was born of a similar exhaustion of hope.

Yet, while their demands to Bangkok may have failed, Andrew Turton notes that once the FFT shifted their organizing back to the villages

> It was probably at this level that the Federation began to achieve the most by recruiting and politicizing villagers; holding meetings to inform farmers of their legal rights, especially under the Land Rent Control Act; denouncing corrupt officials for misappropriating development funds; denouncing and opposing landlords, mine and tobacco factory owners, etc. (Turton et al. 1987: 39-40).

[11] The complete list of demands is reprinted in Kanoksak 2530 [1987], Appendix 7, pages 157-158.

The life and death of Intha Sribunruang, the president of the northern branch of the FFT, which I address in the next section, powerfully illustrates how the FFT's organizing was at once inspiring for farmers, and deeply threatening to some of the elites around them. While northern farmers who protested in the streets of Chiang Mai city and in Bangkok in 1974 were criticized and belittled for bringing their issues to the cities, the response with which their return to the villages was met was far more violent.

Farmers and students faced intimidation, threats, arbitrary arrest, and assassination at the hands of a range of state, para-state, landholding, and right-wing actors. The students' and farmers' organizing was initially met with verbal harassment, as well as fliers posted in some villages warning outsiders to keep out. Unsigned and posted anonymously (and therefore untraceable), these fliers often contained vicious and defaming language, referring to students and farmers as agitators or communists. Then, throughout 1975 and 1976 student and shared student-farmer houses in Chiang Mai were both raided by the police and burned down in unsolved cases of arson.[12]

The violence culminated in a series of assassinations of FFT leaders. The assassinations of farmers were committed openly and seemingly without fear of consequence. Intha Sribunruang, the president of the northern branch of the FFT whose life I discuss in detail in this chapter, was assassinated in front of his house at the height of the killings on 30 July 1975. Sawat Thatawan, another FFT leader, was killed on his way home from Intha's funeral on 3 August 1975.

[12] Chatri Hutanuwat, a CMU student and one of the leaders of the Farmer Project whose arrest I address later in this chapter, lived in a small house in the compound of Ajarn Angun Malik. While Ajarn Angun, Chatri, and other residents of the compound were at a protest, Chatri's house was burned down. See *Thai Niu*, 13 March 2518 [1975]: 1, 12, for more details. See Nitirat (2542 [1999]), pages 153-154 for an account of the raid on a student-farmer house in Chiang Mai in May 1976.

Sithon Yodkantha, who became the president of the northern branch of the FFT following Intha's assassination, noted that the killings seemed strategically planned and carried out. Sithon compared the assassinations to cutting off the arms and legs of a person before killing them completely. At first, village-level leaders and district committee members of the FFT were targeted. Then, once a significant number of minor leaders had been killed, Intha, a major leader and intellectual of the movement, was assassinated (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 37).

Given that the assassins remain unnameable, here I develop an optic for analyzing the assassinations and the various responses, and lack of response, to them. In so doing, I trace the range of personal, social, and political effects of the assassinations. While my work cannot uncover the assassins, through my analysis I interrogate the conditions under which the identities of the assassins and the larger forces behind them remain unknowable.

As a point of departure, I turn to examine Benedict Anderson's (1990) analysis of political killings in his essay, "Murder and Progress in Modern Siam." Anderson traces the genealogy of political murders in tandem with the development of the modern Thai state, beginning with 1855. Relevant to my discussion here is his analysis of assassination in what he terms as the first part of consolidation of parliamentary democracy in Thailand, between 1973 and 1978. This period, Anderson argues, can be viewed as dominated by "the struggle of the bourgeoisie to develop and sustain its new political power (institutionalized in parliamentary forms) against threats from both left and right, the popular sector, and the state apparatus" (1990: 40). Anderson argues that this period of bourgeoisie consolidation can be divided into two, 1973 – 1978 [between the democracy engendered by the October 1973 movement through the October 1976 coup and the ensuing return to dictatorship] and then 1978 – 1989. Consolidation in this analysis means not the stability of individual achievement,

but the stability of parliamentary system. A parliamentary system, by which he largely means free and fair elections, more than others, would serve to economically and politically benefit not only the middle-class in Bangkok, but also the provincial middle-class, who had been expanding significantly since Sarit Thanarat's regime.

Unlike the preceding (and future) strong military dictatorships and the civilian governments appointed by then, parliamentary democracy "opens up channels to political power in both vertical and horizontal dimensions" and offers middle-class people multiple paths to advancement (Anderson 1990: 41). In addition, Anderson argues that electoral politics, which involve the participation of citizens across the country to select leaders, "serve to reduce the power gap between the provinces and the metropolis" (1990: 41). Parliamentary systems remove some of the power exclusively held by those within the bureaucracy; while some middle-class actors benefit from close ties to bureaucrats, the vast majority of them do not (Anderson 1990: 42). Finally, when a parliamentary system of elections is strong, Anderson argues that it "serves to delegitimize extra-parliamentary political activity – especially strikes, demonstrations, and popular movements, which the bourgeoisie is less like to be able to control and may, on occasion, profoundly fear" (1990:42).

Although I largely agree with Anderson's assessment of the benefits of parliamentary systems, I am troubled by his assertion that the delegitimation of extra-parliamentary political activity aids the middle-class. This assertion assumes a far more unified middle-class than I encountered while conducting research. I suggest here that we must think about *other* middle-class actors, namely the students, teachers, lawyers, and doctors who were involved in the farmer, labor, and other extra-parliamentary movements during the 1973-1976 period. Further, if we understand the transgressive alliances between students and farmers as one of the most significant, perhaps even revolutionary, transformations of the period, urgent questions about the

content of parliamentary democracy, and the meanings of the extrajudicial killings which were coterminous with it, are raised. Anderson himself addresses these questions by dividing the political killings into *local* and *national* killings. By discussing his typology, and my reservations, here I illustrate the dangers *all* political assassinations posed to parliamentary democracy in the 1973-1976 period, as well as its possible futures.

Prior to 1855 and the signing of the Bowring Treaty, which he marks as the moment at which Siam became "modern," Anderson argues that the form of the state was so intertwined with the monarchy that "there was no sharp conceptual line between execution and murder, between "state" and "private" killing" (1990: 35). Between 1855 and 1932 [the fall of the absolute monarchy], a fear of external intervention caused the political murder rate to decline. Anderson suggests that the distinction between state and private killings again became blurred under the personalistic governments of the early constitutional monarchy between the 1930s and the 1950s.

Then, notably, under Sarit Thanarat's regime and then subsequent military dictatorships from 1958 to 1973 there was a skyrocketing of political murders. Suspected communists, dissidents, and hooligans were "accused of endangering *state* security; and the executions were performed in public by acknowledged agents of the state" (1990: 36). The Thai state could, and did, use executions to quash actual dissidence, as well as use their media dissemination to create a climate of fear. Well-publicized official assassination, particularly when the details of the alleged crime were never made explicitly clear, functioned to intimidate a mass of people well in excess of those directly affected by the assassination.

This strategy had paradoxical effects, particularly after the 14 October 1973 movement. Anderson describes this paradox in terms of *local* and *national*. His two

examples, the Red Drum slaying in Phatthalung in 1971-1972 and the Ban Na Sai affair in late 1973, represent two atrocities of Thailand's anti-Communist counterinsurgency campaign.[13] In each case, the inhabitants of a rural village suspected of siding with the CPT were murdered by agents of the state. In the case of Phatthalung in southern Thailand, the villagers were placed in gasoline oil drums and burned alive. The entire village of Ban Na Sai in northeastern Thailand was burned to the ground. In Anderson's view, the Red Drum murders although "designed to terrorize a *local* peasant population suspected of communist sympathies, were not acceptable to a *national* audience which even the military regime of Sarit's successors felt somewhat constrained to respect" (1990: 37, emphasis is in original). In the case of Ban Na Sai, the investigative work of students and journalists exposed the *local* massacre to a *national* audience and this affected the legitimacy of the state counterinsurgency program. In summary, Anderson notes, these two incidents reflect how "a conspicuous gap was opening up between the state as law and the state as apparatus" (1990: 37).

Anderson's observation of the growing gap between the Thai state as apparatus and the law which supposedly guided its actions is astute. As I show in the next chapter, as 1975 wore on, this gap eventually widened to allow one part of the status apparatus (some factions of the police) to cite the law as the reason for their attempted destruction of another part (the Prime Minister). In addition, I argue that this gap may be responsible for the curious lack of action from many sectors of the Thai state in response to the assassinations of FFT activists and leaders.

Anderson extends his typology of *local* and *national* to differentiate various political killings of progressive activists during between 1973 and 1976. *Local*

[13] For an excellent analysis of the killings in Patthalung, see Dennis (1982), Chapter 5. For a collection of documents, photographs, and reflections related to the Ban Na Sai events and investigation, see Chaiwat (2517 [1974]).

killings are described as those of farmer leaders, worker leaders and journalists who "were felt to threaten the power or profits of provincial notables, including landowners, businessmen, and corrupt village headmen" (Anderson 1990: 42). These are in contrast to the *national* killings of those who "threatened no particular private interests," under which he includes the assassinations of student leaders, Professor Bunsanong Punyodhayana (sociologist and one-time Socialist Party MP candidate), and the killings during the 6 October 1976 massacre at Thammasat University. These people, Anderson continues "were regarded as enemies of the *state*, or were cynically depicted as such" (1990: 43).

Not only did *local* and *national* targets represent different kinds of threats, but their killers were positioned differently vis-à-vis the Thai state. In his assessment, *national* killings were performed by gunmen who were "more or less direct agents" of the state, often meaning a member of the Krathing Daeng, the Village Scouts, or other right-wing para-state groups with the direct or indirect patronage of different state organs (Anderson 1990: 43). In Anderson's analysis, the *national* killings were "anti-middle class, and intended to return the political order to what it had been before 14 October 1973" (1990: 43).

In contrast, Anderson argues that *local* killings were carried out by ordinary gunmen. In addition to the absence of gunmen connected to the state, he argues that the "highly uneven geographical distribution (most were in the north) underscores the absence of the central state-qua-state in the violence" (Anderson 1990: 43n). Further, in his analysis, these killings "were pro-middle class, and intended to intimidate members of the subaltern classes and their self-appointed tribunes" (Anderson 1990: 43).

While I do not want to suggest that there were not significant differences among the assassinations, Anderson's differentiation here elides more than it

elucidates. In contrast to Anderson's division of the assassinations and their effects vis-à-vis the possibilities of a parliamentary system, I argue that *all* of the assassinations were detrimental to the consolidation of a parliamentary system. In addition, I suggest that all political assassinations damage the *future* possibilities of parliamentary politics; when previous eras of open politics are marked by violence against protesting voices, the risks and dangers involved in engaging in dissent become very high. First, while I do not dispute that the farmers killed likely did threaten specific private interests, by being described as "agitators," they were also depicted as enemies of the state and Thai people in general. In addition, I would propose that given the existence of collusion between some state and private entities, at times they may have shared the same interests. Second, like the killings identified by Anderson as *national*, the killings of FFT leaders were an attempt to thwart the new political subjectivity of the farmers, and in so doing, return farmers and others to a pre-1973 state. Third, while I agree that the killings of the farmers, which took place across the country with a concentration in the north, were scattered geographically, I do not think that this necessarily indicates that the Thai state was uninvolved. Perhaps it was not – there is no way to confirm the actions, or even knowledge, of the state vis-à-vis the unsolved assassinations. Rather than conclude that the state was not involved, I would suggest that the concentration of killings in the north should prompt us to ask if perhaps something was happening in the north with which the central state *was* interested. In addition, *all* of the assassinations were both constituted by and constitutive of the gaps among the Thai state as a set of apparati, collection of laws, and protector of its citizens. This is strikingly apparent in various state responses to the assassinations of FFT leaders, to which I now turn.

State (in)actions: ignorance, indifference, and incompetence

As farmers were being assassinated in increasing numbers in 1975, the FFT, students, and their allies frequently called on the Thai state to take action to investigate the murders and protect the farmers. In mid-July, the National Student Center of Thailand published a declaration about the farmer assassinations on the front page of *Athipat*, their newspaper. They stated that the farmers in the north who had been killed and injured up to that point were largely local village leaders and members of the FFT, many of whom held leadership positions in the FFT. They were people who had struggled fiercely for justice and were loved by their fellow villagers. Each assassination was carried out by someone from another place and was conducted in such a manner that it went well, so much so that each seemed to be planned ahead of time. In nearly every case the police had claimed that there wasn't enough evidence to make an arrest. In the opinion of the *Athipat* staff, the police had failed to carry out their duties properly (*Athipat* 15-17 July 2518 [1975]: 1). In late July, the FFT submitted a letter to the Ministry of Interior, "asking it to provide security measures to the farmers who are fighting for justice" and for "the Government to reconsider the case and publicise the murders so that the Government will provide full protection to farmers who are fighting for justice" (*Bangkok Post* 27 July 1975: 3). However, rather than investigate the murders, most state officials claimed to be unable to take action, refused to take action, or outright denied the importance of the assassinations.

When students asked the Prime Minister, Kukrit Pramoj, to intervene to stop the assassinations, he claimed ignorance and said that it was a matter better left to the police. PM Kukrit claimed to be like everyone else, and to only learn of each assassination when he read about it in the newspaper the morning after it took place (*Sayam Rat* 1 August 2518 [1975]: 16). Asa Meksawan, the provincial governor of Chiang Mai, on the other hand, cited the sheer difficulty of the situation as the reason

for inaction: "…police have found it difficult to dig into these cases because they have not been able to obtain cooperation from witnesses. Police have to grope into the dark by themselves. It's like looking for a pin in the ocean" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 5 August 1975: 8). Rather than absolving them, the excuses for inaction offered up by Asa and Kukrit only served to make them look incompetent.

Despite PM Kukrit's assertion that dealing with the assassinations was the field of the police, various sectors of the police were not eager to intervene. The Deputy Minister of Interior, Chumphon Lohachalah called for "cooperation from the people on this also, because the police are not deities, they can't know or manage everything" (*Thin Thai* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[14] He further claimed that police protection of the farmers was impossible because there were fewer police than farmers in the country (*Thin Thai* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12). *Surely* there were other viable options for protecting the farmers than assigning police to farmers in a 1:1 ratio, which seem to be what Chumphon was suggesting.

Police General Phoj Phekanan, the head of the Department of Police, echoed and even expanded on Deputy Minister Chumphon's comments and denials of the ability of the police to protect the farmers. When asked what the police were doing to protect the farmers, General Phoj responded by saying: "Don't think that the police have abandoned [them] ….. but don't think that the police are like Narai with four arms, omniscient … or have enough police strength to protect all of the farmers. There are more farmers than police, I don't know how many …. therefore, they [farmers] must help" (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[15] When asked to clarify what he

---

[14] "ความร่วมมือกับประชาชนเรื่องนี้ด้วย เพราะตำรวจไม่ใช่เทวดา จะรู้หรือจัดทั้งหมด"

[15] "อย่าคิดว่า ตำรวจจะทอดทิ้ง ..... แต่ก็อย่าคิดว่าตำรวจเป็นนารายณ์ สี่กร รอบรู้ … หรือมีกำลังตำรวจเพียงพอจะจัดไปคุ้มครอง อารักขา ชาวนาให้หมดทุกคน จำนวนชาวนาก็มีมากกว่าตำรวจไม่รู้เท่าไหร่.. เพราะฉะนั้นมันต้องช่วยกันครับ"

meant by “help,” the Police General said “the farmers must help by being the ears and eyes of the police” (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[16] Yet given police inaction, and even rumors of police involvement in the assassinations, farmers may have been wary of collaborating with the police.

Then the interviewer asked Police General Phoj why it appeared that the police didn’t seem to know or care about the fact that many of the assassinated farmers were actually leaders of the FFT. General Phoj responded that he wished that the farmer leaders were officially registered or that he had been provided with a list of their names. He claimed that the police only learned about the leadership positions of the farmers when they were printed in the newspaper following the assassinations. If there was a list, he might have “paid special attention” (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[17] Up until this point, the printed interview, which was printed in a conservative Chiang Mai daily (*Thai Niu*), had consisted exclusively of the verbatim questions and answers. However, after this statement of Police General Phoj’s, the interviewer, Therd Tharaninthorn, wryly commented, “Hmm. You speak as if your police feel too far behind. But for example, with Mr. Intha Sribunruang, all of the people in the city know that he was a top leader of the farmers. But for the police who feel that they are behind, he had to be killed and dead before they knew” (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[18] Therd surmised that either Police General Phoj did not think before he spoke, or perhaps inadvertently revealed the indifference of the police to the farmer assassinations.[19]

---

[16] “ชาวนาก็ต้องช่วย เป็นหูเป็นตาให้ตำรวจ”

[17] “ได้มีการความสนใจเป็นพิเศษ”

[18] “แหม ท่านพูดยังกับว่า ตำรวจของท่านนั้น ความรู้สึกช้าเสียเหลือเกิน อย่างนายอินถา ศรีบุญเรือง ชาวบ้านเขารู้กันทั้งเมืองว่าเป็นผู้นำชาวนาชั้นอ๋อง แต่ตำรวจความรู้สึกช้ากว่าชาวบ้านต้องให้โดนฆ่า ตาย เสีย ก่อนถึงรู้”

[19] Upon hearing of Police General Phoj’s statement, the National Student Center of Thailand responded by saying that the police *did* have a list of the leaders. The Ministry of Interior and Department of Police should have had lists of the leaders, as the PM’s Office during the prior Sanya Thammasak

Yet another strategy was that taken by some officials to flatly deny the difference between the farmer assassinations and other murders during the same period (Bowie and Phelan 1975: 6). As one example of this denial, Buntheng Thongsawat, Minister of Interior, made the following statement to Parliament:

> These killings are like other murders occurring everywhere in the country. The government can't consider if the person was important or not, or if the person was a farmer leader or not. We must view every life as important to protect (*Prachachaat Weekly* 2.92 (21 August 2518 [1975]): 10).[20]

Even in Buntheng's formulation, every life should be protected. And yet the record of blatant state inaction in the face of farmer assassinations indicates that some lives may have been deemed more important to protect than others.

While at least the Ministry of Interior acknowledged the assassinated leaders *as* leaders, an article in *Yutthakot* (*ยุทธโกษ*), the journal of the army, indicated that at least one part of the military disputed this fact.[21] In a September 1975 article the author, Major Worawut Kosonyutthasorn, referred to the assassinated FFT leaders as "people **who call themselves** leaders or representatives of farmers" (Worawut 2518 [1975]: 41, emphasis is added).[22] Then, each assassination to date was listed, and the leadership position of each farmer was specifically denied. He described Intha

---

government had requested a list of FFT officials in late December 1974 in order "to facilitate cooperation in finding a solution to the worsening land problem" (*Ampo* 7.4 (October-December 1975): 47).

[20] "เป็นเพียงส่วนหนึ่งของคดีฆ่าคนตายในท้องที่นั้น ๆ โดยรัฐบาลไม่ได้คิดว่า บุคคลที่ตายนั้นเป็นใครมีความสำคัญแค่ไหน เป็นผู้นำชาวนาหรือไม่ แต่ยอมรับที่จะต้องรับหน้าที่คุ้มครองชีวิตคนเหล่านั้นเสมอกัน"

[21] See Thak (1980) for an excellent analysis of *Yutthakot*. In a paper entitled, "Professionalism in the Modern Thai Army," Thak Chaloemtiarana analyses the contents of *Yutthakot* over the period between 1947 and 1977 in order to track changing attitudes in the Thai military. Of particular interest to my project here, Thak argues that by the middle of the 1975, bold articles on social and political topics were appearing with increasing frequency in *Yutthakot*. He analyses this as indicating a restrengthening of the army's power (Thak 1980: 28). Many of the articles in the 1975-1977 period, including the one by Major Worawut Kosonyutthasorn that I discuss here, were harshly critical and dismissive of student, farmer, worker and other dissenting groups.

[22] "**ผู้เรียกตัวเองว่า**ผู้นำหรือผู้แทนชาวนาชาวไร่"

Sribunruang as “the person who appointed himself the president of the Northern Farmers’ Federation” (Worawut 2518 [1975]: 41).[23] These were not political killings, Major Worawut claimed, rather “the people who died were simply ordinary villagers who have left this world” (Worawut 2518 [1975]: 41).[24] Major Worawut refused the significance of both the farmers’ deaths specifically and the FFT broadly. By denying that that the leaders of the FFT *were* leaders, he effectively denied the existence of the FFT as a political actor. The work of Intha Sribunruang stands as an acute refutation of Major Worawut’s argument. It is to his life and death that I now turn.

Intha Sribunruang’s struggle for justice

Intha Sribunruang was born in 1930 and was a resident of Baan Long village, in Pa Pong sub-district, Saraphi district, in Chiang Mai province. He was married and had five children – two sons and three daughters. Intha had completed four years of primary school and spent the years from the age of twelve to sixteen living as a Buddhist novice (Turton 1978: 123). At this time of his death in late July 1975, Intha possessed a small fruit garden and operated “a small shop, selling this and that,” out of his house (Thanet 2521 [1978]: 133).[25] He no longer possessed rice paddy land of his own, as he had sold it order to pay his children’s school fees (Turton 1978: 123). He was described as “generous, calm, thoughtful, careful, and he liked working for the collective good so much that he had been elected headman for five years” (Thanet 2521 [1978]: 133).[26]

---

[23] “ผู้ตั้งตัวเป็นประธาน สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่ ภาคเหนือ”

[24] “ผู้ตายแต่ละคนเป็นเพียงชาวบ้านธรรมดาที่ถูกอุปโลกน์ขึ้น”

[25] “ค้าขายแล็กๆ น้อยๆ”

[26] “มีนิสัยโอบอ้อมอารี ใจเย็น สุขุม รอบขอบ และชอบทำงานเพื่อส่วนรวมจึงได้รับเลือกเป็นผู้ใหญ่บ้านตลอด ๕ ปี”

Intha was an organizer and leader long before the establishment of the FFT. He founded a village drama group, was elected as village headman, served as a member of the *tambon* (sub-district) committee, and led a government-sponsored district farmers' cooperative (Turton 1978: 123). In an interview shortly after his assassination, Intha's wife, Ruankham, commented that even though he did not have a strong background in formal education, Intha read voraciously about the lives of workers and farmers and listened to the radio a lot. He first became involved in progressive politics when students were protesting the U.S. presence in Thailand in 1973 (*Sieng Chonabot* 7 October 2518 [1975]: 4).

When farmers across the nation were protesting in November 1974, Intha brought a delegation of farmers from Saraphi district to join the protests in Chiang Mai. He was selected as a representative to travel to join the protests in Bangkok. When the Farmers' Federation of Thailand was established on 19 November 1974, Intha was elected as one of the regional vice-presidents (Turton 1978: 123).[27]

Once the Land Rent Control Act was passed on 16 December 1974, he worked tirelessly to make the provisions of the Act real in the lives of tenant farmers across the north. While Intha was active around other issues, I stress land rent more than the others for two reasons. First, as I address directly below, Intha himself stressed the importance of the issue in relation to his work and to the lives of farmers he met. Second, in Intha's assessment, as well as those of both his friends and critics alike, it

[27] In considering the variety of leadership positions held by Intha during his life, Andrew Turton argues that we should take his life as an indication of the possibility of a progressive undercurrent in village politics: "What is of note is that his career contains all the elements which mark a man out for respect at the village level, with experience in religious, cultural, political, administrative and economic spheres. The fact that he had been an elected village headman (he resigned on becoming Vice-President) and elected head of a government sponsored farmers' group, should serve as a reminder that many progressive rural leaders gain experience in these ways and that not all such posts are held by rich peasants whose class interests would tend to align them with district officials and rural capitalists. Intha's experience and analysis of the critical situation of the majority of farmers led him beyond working within those structures and to seek more radical solutions" (1978: 123). For those who would erroneously characterize village (or any) politics as a sinister sphere of influence, as I am sometimes tempted to do, Intha's life serves as a useful corrective.

was land rent that brought him into direct conflict with landowners and their allies within the Thai state. While the word "gains" (ผลประโยชน์) is cited by Intha and others as being at the heart of this conflict, I argue here, as throughout this thesis, that what was at stake far exceeded the number of *thang* of rice a landowner would receive as rent in any given year. Most significantly, by learning about their new rights under the Land Rent Control Act, tenant farmers refused to adhere to the demands of the landowners. They refused to pay the high rental rates that had been the practice before the new Act was passed. Instead, they demanded that the landowners follow the law and accept the new rates stipulated by the Act. When landowners refused to comply or took legal action against them, as I noted in the beginning to this chapter, they called on state officials to take action against the landowners. How often these state officials complied with the farmers' demands remains a matter of some issue. What is clear, however, is that the dramatically changed political conditions following October 1973 meant that in 1974 and 1975, large landowners could no longer retain their unshakeable financial position, or image of themselves as beneficent patrons, as easily as they had during the land rent control struggles in 1950-51. Intha Sribunruang was a primary force behind this transformation.

In the eight months between the passage of the Land Rent Control Act in December 1974 and his assassination in July 1975, Intha traveled to every district in Chiang Mai province to talk to villagers about their rights under the newly-passed law. This organizing work was critical, Intha explained, because many villagers did not know that the law existed. He further commented that they "do not yet really understand this Act, and its importance, or the benefits the act affords them" (Intha 2518 [1975]: 30).[28] One editorial published after Intha's assassination described his work as "mediating and struggling for the capitalists to accept collecting rent from

---

[28] "เรื่องนี้ชาวบ้านก็ยังไม่ค่อยเข้าใจกันว่ามันมีใจสำคัญอะไร เขาจะได้ประโยชน์อะไรจากกฎหมาย"

farmers following the new law … because civil servants are not able to make all of the landowning capitalists accept the new law of the government" (*Prachachaat* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 6).[29] Once the villagers understood their rights under the act, they could, at least in theory, demand fair rents. Simultaneously, the legal education organizing done by Intha is significant precisely because he did it as a farmer -- not a professor, not an MP, not a student, not a development official. This is not to in any way diminish the significance of the alliance work by students and lawyers that I emphasized in the last chapter, only to highlight another shift resulting from the work of the FFT. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire explains that a liberatory process of education involves the following:

> A revolutionary leadership must accordingly practice *co-intentional* education. Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that relation, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement (1970: 51).

The organizing among farmers, students, and lawyers around the 1974 Land Rent Control Act may usefully be understood in this register. By becoming teachers of farmers and students – of legal knowledge, the meaning of rights, and the facts of rural life – Intha and other FFT activists expanded the possibility of what kinds of political action farmers could take, and what kinds of futures might be possible. Simultaneously, by joining with students, lawyers, and others through their organizing, they re-created the possibility of alliances among differently situated actors.

---

[29] "ไกล่เกลี่ยและต่อสู้เพื่อให้นายทุนยินยอมเก็บค่าเช่านาจากชาวนาตามพระราชบัญญัติใหม่ ...เพราะว่าราชการไม่สามารถสร้างให้นายทุนเจ้าที่นาทั้งหลายยอมรับกฎหมายใหม่ของรัฐบาล"

At times the *kamnan* (sub-district heads) were not content to simply *fail to inform* villagers of the act, but actively lied about the land rent situation in their sub-districts and harassed FFT members. Intha noted that he had been chased out of some villages, and in other villages saw flyers posted telling the FFT to keep out of the area (Intha 2518 [1975]: 29). Instead of printing information about the new law, the radio and newspapers only reported that the FFT "has incited the masses" (Intha 2518 [1975]: 30).[30] Rather than form and use the committees stipulated by the act to settle rent disputes between landowners and rent farmers, Intha commented that "in some areas the *kamnan* will keep around a gangster or a young policeman to become involved" (Intha 2518 [1930]: 30).[31] While this contributed to creating a climate of fear, this kind of intimidation was not enough to stop the farmers from demanding that landowners follow the new law.

In addition to his work spreading information about the Land Rent Control Act, Intha was also the founder and editor of the FFT's newspaper, *Thai Farmer* (ชาวนาไทย). The officers of the FFT and the newspaper were on the grounds of Chiang Mai University, in a building that once housed single faculty members. With the help of allied faculty, a spare room was taken over by the FFT. One former activist told me about the experience of hand screen printing the newspaper on the campus of Chiang Mai University. They used red ink for the front page. On the cover was an image of a farmer with a plow, and the words "Rise up and struggle" (Author interview with former CMU activist, Bangkok, 15 June 2005).[32] Only two issues of the paper were printed before Intha was assassinated. In the first issue, an article entitled "Introducing Thai Farmers," was printed. In it, farmers were urged to "pick up weapons of correct

---

[30] "ปลุกระดมมวลชน"

[31] "บางแห่งกำนันก็เลี้ยงอันธพาล เอาตำรวจหนุ่มๆ เข้ามายุ่งเสมอ"

[32] "ลุกขึ้นสู้"

thought" ("ต้องติดอาวุธทางความคิดให้ถูกต้อง"), and to understand the rules of struggle. The first rule of struggle was described as:

> Righteousness will prevail over evil. To put it simply, it is that the oppressed, persecuted, bullied side is the side that has not received justice. When this side struggles against the oppressors, we must believe that the struggle of the farmers is built on a foundation of correctness and justice, such that in the end we will have to prevail. Because we believe that one day there will only be sympathy, there will be a wide range of people who join the struggle, not only farmers, but also students, civil servants, teachers, professors and other people who love justice, who sympathize with the farmers, and understand the benevolence of farmers who use their labor to take care of everyone in the country (quoted in Preecha and Chamrat 2522 [1979]: 108).[33]

In my discussion of the fight for the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act in Chiang Mai in Chapter Two, I noted that opponents of the Act cited the *interdependence* between the landlords and tenants, and the benevolence of the landlords, are reasons not to decree the Act. Here, the FFT offers a different understanding of interdependence by citing their labor producing food (rice) for the nation as a benevolent act. The sense of justice operative for the FFT grew out of an understanding of this interdependence between the farmers and the rest of the nation. The basic premise advanced here is that once their potential allies realized the oppression faced by the farmers, they would naturally choose to join the struggle. Many former student activists with whom I spoke offered a similar narrative of their own involvement. Many students were born into privileged families. Once they witnessed the lives of farmers, however, they began to come to consciousness about

[33] "ธรรมะย่อมชนะอธรรม จากคำพูดง่ายๆ นี้ คือว่าฝ่ายที่ถูกกดขี่ข่มเหงรังแกเป็นฝ่ายที่ไม่ได้รับความเป็นธรรม เมื่อทำการต่อสู้กับฝ่ายกดขี่ข่มเหรังแก ก็ต้องถือว่า การต่อสู้ของชาวนาชาวไร่ตั้งอยู่บนพื้นฐาน ของความถูกต้อง และเป็นธรรม ซึ่งจะต้องได้รับชัยชนะในที่สุด เพราะนับว่าวันมีแต่เห็นใจ มีคนเข้าร่วมอย่างกว้างขวาง ไม่ว่าจะเป็นชาวนาชาวไร่ด้วยกันเองหรือเป็นนักเรียน นักศึกษา ข้าราชการ ครู อาจารย์ และ ประชาชนในวงการอื่นๆ ที่รักความเป็นธรรม ต่างเห็นอกเห็นใจชาวนา รู้ซึ่งถึงพระคุณของชาวนาที่ได้ลงแรงกายเลี้ยงคนทั้งชาติ ..."

injustice. They felt compelled to join the farmers, even if solidarity was a less seamless than the vision articulated by Intha in his article.

Intha continued by explaining that the power of the farmers came from their difference from the capitalists:

> Another weapon of thinking of the farmers is the behavior of the cornered gangster capitalists. This behavior is the killing of the farmer leaders. I say this because the cooperation and strengthening of the struggle of the farmers, especially on the issue of the Land Rent Control Act, has caused these big capitalist landowners and some civil servants who act like slaves who serve the capitalists, to lose their gains and reputations and to be condemned by the masses ….. They therefore struggle desperately to find a way out. In this, they are not at all different from a rabid dog that is chased, beaten and cornered. He cannot find a way out and therefore he has no other way out other than finally turning to definitively destroy the other. We, all the farmer brothers and sisters, must comprehend this and see the real nature of the capitalists. This is their weak point. We must understand that the enemy of the farmer is in trouble. They are about to be destroyed and the farmers are close to victory ….. We farmers have the great, powerful strength of the masses, we are a hundred thousand, we are a million. We came together and organized together, with a strength that is stronger and with a higher consciousness. We know that we will win in the end" (quoted in Preecha and Chamrat 2522 [1979]: 108-109).[34]

Intha perceived the desperation of the landlords. Yet, even if the farmers were able to comprehend the suffering pf the landlords, they could not use this to protect themselves.

---

[34] "อาวุธทางความคิดอีกอันหนึ่งของชาวนาคือ พฤติกรรมหมาจนตรอกของของเหล่านายทุนอันธพาล พฤติกรรมเช่านนี้คือการลอบฆ่าผู้นำชาวนา เหตุที่กล่าวเช่นนี้ก็เนื่องมาจากว่า จากการรวมตัวผนึกกำลังกันอย่างเข้มแข็งในการต่อสู้ของชาวนาชาวไร่ โดยเฉพาะเรื่องพระราชบัญญัติควบคุมการเช่านา ทำให้เหล่านายทุนเจ้าที่ดินใหญ่กับข้าราชการบางคนที่ทำตังเยี่ยงทาสรับใช้นายทุน ต้องสูญเสียผลประโยชน์เสียหายเสียชื่อเสียง ถูกมวลชนประณาม ….. มันจึงต้องดิ้นรนหาทางออกอย่างสุดฤทธ์ไม่ต่างอะไรกับหมาบ้าที่ถูกไล่ตีอย่างจนตรอก หาทางออกไม่ได้มันจึงไม่มีทางอื่นนอกจากหันมาทำร้ายเป็นครั้งสุดท้าย ซึ่งอันนี้เองพวกเราพี่น้องชาวนาชาวไร่ทั้งหลายต้องเข้าใจเห็นเนื้อแท้ของมัน เห็นจุดอ่อนของมัน ต้องเข้าใจว่าศัตรูชาวนากำลังแย่ กำลังพินาศและชาวนาเองก็จะใกล้ได้ชัยชนะ….. เราชาวนาชาวไร่มีพลังมวลชนที่ยิ่งใหญ่มีเป็นแสนเป็นล้าน เรารวมตัวกันจัดตั้งขึ้นมา ด้วยกำลังที่เหนือกว่า ด้วยจิตใจที่สูงกว่า เราย่อมได้รับชัยชนะในที่สุด"

In his last interview in mid-July 1975, Intha offered a slightly different assessment of the assassinations of FFT leaders. He said that they were:

> due to a conflict of interest with the landowners about the price of land rent. It's about the land, it's about money. Some people are killed not because it is about money. More likely it is a disagreement over the land. This plan is only to threaten and to harm the opposition's struggle. The harder they struggle, the faster they will die (Intha 2518 [1975]: 30).[35]

Intha's comments here are astute, but I find his discussion in *Thai Farmer* more compelling. The assassinations were about a conflict of interest with landowners – but not only about money and the price of land rent. The organizing of the FFT around the 1974 Land Rent Control Act challenged the relations of land rent, and also the conditions of who produced, possessed and circulated the knowledge that governed these relations.

In his essay "Withdrawal Symptoms: Social and Cultural Aspects of the October 6 Coup," Benedict Anderson argues for an understanding of the 6 October 1976 massacre as a unique moment not only due to the public, mob-like nature of the violence, but also as the culmination of two years of right-wing violence against progressive activists. Anderson attributes the open forms of violence to shifting class formations and ideological conflict. In particular, he cites the transgressive class behavior of middle-class students as a major cause of panic and alarm by conservative forces (Anderson 1977: 19). I explored the transgressive class behavior of students who left the classrooms to learn in the fields with the farmers in the last chapter. Here I want to stress a resonant thesis. Perhaps as alarming to the elites as students who did not aspire to joining them were farmers – like Intha and other members of the FFT –

---

[35] "มันเป็นเรื่องการขัดผลประโยชน์กับเจ้าที่ดิน เรื่องค่าเช่านา เรื่องที่นา เกี่ยวกับเรื่องเงิน การถูกยิง บางคนเพราะเรื่องเงินก็ไม่มี คงเหลือเรื่องข้อขัดแย้งเกี่ยวกับที่ดิน แผนการปราบปราม คงเป็นเพียงแต่ข่มขู่กลั่นแกล้ง เท่านั้น ฝ่ายตรงข้ามมันดิ้นรนยิ่งรุนแรง มันก็ยิ่งตายเร็ว"

who understood and used their legal rights. For years, farmers only experienced legal change as its objects. With the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, farmers came into view as subjects of law, and as the actors at the forefront of its implementation.

In other terms, the assassinations were an attempt to return the farmers to their pre-October 1973 state of relative repression. In the afterword to his book, *A Miracle, A Universe*, about political repression and its aftermaths in Uruguay and Brazil, Lawrence Weschler describes both liberation and repression within the terms of subject formation. He explains that liberation is a process in which "an entity which had been content to receive the action of other people's sentences now suddenly demands to initiate such actions on its own" (1991: 237). Repression is a similarly grammatical process, one in which "the authorities scramble to find some way of recapturing individuals (or polities) who have suddenly taken to behaving like subjects, so as to turn them back once again into mere objects" (1991: 237). The assassinations may be read as an attempt to recapture the farmers, who, in learning about their legal rights, had become new subjects altogether.

Not only were landlords no longer sure who held the power in their individual relationships with their tenants, they were also being taken to court, accused of being greedy by farmers, their methods were exposed in the press, and they were labeled as capitalists by nearly everyone. They were cornered, afraid, ashamed, and losing power. It is not surprising that they may have turned to violence. Whether, and how often they resorted to violence, unfortunately, remains unknown.

Like many other progressive activists, Intha reported being threatened; he described the man who threatened him as a tough, big man with scars on his neck, face and arms (Intha 2518 [1975]: 30). After Intha's death, his father, Jai Sribunruang commented that Intha anticipated his assassination: "Mr. Intha knew that he was going to be killed in advance. He even told his son that if a stranger came on a motorbike in

front of the house, tell him" (*Thai Niu* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[36] Yet Intha did not let his own fear of being assassinated stop him from organizing, and even noted that he took his son with him everywhere so that he would learn how to struggle for justice.

On the morning of 30 July 1975, Intha was home alone. His wife was an assistant nurse and was attending a health training in the village. She often ran the shop, but he offered to run it for her that morning so that she could attend the training. His five children were all at school. He was wearing a white undershirt and a pair of black pants. At 9:45 a.m., two men pulled up in front of Intha's house on a red Yamaha motorbike. The driver remained on the bike while his passenger got off and asked Intha for some cigarettes. As Intha was handing him his change, he shot Intha point-blank in the head. The assassin used a .22 with a silencer. Intha died instantly (*Thai Niu* 1 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). His assassination came only eleven days after he predicted a speedy end to the assassinations.

Tensions of investigation

Intha's prominence and importance to the FFT engendered a range of seemingly contradictory events on behalf of various state actors and agencies. On the one hand, some actors were catalyzed to take action to apprehend his assassin, while others pursued a strategy of denial and dissimulation in line with the pattern following the assassinations of other farmer and activist leaders noted earlier. The tension between these two kinds of action illustrates the price of dissent paid by some state officials, and perhaps hints at the intentions behind the murders of Intha and other FFT leaders.

[36] "นายอินถา รู้ตัวล่วงหน้าแล้วว่าจะต้องถูกลอบฆ่า ถึงกับสั่งลูกชายไว้ว่า หากมีใครแปลกหน้าขี่รถจักรายานยนต์มาหน้าบ้านให้บอกด้วย"

Intha Sribunruang was the seventeenth farmer leader to be killed nationally since the killings began in March 1974 and the sixth to be killed in the North since June 1975. Intha's prominence as president of the northern branch of the FFT and the accumulated assassinations leading up to his death sparked protests and action across the country. His death affected many people and one newspaper reported that it "sent a wave of shock and anger through student activist leaders in Bangkok" (*Bangkok Post* 1 August 2518 [1975]: 3). The National Student Center of Thailand in Bangkok and the Northern Student Center in Chiang Mai organized protests and letter-writing campaigns to Parliament demanding that they take action to protect farmers' lives and apprehend the assassins (*Daily Niu* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 1). A group of Chiang Mai University professors issued a declaration calling on the police to work quickly to find the assassins and to treat the farmers fairly and to not perceive them as agitators (*Prachachaat Weekly* 2.90 (7 August 2518 [1975]): 10). The Eastern Student Center (ESC) submitted a petition to the Ministry of Interior asking them to investigate the assassinations of the farmers and to arrest the assassins. The ESC viewed Intha's assassination as representing "a grave threat to the life, liberty, and rights of the people" (*Prachathipatai* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[37] In their petition, the ESC stressed that farmers had peacefully petitioned and protested for justice, but were denied by the government. Even Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj, who maintained that the assassinations were the province of the police and he could not intervene, urged them to hasten their investigation of the killing of the farmers following Intha's assassination (*Sayam Rat* 1 August 2518 [1975]: 16; *Bangkok Post* 2 August 1975: 1, 3). Common to each demand was the hope that the police would identify the assassins. If the assassins were known and apprehended, perhaps the killings would cease.

---

[37] "การคุกคามชีวิตและสิทธิเสรีภาพ อย่างยิ่งของประชาชน"

Yet despite these urgings and admonitions, the police investigation into Intha's assassination began with denials of Intha's status as a farmer leader. One of the police investigators involved, the Chiang Mai provincial police commander, Police Lieutenant General Thani Wiradecha, insisted on *evidence* that Intha was a farmer leader. He said:

> I want firm evidence that the dead person was the vice president of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand. You often say that the person who died was a farmer leader. But I haven't seen any evidence that these people were farmer leaders. If you have evidence, bring it to me. I will investigate it, and I will have the police keep an eye on and watch over the farmer leaders. But the police can't keep vigil over them, because they have other citizens to watch over as well (*Prachathipatai* 1 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[38]

What kind of *evidence* did Police Lieutenant General Thani want? Recalling the comments of Therd Tharaninthorn, the *Thai Niu* reporter mentioned earlier, Intha was widely known throughout Chiang Mai. If Police Lieutenant General Thani picked up a copy of *Chao Na Thai*, he would have seen evidence of Intha Sribunruang as a leader and intellectual. If he read *Thai Niu* or *Thin Thai*, two daily Chiang Mai papers, on almost any day between late 1974 and Intha's death in July 1975, he would have seen the name of Intha Sribunruang cited as a farm leader. Yet perhaps nothing would have convinced Police Lieutenant General Thani that Intha Sribunruang was a leader of the people. As we have seen, a lot was at stake in doing so.

If the police recognized the assassinated leaders as such, they would also, by default, recognize the farmers' movement. Police Major General Suphak Vinin, commander of the Zone 5 Provincial Police, cited the illegality of the FFT as a reason

---

[38] "ผมต้องการหลักฐานยืนยันว่าคนตายเป็นรองประธานสหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย พวกคุณมักจะพูดว่าผู้ที่ถูกฆ่าตายเป็นผู้นำชาวนา แต่ผมไม่เห็นมีหลักฐานอะไรเลยที่แสดงว่าพวกนี้เป็นผู้นำชาวนา ถ้าคุณมีหลักฐานก็เอามาให้ผมซิ ผมจะได้สืบสวนได้ และให้เจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจคอยสอดส่องดูแลผู้นำชาวนาให้ แต่จะไปให้เฝ้าไม่ได้ เพราะตำรวจต้องดูแลประชาชนอื่นด้วย"

to disregard Intha's status as the vice president of it as a factor in the investigation.[39] He suggested that many farmer activists had a history of anti-monarchy sentiments, and this may have angered their fellow villagers enough to kill them. In the specific case of Intha, Police Major General Suphak believed that "he was a radical who activities and speeches might have caused conflict with rival political groups or endangered the interests of others" (*Bangkok Post* 2 August 1975: 3). In his comments as well as those of many others, precisely what was meant by *interest* was left unspecified. Police Major General Suphak's mention of supposed anti-monarchical sentiments compounded the void created by his reference to unspecific "interests." To question his assertion would be risk the charge of lese-majeste.

Yet another police investigator, Deputy Director General of the Chiang Mai Provincial Police, Nirandorn Witthayawuthakul, cited Intha's small shop as the reason for his assassination. He said "Maybe it was a merchant. Because [Intha's] small-scale selling could have led to a conflict of interest with others" (*Sieng Chonabot* 13 September 2518 [1975]: 8).[40] However, Ruankham Sribunruang, Intha's wife, disputed this claim. She explained that "He wasn't a large merchant at all. He only sold a little bit only, we only saw a profit of 10-20 baht per day. How could that affect anyone's gains?" (*Sieng Chonabot* 7 October 2518 [1975]: 4).[41] In her view, his death was definitely a political killing. The Chiang Mai police seemed willing to consider every possible reason for Intha's killing other than politics. Whether this resulted from

---

[39] It is true that the FFT did not undertake the arduous process of becoming an officially registered organization. However, responding to this concern in *Thai Farmer*, the FFT asserted that "That the establishment of the FFT is illegal is out of the question. For we peasants are acting according to our own freedom of association, clearly written in the constitution. We have, however, not applied for registration at a government office, because we don't agree with the law specifying that people cannot form associations for achieving political ends. This law ignores us and aims to segregate us from participating in the politics of our own country" (quoted in Karunan 1984: 48).

[40] "อาจจะเป็นพ่อค้า เพราะการค้าเล็กๆ น้อยๆ ก็ อาจมีการขัดผลประโยชน์ กันได้"

[41] "เพราะว่าไม่ได้เป็นพ่อค้าใหญ่อะไรเลยเพียงแต่ขายของเล็ก ๆ น้อย ๆ เท่าที่เห็นนี่แหละกำไรวันละ ๑๐-๒๐ บาท เท่านั้นเอง แล้วจะต้องไปขัดผลประโยชน์กับใครเขาได้"

honest confusion, or machinations, the result was to focus attention away from the real dangers faced by farmer activists. In my assessment, the denial of the political nature of Intha's death further signals the importance of examining his work as well as that of the FFT more broadly.

In addition to the various police denials and refusals to view Intha's assassination as political, another disconcerting aspect of the investigation of his death was the reliance on false evidence. Shortly after Intha's death, the police claimed to have found a letter written by Intha that shed light onto his assassination. While the validity of the letter was never proven, in the crucial first days of the investigation, the police insisted that its validity was beyond question. From the outset, I want to be very clear that I am not arguing that the police manufactured or planted the letter. They may have, as some alleged in this specific case (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12) and others commented about the assassinations more broadly (Turton 1978: 123). However, other actors may have planted the letter, and the police may have been victims of their actions as well. What is of concern here then is the police *use* of the letter, and its *effects* on the investigation and the farmers' movement.

On 4 August 1975, five days after Intha's assassination, a group of Chiang Mai provincial and regional police investigators went to visit Intha's family. They gave the family a 2,000 baht donation, as well as 1,000 baht to make merit for Intha. They police also offered that if the family had any troubles, the police would be more than happy to assist them. Then, during the same meeting, they showed Ruankham a signature on a piece of paper and asked her to certify that it was Intha's. This signature was on a letter than the police alleged that Intha wrote and signed shortly before his death. Although the contents of the letter were made public a few days later, Ruankham was initially shown only the signature (*Voice of the Nation* 5 August 1975: 1, 8; *Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12).

When the police brought the letter to Ruankham, they claimed that it was found by a woman named Amporn Sirimuk, a fellow villager, two hours after the assassination. Amporn claimed to have picked it up off a table in Intha's house before turning it into the district officer. Ruankham refused to certify the signature as Intha's. She and her eldest son, Uthai, both said that although the signature was similar to Intha's, it was not his signature. Uthai brought out another document with Intha's signature on it to show the police the differences. Even further, Uthai noted that Intha always asked his advice about writing, since he had only completed Grade 4. Intha had not consulted him about this letter, and Uthai felt certain that he would have consulted him about a letter to the prime minister (*Prachathipatai* 5 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12; *Voice of the Nation* 5 August 1975: 1, 8; *Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12).

The letter was allegedly addressed to Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj. In it, Intha supposedly wrote that he was prepared to break with the students because "I see that the students only mislead and do not really do what they say" (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[42] In addition, Intha allegedly wrote than he planned to join the PM's party, the Social Action Party, and would bring many FFT members with him as well. All of this was contingent upon the PM allocating land to Intha's family personally (*Voice of the Nation* 5 August 1975: 1, 8).

While the veracity of the letter was disputed, and largely discarded with the apprehension of the assassin a few weeks later, let us consider for a moment the implications of the alleged letter. They are threefold. One, it offered an explanation for the assassination which simultaneously painted the students and farmers as violent and divided group. Two, in so doing, it shifted emphasis away from potential state or para-state forces behind the assassination. Three, perhaps most damaging, the letter

---

[42] "เห็นว่าพวกนักศึกษา หลอกลวงไม่ทำจริงตามที่เคยพูดไว้"

can be read as an attempt to discredit Intha as a leader of the FFT and the work he did fighting for the farmers and for justice in Thai society.

The violence and profound disruption of the assassination did not stop with the killing of the FFT leaders, but continued to affect their families in a variety of ways following their deaths. When Intha died, his wife Ruankham was forty-one years old; she and Intha had been married for twenty-three years. After he died she took sole responsibility for their whole family. Their livelihood became less secure after he died. Ruankham was only able to sell enough at the shop to make money sufficient to eat from day-to-day (*Sieng Chonabot* 7 October 2518 [1975]: 4). Yet Ruankham not only had to deal with financial difficulty, but with the continual denial of her husband's life.

This was sharply illustrated in an interview months after Intha's assassination in which Ruankham offered another set of reasons why the letter allegedly found in her house after Intha's death was false. This time, her reasons exceeded those of the mechanics of writing or signatures. Ruankham said that she did not know why the police or other state officials would want to produce, or validate, the letter. But she did say that: "The letter alleges that Poh Luang Intha wanted to leave the Socialist Party. That isn't true. Because while we were together, everything I heard, was that Poh Intha was a very sincere person. And he was one person who unfailingly believed in the path of socialism" (*Sieng Chonabot* 7 October 2518 [1975]: 4).[43] Before his death, Intha worked closely with Inson Buakhiew, Dr. Bunsanong Punyodhayana, and other

[43] "ในเนื้อหาของจดหมายนั้นก็ว่าพ่ออินถาเขาต้องการจะลาออกจากพรรคสังคมนิยมนั้นก็ไม่เป็นความจริง เพราะเท่าที่อยู่ด้วยกันมาและถ่ายทอดให้พี่ฟังแล้วพ่ออินถาเขาเป็นคนเอาจริงเอาจังมาก และเป็นผู้หนึ่งที่เชื่อมั่นในทางสังคมนิยมอย่างไม่เปลี่ยนแปลง"

Socialist Party leaders on shared goals of justice for farmers and workers.[44] She further explained that

> It is impossible for sure that Poh Intha would turn to become a member of the Social Action Party, since he didn't like the policy of the party and the various actions of the government that did not solve the problems and left the people dissatisfied, especially around issues of land rent control (*Sieng Chonabot* 7 October 2518 [1975]: 4).[45]

Indeed, from what I conveyed earlier about Intha's organizing and writing in *Chao Na Thai*, it seems unlikely that he would have abandoned his alliances with students and the Socialist Party to join the Social Action Party.[46]

Most perplexing and troubling of various Thai state responses to Intha's death was that of Asa Meksawan, the governor of Chiang Mai province. Asa was particularly concerned with the assassination of Intha. On 1 August, Asa himself went to the Saraphi district police station to urge the police to apprehend the assassin quickly. The same day he gave 1,000 baht to make merit for Intha (*Thai Niu* 2 August 2518 [1975]: 12). He attended Intha's funeral on 4 August 1975 and publicly said "He

---

[44] The Socialist Party of Thailand (SPT) was particularly strong in Chiang Mai. Inson Buakhiew was an SPT member of parliament from Hang Dong district. In addition, Dr. Bunsanong Punyodhayana, who was a Cornell-educated sociologist and SPT candidate for MP in Chiang Mai in a by-election held when Thongdee Isarachewin died in late 1975, was assassinated in early 1976. See the volume (Somporn 2544 [2001]) published on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Bunsanong's death for a collection of articles about the history and work of the SPT.

[45] "เป็นไปไม่ได้อย่างแน่นอนที่พ่ออินถาจะหันไปเป็นสมาชิก พรรคกิจสังคม เพราะเขาไม่ชอบนโยบายของพรรค และจากการกระทำต่าง ๆ ของรัฐบาลที่ไม่ยอมแก้ปัญหาให้เป็นที่พอใจ ของประชาชน โดยเฉพาะปัญหาควบคุมค่าเช่านา"

[46] The Social Action Party (SAP), led by then-PM Kukrit Pramoj, was described by Robert Zimmerman as "center-right." Of the SAP, Zimmerman writes: "Its leaders are constitutionalists and performance oriented technocrats (many former Democrat Party members) who recognize the weaknesses of the old bureaucratic polity and accept the need for fundamental but orderly restructuring of the political process. They reject 'socialism' as the answer to Thailand's problems, love their King and prefer a free, capitalist-oriented economic system with some socialistic welfare programs for the very poor in Thailand" (Zimmerman 1976: 162).

was a good person, he was purposeful, when he spoke he knew what he was talking about" (quoted in Kanoksak 2530 [1987]: 167).[47]

Yet the day after the funeral, Asa held a press conference at the Chiang Mai Provincial Office to clarify his position vis-à-vis Intha. The day of the funeral, 3 August 1975 *Prachathipatai* (ประชาธิปไตย) newspaper reported that Asa had recently warned Intha of pending violence against the farmers at the hands of the *Nawaphon*. The article quoted Asa as telling Intha that "Presently over a hundred Nawaphon assassins are coming to take action. Be careful, Mr. Intha, take care of yourself" (*Prachathipatai* 4 August 2518 [1975]: 2).[48] At the press conference, Asa unequivocally denied that he had ever met with Intha to convey this warning. He claimed that he had only met Intha when he "led the farmers to the provincial office to petition for their living, for their mouths and stomachs …but Mr. Intha Sribunruang never met individually with the provincial governor of Chiang Mai" (*Thai Niu* 9 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[49] He clarified that his brief statements at Intha's funeral were his personal views, not those of the provincial government. Asa said that he felt very sorry about Intha's death, and uneasy (*Thai Niu* 9 August 2518 [1975]: 3).

Here I have noted the willingness of state officials at different levels to deny and silence farmers. Asa's statements, and retractions, offer insight into the difficulties faced by bureaucrats who refused to do so. Whether or not Asa did warn Intha about the possible violence at the hands of the *Nawaphon*, his denial is unsurprising given the reputation of the *Nawaphon* for killings and other violence.

---

[47] "เป็นคนดี มีเหตุผล พูดจากันรู้เรื่อง"

[48] "ขณะนี้กลุ่มนวพลที่เป็นหน่วยล่าสังหารกว่า 100 คน กำลังขึ้นมาปฏิบัติงาน ขอให้นายอินถาระวังตัวให้ดี"

[49] "นำประชาชนชาวไร่ชาวนามาร้องเรียนเป็นคณะเกี่ยวกับ การทำมาหากินเรื่องปากเรื่องท้องของประชาชนเหล่านั้น ... แต่นายอินถา ศริบุญเรือง ไม่เคยไปพบปะกัน ผวก. เชียงใหม่ เป็นการส่วนตัว"

The news report did not reveal who, or what, caused Asa to call the press conference.[50]

In the interview with *Chaturat* eleven days before his assassination, Intha cited the inability of the government to understand the material urgency of the work of the FFT: "As for the government: I think the government did not agree with the demands of the farmers about our livelihood. Every day the government eats the rice of the farmers. And then they turn around and destroy the farmers at every chance, overtly and covertly" (Intha 2518 [1975]: 30).[51] I wonder if perhaps in respecting Intha and the work of the FFT, Asa Meksawan understood *too* well. His unease, perhaps, can be read as prophetic of the violence that was yet to come.

Who is named, and who is unnameable?

Out of all of the assassinations of farmer leaders, only in the case of Intha Sribunruang was an arrest made. Visooth Ruamchai, a twenty-four year-old man from Sansai district in Chiang Mai province, was arrested 10 August 1975 while walking near Tha Pae gate in Chiang Mai city (*Voice of the Nation* 11 August 1975: 1). Visooth was a seasoned criminal and had served time in prison in Phitsanulok on charges of accessory to murder and selling drugs. Although the gun was not recovered, a copy of a threatening letter and 20,000 baht in cash was found on his person (*Thin Thai* 12 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). After initially denying that he killed Intha, Visooth confessed that he was paid 5,000 baht to kill Intha (*Voice of the Nation* 12

[50] In an essay about the diversity of 'state' practices and actions in Indonesia, Tania Li writes: "Resistance may be found at the heart of the bureaucratic apparatus, where experts debate the merits of diverse plans of argue against excessive intervention in peoples' lives" (2005: 385). As I take up directly and extensively in the next chapter,

[51] "สำหรับรัฐบาล ผมคิดว่าทางรัฐบาลไม่ได้เห็นดีกับชาวนาที่เรียกร้อง เพื่อปาก เพื่อท้อง ทุกวันนี้รัฐบาลก็กินข้าวของชาวนา แต่ กลับมาทำลายชาวนาทุกด้าน ทั้งทางตรงและทางอ้อม"

August 1975: 1).[52] When asked who paid him, Visooth claimed that it was the Soviet KGB (*Thai Niu* 12 August 1975: 12).[53] Despite Visooth's claims otherwise, the Chiang Mai police asserted that the forces behind the assassination were in Chiang Rai (Thai Niu 13 August 1975: 12).

Although the gun used to kill Intha was not recovered, the case against Visooth remained firm because he confessed and more than ten witnesses of the assassination identified him as the assassin (*Thai Niu* 17 August 2518 [1975]: 16). In the period leading up to the court case, the primary witness, one of Intha's neighbors, was reported visited by Visooth's friends and asked how much money it would take for him to retract his identification of Visooth as the gunman. The witness refused to retract his identification and on 22 October 1975 the first hearing of the case was held. Despite his earlier confession, at the time of the first court hearing, Visooth denied that he killed Intha (*Thai Niu* 23 October 1975: 16). In the months that followed, under circumstances which remain unclear, the case against Visooth was dropped.

Intha's life and death offer evidence of how the 1974 Land Rent Control Act and the work of the FFT in a broad sense reconfigured rural, and rural-urban, relations. These reconfigurations at once offered the promise of a brighter future for some segments of Thai society, and spelled doom for others. Even if the opponents of the

---

[52] Visooth was interrogated at the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai, which was a detention and re-education center for suspected Communists operated by the Internal Security Operations Command. The next chapter is devoted to the Karunyathep Center and its precarious position not-quite-within-the law. For now, I will suggest that reports that Visooth was interrogated there are perplexing, and concerning. Signaling further concerns, newspaper reports noted that he was interrogated using "secret methods" (วิธีลับ) (Thai Niu 13 August 1975: 12).

[53] Upon hearing Visooth's assertion that the KGB was behind the assassination of Intha, the left-wing newspaper *Sieng Chonabot* printed an editorial refuting the claim. First, why would the KGB be interested in the struggle of the Thai farmers? How were Thai farmers' issues relevant to the USSR? Second, if the KGB *did* want to destroy the power of the people, wouldn't working with the Thai government be a more effective strategy? Then *Sieng Chonabot* offered the theory that the CIA hired the assassin, and instructed him to say that he was hired by the KGB (15 August 2518 [1975]: 3). I suspect that those behind the assassinations were neither U.S. nor USSR-based, but were rather more *national* in their locale.

farmers were ultimately able to use extrajudicial means to silence or defeat farmers in land rent disputes, for example, farmers understood their right to dispute, and had the tools and allies to legally dispute landowners. The extrajudicial actions of their opponents, landowning and otherwise, may be read as indicative of the success of the FFT's organizing to spread and use the 1974 Land Rent Control Act.

In the face of state inaction to protect the farmers, the National Student Center of Thailand sent over 200 people to Chiang Mai to work to protect and support farmers in districts throughout Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces (*Thai Niu* 17 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 16). However, despite their work, harassment and assassination of the farmers continued. In late 1975 and 1976, the Farmers' Federation of Thailand largely disappeared from public sight and farmers and students took their struggles underground. The sharp polarization of Thai society in 1975 created a culture of impunity in which it was possible for those with power to kill their opponents without fear of censure or punishment. The assassinations were not only deadly, but untraceable.

At the very moment that the assassins were unnameable, progressive activists were too easily nameable. T., a former teacher and SPT activist told me that he was afraid to go to the funerals of the assassinated Farmers' Federation leaders in July and August 1975. T. recalled that he and others were afraid to go to the funerals because they suspected that there were intelligence and Nawaphon present. To attend was to mark oneself as a progressive, and therefore a future candidate for assassination. As a result, most of the funerals were only attended by the families of the assassinated people. In turn, T. explained, the opposing side was able to say "Look, this person wasn't important, wasn't beloved by the people" (Interview with former Teachers for

the People organizer, Chiang Mai, 5 October 2006).[54] The polarized and contentious atmosphere made it impossible even for people to mourn and honor the dead properly.

Thirty years after the assassinations of FFT leaders, the assassins have still not been named. Nearly every former activist I spoke to while conducting research between 2003 and 2005 believed that they will never be named. While analytic work cannot hope to name the assassins, perhaps what we can do is trace the conditions under which they become unnameable, and in so doing, interrupt the conditions that reproduce the inability to name those responsible – and interrupt this culture of impunity. Similarly, in Appendix C at the end of this dissertation I name the farmer activists known to be victimized by violence in the 1970s. Even if their killers cannot be named, the farmers' names can be remembered. They must be remembered. The present can be a time of mourning.

[54] "ดูซี ไม่ใช่เป็นคนสำคัญ ไม่ใช่เป็นคนที่มีความรักของประชาชน"

CHAPTER SIX
A DISINTEGRATING STATE

> "Assassination is planned. Assassination is determined. There is no uncertainty; pure intention. Assassination axes jaggedly through the fabric of life, the bearable and borne, tears the assuaging progression of past into present and future. Murder strikes the lives corollary to an individual; assassination rips the life of a country, laying bare ganglia that civil institutions have been in the process of covering with flesh. Assassination is a gash" (Gordimer 1994: 241).

In *None to Accompany Me*, Nadine Gordimer's first post-apartheid novel, political assassination signaled the lingering effects of a brutal state regime backed by a divided South African society. The end of the state policy of apartheid did not mean that everyone in the country – whether officially part of the ousted regime or simply its beneficiary – supported the end of white, European supremacy. Despite regime change, reactionary violence remained in excess of the ability of either, to use Gordimer's language, state or civil institutions, to contain.[1] Similarly, as I discussed in the previous chapter, neither farmers themselves nor various Thai state actors were able to keep Intha Sribunruang and other Farmers' Federation leaders safe in 1975. Not only were farmers assassinated in public view, but their assassins operated with impunity – whether due to a lack of ability (as they claimed) or a lack of will on the part of the Thai police.

Yet while assassination of young Black leaders indicated the remaining effects of polarization and violence as a new, more just South African society was dawning, the assassination of Intha foretold the opposite in Thailand. His assassination marked the beginning of intensified violence against progressive activists, a sharply divided society, and what I refer to as the disintegration of the Thai state. In this chapter, I trace how a series of events following immediately in the wake of Intha's death sliced

[1] For critical account of the end of apartheid in South Africa, see Waldmeir (1998). For analyses of life and violence in post-apartheid South Africa, see Wilson (2001) and Shaw (2002).

through the Thai nation. This series of events began with the arrest of eight farmer leaders and one student leader under suspicious circumstances in Lamphun province on the day of Intha's funeral, 3 August 1975. When their arrests were met with protests calling for an explanation of the arrests, various local and central state officials all denied ordering the arrests. After two weeks of widespread demonstrations and internal state conflict, the nine arrested activists were released.

Immediately, citizen opponents of the release launched their own protests. In short order, the police, initially threatening to strike over an unrelated issue, joined the protests of the release. Both the initial opponents of the release and the police cited the breakdown of the rule of law into mob rule as the reason for their protests. The protests by the police climaxed in the sacking of Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj's house in the early hours of 20 August 1975. Given their insistence of the breakdown of the rule of law as the *raison d'etre* of their protests, the choice by the police to storm and loot the elected prime minister's house *while in uniform* raises serious questions about the exercise of power, authority, and influence.

Informed by Philip Abrams (1988), I frame my analysis in this chapter in relation to state formation (and state disintegration). In 1975-1976, different parts of the Thai state continually acted to deny the claims of activists, obfuscated their own roles, and contradicted one another. The utter fiction of a unified state at this moment is undeniable. And yet, the Thai state continued to operate *as a state* for another year until its formal dissolution with the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup. What if this apparent disunity of the Thai state was not seen as a temporary aberration, but rather as constitutive of the state and its violence(s)? How might this shift affect readings of the assassinations, the series of events they precipitated, and the 6 October 1976 massacre and what followed?

I further argue that during this series of events, nearly every Thai citizen experienced, as participant or witness, the muddling of the meaning of *law* itself and what I -- in contrast to the Thai police -- identify as the breakdown of the rule of law, in this case the dwindling of the legitimacy of those who ruled the nation. In order to think about the shifting operations of law, and what this meant, I turn now to reconstruct the chain of events following Intha's assassination.

A critical theory and practice against the state

Even as conservative pundits and some state officials castigated students for "creating chaos," and described assassinated farmers as "agitators," the Thai state itself was marked by contradiction, conflict, and real or stated failures to communicate among different officials, departments, and ministries. The state was a site, not only an actor, of struggle (Jessop 1990: 261). In particular, as I examined the assassination of Intha Sribunruang and the series of events following in its wake, I was struck by the multiple voices and precise lack of coordination across various parts of the Thai state. As one person asked me, given the chaos surrounding the arrests of the eight farmers and one student in Lamphun in early August 1975, *can we say that something called the Thai state existed at that moment?*[2]

My reply at the time, and what I argue here, is that yes, although it was undergoing a process of disintegration, something called the Thai state existed. In fact, the fragmented and weak nature of the Thai state contributed to creating the conditions under which activist leaders could be assassinated in broad daylight, their assassins never apprehended, and their colleagues arrested on trumped-up charges. In addition, the disunification (and at times, open hostility) among different state agencies helped create the opening for the emergence of a range of right-wing and para-state

[2] I am grateful to Professor Somsak Jeamteerasakul for raising this question.

organizations. These organizations operated with varying degrees of closeness, official and otherwise, to various state officials and ministries. Without exception, these organizations identified themselves as defenders of the Thai nation, Buddhist religion, and the monarchy.[3] At times the zeal to *protect* the nation erupted into direct calls for violence against their fellow citizens, as in the case of *Phra* Kittivuddho, a monk and Nawaphon member who claimed that "Killing Communists is not Demeritorious" in 1976 (Keyes 1978: 153). As I explored earlier, how often this call translated into material violence is nearly impossible to ascertain. What can be posited, however, is that the official and unofficial relationships between para-state groups and various state officials and agencies bear some responsibility for the inability to answer this question.

The urgency with which I write in this chapter is derived largely from the continuing unnameability of the assassins of the farmers. Chief among my concerns is how to critically question and understand state role*s* in both the assassinations and the production of unnameability. In order to think about the various roles of different state actors and institutions, here I offer an analysis of the multiplicity of the state, which is usually masked by the day-to-day operations of rule. When the day-to-day operations break down, and cannot be performed, the fiction of rule in the name of "the state" is made apparent. This makes this series of events an exemplary site to consider the disunity of the Thai state as well as the broader, comparative implications.

---

[3] Writing in a different context (that of neoliberal globalization in the mid-1990s), Gayatri Spivak notes that "Nationalism, like culture, is a moving base – a *socle mouvant* (to quote Foucault again) – of differences, as dangerous as it is powerful, always ahead or deferred by definitions, pro or contra, on which it relies. Against this, globality or postnationalist talk is a representation – both as *Darstellung* or theater and as *Vertretung* or delegation as functionary – of the financialization of the globe, or globalization. Fundamentalist nationalism arises in the loosened hyphen between nation and state as the latter is mortgaged further and further by the forces of financialisation, although the determinations are never clear" (1998: 330).

In my analysis, I foreground the multiple perspectives and motivations behind actions taken under the banner of "the state" in Thailand. Before proceeding, therefore, I want to clarify further what I mean by "the state." In the remainder of this section, I offer a framework for understanding the Thai state as a site, creator, and arbiter of contention.

Informed by Philip Abrams (1988), as a starting premise I argue that something called "the Thai state" does not exist as a bounded, fixed entity. Instead, it is a collection of competing actors and agencies, as well as the ideas and actions that citizens, critics, and those actors and agencies attribute to it. Intervening directly at the intersection of political analysis and practice, Abrams explicates the ways intellectuals mystify and objectify the state by concealing its non-existence, constituent disunity, and ideological bases. By reifying the state in a multitude of ways, both political sociology and Marxist analysis concerning something called 'the state' has hindered attempts to critique, smash, or otherwise engage the state (Abrams 1988: 59). Further, when intellectuals continue to study and represent the state as a static, unified object, they (we, I) contribute actively to reifying the state (Abrams 1988: 69).

While Max Weber (1968) argued that the state must be understood as a claim to legitimacy, Derek Sayer offers the following summary of Abrams' argument:

> …the state is a *claim* that in its very name attempts to give unity, coherence, structure, and intentionality to what are in practice frequently disunited, fragmented attempts at domination. In this sense 'the state' *is* an ideological project (rather than an agency that *has* such projects) (Sayer 1994: 371, emphasis is in original).

When Abrams argues that many representations of states function ideologically, he means that they function to legitimate subjection. This subjection is not (and cannot be) carried out by "the state," but is instead carried out by forces or factions acting under its banner and in its name (Abrams 1988: 68). When critics fail to recognize

this, they further legitimate this subjection by identifying the state as being, or containing, a hidden hand. In this sense, the very structure of the state is presumed to be hidden and to actively hide the state (Abrams 1988: 63-64). This mystified and mystifying conception of the state also legitimates subjection by giving "an account of political institutions in terms of cohesion, purpose, independence, common interest and morality without necessarily telling us anything about the actual nature, meaning or functions of political institutions" (Abrams 1988: 68-69). Without explanation and made invisible, the cohesion of the state seems immediately vast, naturalized, essential, seamless, and difficult to challenge. At its most mystified, *the state* is an abstraction *out there* – unimaginable.

An alternative strategy is to ask who, how, and with what explanation do unspecified actors or agencies acting in the name of or proximate to "the state" carry out their actions, violent or otherwise. Abrams does not contend that cohesion is present in society. Cohesion is "effected repressively, economically, and ideologically in class societies" (Abrams 1988: 73). However, he argues that identifying 'the state' as the arbiter of repression is misguided and lends a false concreteness and unity to the cohesion (Abrams 1988: 73). The representation of 'the state' as a material, unified agent masks what Abrams suggests would otherwise be critical for understanding and challenging repression: "the actual disunity of political power" (1988: 79). Abrams explains:

> The state is the unified symbol of an actual disunity. This is not just a disunity between the political and economic but equally a profound disunity within the political. Political institutions …conspicuously fail to display a unity of practice – just as they constantly discover their inability to function as a more general factor of cohesion (1988: 79).

The representation of 'the state' as a concrete, hidden object attempts to effect an impossible unity, or at least conceal various political disunities.[4] It is our job, as critics, to reveal these disunities.

Here I take Abrams' ideas as starting point for articulating a theory capable of comprehending the disintegrating Thai state of 1975 and 1976. As I specifically trace later, the set of individuals and agencies that operated in the name of the Thai state in 1975 and 1976 were not only disunified, but often actively in conflict with one another. However, even though "the state" does not exist except as a claim marked by ideology, it "contrives to deny the existence of connections and conflicts which would if recognized be incompatible with the claimed autonomy and integration of the state" (Abrams 1988: 77). The challenge therefore is to trace these connections and conflicts in order to undermine "the state."

In this dissertation, I pose questions about two sets of connections and conflicts in order to reveal the Thai state as disintegrating. First, what was the nature of the relationships, official and unofficial, between state actors and often violent para-state groups? While the record of direct material or other support remains largely inaccessible, what kinds of violent para-state action against progressive activists may have been ignored, tolerated, or even encouraged by state actors?[5] Second, even

---

[4] Resonantly, Ernesto Laclau outlines the simultaneous disunity and hegemonic push for seamless unity in society. Within this, he identifies the *ideological* as the very attempt to fix unity (Laclau 1990: 92). However, despite his assertion that a unified, unitary society is impossible, the escape from ideology (which underpins the hope for it) is impossible as well. Despite its failure, the attempt at closure and unity is always present.

[5] As David Banisar (2004) noted in his survey of the state of freedom of information globally, the 1997 "People's Constitution" grants citizens the right to public information. The specific mechanism for citizens to access public information was further specified in the 1997 Official Information Act (OIA). Under the two new instruments, all information was meant to become public after twenty years. A new office based in the Prime Minister's office, the Office of the Official Information Commission, was created to handle citizen requests. However, as Banisar notes, both acts excluded information that "may jeopardize the Royal Institution'; this information cannot be released. Information "relating to the Royal Institution" will be released after seventy-five years. Finally, Banisar reported that "information that would jeopardize national security, international relations or national economic or financial security; cause the decline of the efficiency of law enforcement; disclose opinions and advice given internally; endanger the life of safety of any person; disclose medical or personal information which

within the context of the disintegrating state, there were limits to the dissent which individuals operating under the auspices of the Thai state could broach. What do these limits, and the penalties for crossing them, indicate about the nature of the constituent disunity of the state? These two sets of questions, at once both practical and theoretical, guide my analysis in this chapter about the series of events which followed in the wake of the farmer assassinations.

Against mystifying the Thai state, whenever it is possible I name the *specific* state official, ministry, or defense agency to which I refer. There are many moments at which different offices, ministries and defense factions took opposing (and often contradictory) positions in relation to one another. Yet Abrams' influence upon my work goes beyond the level of choosing to use specific language. The choice to center my analysis of the Thai state on the assassinations and series of events that followed is intentional. Abrams privileges violence as a site at which the impossible unity of 'the state' can be broken down analytically. Mystification as "the central mode of subjection" in societies today is backed up by prisons, armies, immigration and other disciplinary forces (Abrams 1988: 77). Connecting these entities with 'the state,' then "silences protest, excuses force, and convinces almost all of us that the fate of the victims is just and necessary" (Abrams 1988: 77). Refusing the slippage into the catchall phrase, "the state," and instead specifying a branch of the Provincial Police or a leader in the Ministry of Interior, therefore, also refuses mystification. This is a key moment for a critical analysis of, and against, the state.

Not only is the moment of violence an exemplary time to parse out the constituent elements of a disintegrating state, it is also, to use Walter Benjamin's

---

would unreasonably encroach upon the right of privacy; disclose information given by a person in confidence; other cases prescribed by Royal Decree" can be held without release (2004: 85). The 1997 People's Constitution was destroyed with the 19 September 2006 coup; the temporary 2006 Constitution does not address citizen access to government information.

terms, a "moment of danger" (1968: 255).[6] This is because the moment of violence elides and obscures the disunity of political power that Abrams so effectively identifies as the foundation upon which the fiction of 'the state' rests. Abrams suggests that when the link between bodies of violence and 'the state' is broken, transformative effects follow. When the link is broken, he argues that "… **real hidden powers emerge.** And when they do they are not the powers of the state but of armies of liberation or repression, foreign governments, guerilla movements, soviets, juntas, parties, classes" (1988: 77, emphasis added). For my purposes here, I would also add to the list individuals and factions within the police, army, and government ministries who acted in concert with right-wing para-state groups such as the Nawaphon, Red Gaurs, and Village Scouts.[7]

In what follows, I reconstruct the series of events following Intha's assassination which culminated in the sacking of Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj's residence. What emerge are representations of the police and Ministry of Interior which indicate, at the very least, disunity. I draw exclusively on Chiang Mai and Bangkok-based newspapers to make my argument here. In other words, my analysis of the disintegrating Thai state is not based on an exclusive interview with a highly-placed retired civil servant or other state insider. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect

---

[6] The sixth thesis of Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," reads as follows: "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of Antichrist. Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious" (1968: 255).

[7] What I hope is clear is that I am not interested in analyzing the workings of various Thai state and para-state entities as part of a bureaucratic whole. This is not because it is not relevant to my project, but only that I am choosing to put my emphasis elsewhere. Productive discussions of the Thai bureaucracy qua bureaucracy can be found in Riggs (1966), Siffin (1966), and Chai-anan (2002).

of the disintegrating Thai state was the public nature of the contradictions, tension and sheer lack of coordination present. Every citizen was a witness.

The Arrests

You will recall from my discussion in the last chapter that protests across the country followed in the wake of the assassination of Intha Sribunruang on 30 July 1975. Intha was the northern president and national vice-president of the Farmers' Federation. His prominence, as well as the assassinations which preceded his, catalyzed a mass mobilization of students, professors, farmers, and other people. They called on the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Interior, and the police to arrest the assassins of the farmers and to prevent further assassinations of progressive activists.

Only in the case of Intha's assassination was an arrest made. After the evidence pointing to Intha's assassinations at the hands of student leaders was shown to be false, on 10 August 1975, Visooth Ruamchai was arrested. He was later released. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the implications of the failure to identify and prosecute the assassins are significant.

I begin with a series of arrests which took place a full week before the arrest of Visooth. Rather than arresting the assassins of Intha or other FFT leaders, on 3 August 1975, nine of Intha's colleagues were arrested. At 4 a.m., six different police operations involving a total of 150 officers arrested eight farmers and one student activist (*Thin Thai* 4 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12; *Voice of the Nation* 4 August 1975: 1; *Athipat* 8-11 August 2518 [1975]: 1). Those arrested were the following:

1. Bunma Ari (FFT president, Lamphun province)
2. Inkham Sinthornthong (FFT vice-president, Lamphun province)
3. Intha Sriwongwan (FFT treasurer, Lamphun province)
4. Biew Daman (FFT member)
5. Khan Daman (FFT member)
6. La Manichai (FFT member)

7. Saengchu Khamsao (FFT member)
8. Oonruan Chaisak (FFT member)
9. Chatri Hutanuwat (Farmer Project activist and fourth-year medical student at CMU).[8]

The nine were initially held without bail at the Lamphun police station (*Thin Thai* 6 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Bail was later set at 30,000 baht per person (*Bangkok Post* 7 August 1975: 1). Even after bail was set, the nine refused it. From the beginning, the nine chose not to be bailed out as a critique of the illegitimacy of the arrests. Kriangkamol Laophairoj, the secretary-general of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT), sent a telegram to northern student leaders asking them to not bail out the nine (*Bangkok Post* 5 August 1975: 1, 3). Pradap Manurasada, the in-house FFT lawyer and legal educator mentioned in the last chapter, served as the lawyer for the nine (*Thai Niu* 5 August 2518 [1975]: 12).

From the beginning the arrests were surrounded by irregularities, shifting stories, and unconfirmed rumors. For example, one Chiang Mai newspaper heralded the arrests with a headline reading "Big-time arrest of agitators, many documents to stir-up villagers found" (*Thai Niu* 4 August 2518 [1975]: 1).[9] These documents supposedly urged the masses to fight against state officials. Among them was a collection of photocopied articles by Che Guevara on the situation and roles of young people in society (*Thai Niu* 4 August 2518 [1975]: 12). The next day, further details about the seized documents were forthcoming. They included a large number of books about communist China, and posters which reportedly read: "Enemies of students: 1. feudal capitalists, high classes with special rights above ordinary citizens; 2. capitalists in the civil service who serve imperialism; 3. foreign imperialism of the United States

[8] An additional person, Kanchana Yaiprasan, who was a first-year agriculture student at CMU, was also on the arrest lists. She could not be found.

[9] "จับนักปลุกระดมมวลชนครั้งใหญ่ ได้เอกสารปลุกปั่นยุยงชาวบ้านได้มากหมาย"

of America and Japan" (*Thai Niu* 5 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[10] Only one day later, the description of these documents grew even more sinister and precise, to "documents inciting and spreading communism" (*Thai Niu* 5 August 2518 [1975]: 1).[11] They were reportedly found in the houses of the farmers (*Thai Niu* 5 August 2518 [1975]: 12). All of the documents were immediately seized as evidence. Although possession of these documents and books on their own was not yet banned by law, as it would be following 6 October 1976, here they were read evidence suggestive of criminal behavior. The detailed and strict reporting of the documents seems to indicate that mere possession was dangerous.

Other reports suggest that the farmers may have been apprehended by the police under false pretenses. One villager who witnessed the arrests of farmer leaders in his village said that he heard police telling the farmers that they "want to take you into police custody because right now farmer leaders are being killed frequently. This is for (your) protection" (*Prachathipatai* 4 August 2518 [1975]: 1).[12] When the villager went to follow-up at the police station, however, he was told that the farmers were being charged with crimes.

Comments made by the Police Director General, Phoj Phekanan, following the initial round of arrests raise additional questions about police intentions and actions. On 6 August, he said that additional farmers and students would be arrested because "the police have a namelist of a number of farmer and student activists who have 'committed crimes' on various occasions" (*Bangkok Post* 7 August 1975: 1).

---

[10] "ศัตรูของนักศึกษา" คือ ๑. นายทุนขุนนาง ชั้นสูงมีสิทธิพิเศษเกินประชาชนคนธรรมดา ๒. นายทุนทางราชการรับใช้จักรพรรดิ์นิยม ๓. จักรพรรดิ์นิยมต่างชาติคือสหรัฐอเมริกา และ ญี่ปุ่น"

[11] "เอกสารชักจูงและเผยแพร่ลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์"

[12] "ต้องการเอาตัวไปอยู่ในความคุ้มครองของตำรวจเพราะขณะนี้ ผู้นำชาวนาถูกฆ่าตายกันบ่อย เพื่อเป็นการป้องกันไว้ก่อน"

Although no further arrests were made at this time, the existence of a list of individuals who have supposedly committed crimes is troubling. If the crimes had already been committed, why would the police wait to make arrests? Who compiled these lists, and what criteria were used? I bracket these questions for now, but they will emerge as important again in the next chapter when I address the mass arrests that took place following the 6 October 1976 massacre.

Upon examination of the actual crimes with which the nine activists were charged a number of further irregularities emerge. The eight farmers and one student were arrested on a range of charges covering two separate incidents. One set of charges alleged that farmer leaders detained a mine owner and district officer in Mae Tha district in Lamphun, as well as engaged in "mobilizing the masses and encouraging them to disobey the law" (*Voice of the Nation* 4 August 1975: 8). What actually happened is that concerned with the effects of a coal mine on their water supply and crops, villagers held a protest at the offices of the Mae Wa antimony mine. When the mine was initially opened, the mining company promised to dispose properly of the harmful mine waste. However, they failed to do so and instead it contaminated the villagers' water supply and destroyed their crops. In protest, 600 villagers surrounded the mine and forced the workers to leave. When ten policemen came to the mine, the villagers outnumbered them and disarmed them (*Bangkok Post* 15 May 1975: 5; Dennis 1982: 183). Following the demonstration, they held a meeting with the mine owner and the district officer that lasted deep into the night. The villagers refused to leave until the owner agreed to their demands, but did not "detain" him or the district officer (Klum Bandit Phattana 2518 [1975]: 47). The

incident took place on 12 May, but the arrest papers were not drawn up until 27 June (Klum Bandit Phattana 2518 [1975]: 49).[13]

The second set of charges alleged that the farmers burned down a teak forest as well as engaged in “mobilizing the masses and encouraging them to disobey the law” (*Voice of the Nation* 4 August 1975: 8). In this case, *one* tree was indeed burned down, but there is a broader context. On 4 April 1975, an area of Lamphun province was designated a forest preservation area. However, as some of this area had been used for subsistence farming, the Ministry of Interior ruled that any land that had been used for subsistence could continue to be used as such. When government forestry officers planted a tree in this land, in contravention to this ruling, the farmers reacted by setting the tree on fire (Klum Bandit Phattana 2518 [1975]: 48). This incident occurred on 6 June, and the arrest papers were drawn up on 10 June (Klum Bandit Phattana 2518 [1975]: 47).

Many people found the temporal element of the arrests problematic. As one commentator in *Athipat*, the newspaper of the NSCT put it, if the arrest papers for both incidents were drawn up in June, why did no one take action until August, when members of the public were concerned with the issue of farmer assassinations? (*Athipat* 8-11 August 2518 [1975]: 3). This disagreement was even echoed by some in the employ of the Thai state. The Deputy Communications Minister, Anant Chaisaeng, said, “Personally I do not agree with such mass arrests. The crimes were committed three months ago. Why did police not make the arrest then?” He further asserted that, “Right now is not the proper time to make such arrests because many farmer leaders

---

[13] Following the arrests of the eight farmers and one student, both the Chiang Mai University Students' Organization and the Faculty of Science at CMU conducted independent reports of the mine and its effects on the villages. The Students' Organization report can be found in *Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 3, 10. The Faculty of the Science report can be found in *Thai Niu* 17 August 2518 [1975]: 3. The full text of the NSC declaration on Mae Wa mine can be found in *Sieng Chonabot* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 4.

have been killed" (*Bangkok Post* 6 August 1975: 3). Witnessing the delayed arrests, observers may have wondered if they too would be found retroactively suspect. The large number of police personnel involved and coordination required to carry out the simultaneous raids to arrest the nine only compounded the injury resulting from the denials made by various police officials that they lacked sufficient resources to keep the farmer leaders safe.

Marut Bunnag, president of the Lawyers' Society of Thailand, criticized the length of time between the two incidents and the arrests as inappropriate. However, of even greater concern to Marut was the accusation that the nine had "incited the masses." The farmers and student leaders were not criminals, he noted. If the government was going to bring the charge of inciting the masses, they "must have evidence that shows it clearly" (*Sayam Rat* 6 August 2518 [1975]: 1).[14] Marut explained further:

> If they say that they want to change the government, then it cannot be considered treasonous. But if they tell the citizens to pick up arms to fight the government, then it can be considered treasonous instantly. Therefore, in line with the law, one should have the view that the police must find very clear evidence before proceeding (*Sayam Rat* 6 August 2518 [1975]: 16).[15]

Marut's observations give weight to the idea that at this time the distinction between criticism of the government and outright insurgency was being blurred. Critical discussion, and even thoughts, of dissent were criminalized.

In addition, there was initial confusion about *who* ordered the arrests. Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj immediately denied any involvement. Numerous high-

---

[14] "ต้องมีหลักฐานระบุแน่ชัด"

[15] "ถ้าพูดในทำนองให้มีการเปลี่ยนรัฐบาล ไม่ถือว่าเป็นกบฏ แต่ถ้าพูดให้ประชาชนลุกขึ้นจับอาวุธต่อสู้กับรัฐบาลย่อมถือว่าเป็นกบฏทันที่ ดังนั้น ตนจึงมีความเห็นว่าตำรวจจะต้องหาหลักฐานให้แน่ชัดเสียก่อนแล้วจึงดำเนินการตามกฎหมายให้เด็ดขาด"

ranking officials within the Ministry of Interior, and the Department of Police, which is a division of the Ministry of Interior, denied being behind the arrests. Both the Minister (Buntheng Thongsawat) and Deputy Minister of Interior (Chalor Wannaphut) claimed that the police ordered the arrests and that they did not know about the arrests ahead of time. The Police Director General (Police General Phoj Phekanan) claimed to know nothing about the arrest order. The Lamphun provincial police commander (Police Lieutenant General Sanan Narinatorasak) claimed that the deputy Police Director General (Police Lieutenant General Montchai Phunkhongchuen) ordered the Lamphun deputy provincial police commander (Police Major General Suthat Sukhumwat) to carry out the arrests; he himself claimed no involvement or knowledge. The Lamphun deputy commander, however, claimed that the order was given by the Police Director General, who, as you will remember, denied any knowledge. The Deputy Police Director General, who also headed a special crime suppression division, initially claimed that the order came from the second deputy Minister of Interior (Bunlert Lertpreecha), with the cooperation of the Deputy Minister of Interior (*Prachachaat Weekly* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 7). However, as I noted at the beginning of the paragraph, the Deputy Minister of Interior claimed that he did not know about the arrests ahead of time.

Yet, despite the confusion, one day after the arrests the deputy Police Director General-cum-head-of crime-suppression division (Police Lieutenant General Montchai Phunkhongchuen) admitted to ordering the arrests (*Voice of the Nation* 5 August 1975: 1). The Police Director General did not know because the deputy Police Director General had acted in his capacity as the head of crime suppression, which was directly under the Minister of Interior, not within the Department of Police. Police Director General Phoj commented that the order could have come from within the Ministry of Interior itself, or

from elsewhere. Commenting on Police Director General Phoj's lack of prior knowledge of the planned arrests, one Chiang Mai newspaper noted that "There is a lot of criticism in many circles. Some say that in the Department of Police there was disagreement over the arrests of the suspects" (*Thin Thai* 6 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[16] In this case, and state of confusion, it is worth reiterating that no one within the leadership of the Ministry of Interior claimed prior knowledge of the arrests. Given that the Minister of Interior and the Deputy Minister of Interior denied involvement, Police Director General Phoj's assertion of *elsewhere* seems likely. But where?

Although Police Director General Phoj claimed initial ignorance about the arrests, he soon put the weight of his office behind them. When asked to explain the arrests of the nine in Lamphun, Phoj said: "There's nothing that I need to clarify, because the evidence is already clear" (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[17] When a reporter pushed the question of evidence, the Director said "Eh, you don't have to worry. The evidence is really good" (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 10).[18]

Those arrested offered a contrasting view on the issue of evidence. On 5 August 1975, *Chaturat* magazine interviewed three of the nine arrested. Despite General Phoj's insistence of the high quality of the evidence, Inkham Sinthornthong, who was one of the farmers arrested in connection to the events at Mae Wa mine, said that he was not even present at the demonstration at the mine. (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 32). Bunma Ari, another farmer arrested in connection to the mine protests, was also not present. Expressing confusion at his arrest, Bunma

---

[16] "ได้เกิดเสียงวิพาคษ์วิจารณ์กันมากมายหลายวงการ บ้างก็กล่าวว่า กรมตำรวจเกิดการขัดแย้งกันในเรื่องการจับกุม ผู้ต้องหาดังกล่าว"

[17] "ผมก็ไม่เห็นจะต้องมีอะไรชี้แจง เพราะพยานหลักฐานก็ชัดเจนที่สุดแล้ว"

[18] "อ๋อ ไม่ต้องห่วง หลักฐานดีมาก"

commented, “We work for a living in the way of villagers, we don’t cause trouble for anybody” (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 32).[19]

After those two brief statements, the jail officials took the two farmers back, and let Chatri Hutanuwat, the sole student arrested, remain to continue talking to the *Chaturat* reporter.[20] Chatri explained that he began working with farmers in 1974. Before that he had been a typical university student and spent his free time having fun. But in 1974 he went to help families affected by a severe flood outside Chiang Mai city. While working, he met four farming children who had no rice to eat. Chatri decided that day to work with the farmers in their struggle for justice. He had done so up until the moment of his arrest (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 32). In contrast to the confusion about who ordered the arrests and Police Director General Phoj’s oblique references to evidence, Chatri and Bunma were strikingly clear in their objectives. In the context of the criminalization of dissenting action and thought, perhaps even the call for an ability to make a living and fill one’s belly with rice was becoming seditious.

The Protests

Attempting to pre-empt protests around the arrests of the nine activists, on 7 August the Ministry of Interior issued a declaration in which they insisted that they

---

[19] “เราหากินตามประสาชาวบ้าน ไม่ได้ทำความเดือดร้อนแก่ใคร”

[20] When the *Chaturat* reporter asked Police Lieutenant Major Sunthorn why the farmers were forced to return to their cells before Chatri he said something strikingly class-inflected. He commented that sometimes, “People go to visit some people, like they visit normally, and it just makes them more stirred up and angrier” (“คนไปเยี่ยมบางคน แทนที่จะไปเยี่ยมธรรมดา กลับไปปลุกปั่นยุยงให้ผู้ต้องหาโกรธแค้นยิ่งขึ้น”) (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 32-33). When the reporter asked then about why it was okay to talk to Chatri, he answered “because you speak together and he understands” (“พูดกันเข้าใจ”) (*Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August 2518 [1975]): 33). *Understanding*, apparently, was the province of university students, not farmers.

were making progress on the assassinations. They cited this as difficult because between 13 April and 3 August, there were nine assassinations of farmer leaders and over two hundred total murders (*Thin Thai* 9 August 2518 [1975]: 12). In addition, in the same declaration they insisted that the cases against the nine arrested activists were not connected to the assassinations (*Thin Thai* 9 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[21]

For many, their assertions rang hollow and the Ministry was unable to prevent the protests. From the very beginning, student leaders found the claims of the lack of connection between the two sets of events to be unacceptable. Shortly after the arrests, the CMU Students' Association issued a statement citing the long-standing struggle of the farmers and the injustice of their deaths. They criticized PM Kukrit Pramoj for not taking concrete action and closed their statement by saying: "We want to express our opposition and condemnation of the actions without justice of the ruling classes, the cruelty of the landowners who conspire with the reactionary ruling classes, and ask for the support of the struggle of the farmers in every way" (*Thai Niu* 6 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[22] Even here, as the CMU Students' Association used radical (inflammatory in the eyes of some) language, they were not urging anyone to violence.

The protests soon moved to the streets. On 5 August, approximately 400 students met late into the night in the CMU Student Union building to develop a plan for further action (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). They decided to go to Lamphun on the morning of 6 August to protest and to visit the arrested activists.

On 6 August, approximately 300 CMU students held an open debate in front of the Lamphun police station. They proclaimed that "The arrest is an arrest like that of an untamed ruler. There's no reason. Except that the Department of Police is in

---

[21] The full text of the declaration can be found in *Thai Niu* 9 August 2518 [1975]: 3, 10.

[22] "เราขอประกาศคัดค้านและประนามการกระทำที่ไร้วามเป็นธรรมของชนชั้นปกครอง ความโหดเหี้ยมของบรรดาเจ้าของที่ดินที่สมคบกับชนชั้นปกครองปฏิกริยา และขอสนับสนุนการต่อสู้ของชาวนาชาวไร่ทุกแบบ"

contradiction with itself' (*Thin Thai* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[23] They carried banners criticizing the PM, the police, and the provincial governor. They used megaphones to proclaim their ideas in front of the Lamphun police station (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). The protesting students had no way of knowing that in a few days, the Department of Police would act in such a way as to make their internal contradictions starkly visible to the entire nation.

In the charged atmosphere of the time, not only were there critics of the arrests, but also overt supporters of them. The students faced an immediate response to their protests from a group of supporters in Lamphun. Somboon Muangsawan, a Lamphun resident, went to observe the student protests and listen to the debate. He grew agitated and left the area in front of the police station. A short period later he returned with seven other men and three pickup trucks. They called themselves the Lamphun Province Farmer Agriculturalist Group (กลุ่มเกษตรกรชาวนาจังหวัดลำพูน). They watched the student protests, and then circled them in the trucks using megaphones to yell at them. They accused the students of looking down on Lamphun people (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). This accusation may seem off, as the students had come to Lamphun to visit the arrested nine, eight of whom were farmers from Lamphun. However, understood differently, their accusation may be understood as an attempt to undermine student-farmer solidarity, and to create hostility against students in the minds of other Lamphun people present.

Somboon and his colleagues in the Lamphun Province Farmer Agriculturalist Group urged the Lamphun people present not to listen to the students and insisted that the arrests were appropriate (*Thin Thai* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 12). The situation grew tense and some students wanted to leave. However, the counter-protestors soon left and no one was hurt (*Thai Niu* 7 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12).

---

[23] "สวนฝ่ายจับกุมว่าเป็นการจับกุมแบบเวียงแห ไม่มีเหตุผล แม้วงการตำรวจยังขัดกันเอง"

By 6 August, CMU was closed, and many students were boycotting classes at Thammasat and Ramkhamhaeng Universities in order to protest for the release of the nine (*Bangkok Post* 7 August 1975: 1). Student unions at Chulalongkorn, Mahidol, and other universities also called for students to protest classes; teachers' colleges were planning to shut down also (*Bangkok Post* 7 August 1975: 1). By 7 August, all universities in Bangkok except Kasetsart University were closed (*Bangkok Post* 8 August 1975: 1).

Between 4 and 8 August, protests calling for the release of the nine grew to over 10,000 in Bangkok alone (*Voice of the Nation* 8 August 1975: 1). However, the centers of the protests, and the growing counter-protests, were in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. On 7 August, at 3:00 p.m., approximately 3000 students massed inside the gates of CMU. At 4:30 p.m. the demonstrators left the campus and passed Suan Dok Hospital on their way to Tha Pae Gate. The march was accompanied by vehicles using megaphones to broadcast their demands. Those marching held big banners and posters that decried the assassinations of the farmers and the arrests of the nine.

When the march arrived at Tha Pae, they were joined by approximately 1000 students from Chiang Mai Teachers' College as well. Theerachai Maruekhaphitak, the head of the political wing of the NSCT as well as a CMU student and former NSC president, said that the protests had two purposes: to demand state action to stop the assassinations of the farmers and to demand the release of the nine arrested activists. The NSCT called for the state to investigate whether or not the arrests of the nine were just. The mother of Chatri Hutanuwat, the arrested student among the nine, traveled up to Chiang Mai from Bangkok to speak at the rally. Chatri himself sent a letter from jail, urging people to continue struggling and fighting. After midnight, the protest started to break up as students and other supporters returned home. By the morning all but twenty protestors had left (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 12). I want to

briefly step back from my analysis of the details of the protests to comment on the stance of the student movement towards something called "the state." The student movement, which was far more fragmented and contradiction-ridden that I am able to address here, largely approached "the state" as a coherent whole. In their demands for "state action" they failed to take into account the disunified and disintegrating form of the state. Even if there had been the necessary will across various groups and agencies to respond to the student and farmer demands, it is unlikely that at this time, they would have been able to do so. This is not to absolve various Thai state agencies and actions for their actions and inactions. Instead, I note this in order to offer another piece of the context of those actions and inactions.

On 7 August, the Lamphun Province Farmer Agriculturalist Group issued a declaration in which they insisted that they loved peace, order, and quiet in Lamphun. They claimed that the majority of farmers in Lamphun did not agree with the protests to release the nine; their claim was not accompanied by numbers or other supporting evidence (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 12). At this time there were also reports that important documents and valuables were being taken out of the governor's residence and that the police were preparing to defend him (*Thai Niu* 8 August 2518 [1975]: 12). However, it wasn't the governor who needed protection. Not surprising, given the preceding events, the protesting students were those in need of protection.

On 8 August, approximately 1000 students assembled again at Tha Pae and continued the protests to release the nine and halt the assassination of the farmers. While they were protesting, a bomb went off at the edge of the Tha Pae area. No one was hurt. A few seconds later, a second bomb went off. Five people were hurt by the second bomb and were taken to the hospital. After the second bomb, a female student went to speak at the podium and challenged the opposition to set off another bomb. She insisted that she was ready to die. Then a third bomb went off very close to the

podium. However, it did not explode completely and the female student and many others in the packed area avoided being hurt. The bombs were cited as being placed by a "hidden hand" ("มือมืด") (*Thai Niu* 10 August 2518 [1975]: 12). No arrests were made. At this time, demonstrations against the students were ongoing in neighboring Lamphun province as well (*Thai Niu* 11 August 2518 [1975]: 5).[24]

The protests reached a zenith on 12 August. Approximately 3000 people, comprised of CMU and Teachers' College and other students from Chiang Mai, NSC activists, as well as representatives from the NSCT in Bangkok who had traveled north were massed at the provincial hall in downtown Chiang Mai (*Thai Niu* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 5). The counter-protests reached a high point on 12 August as well. A group of approximately 300 people calling themselves "Young People of Chiang Mai," ("กลุ่มหนุ่มสาวเชียงใหม่") began protesting at 9 a.m. around the city. They claimed that the protesting students "created chaos in Chiang Mai, which has been a tranquil and beautiful city for a long time, and has long-standing traditions and customs" (*Thin Thai* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[25] The reference to "traditions and customs" here is significant. The refrain is one frequently heard as part of conservative calls protesting change. But here the context begs the question of what "traditions and customs" the Young People of Chiang Mai viewed the NSCT and NSC as destroying, and themselves as protecting. At a time when the signifier "communist" had come to include almost anything even proximate to a criticism (let alone a threat) to the status quo, perhaps "traditions and customs" had become equally empty.

---

[24] One unnamed Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) officer accused the Soviet KGB and China of creating the unrest after the arrests of the 8 + 1. Apparently, the KGB was strongest in Bangkok, and so was behind the unrest at Thammasat; China, on the other hand, was strongest in the provinces (*Bangkok Post* 9 August 1975: 3).

[25] "สร้างความวุ่นวายให้เชียงใหม่ซึ่งเป็นเมืองสงบมานานสวยงามด้ายธรรมชาติ และขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีมานาน"

The Young People of Chiang Mai further claimed that the students and farmers who were protesting were "destroying the tranquility and order in the homeland, and are inciting the people to devalue the sacredness of law, which is very inappropriate" (*Thai Niu* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[26] Over the next weeks, the *law* would come into increasing crisis. The claim of the Young People raises the question of what they meant by *law*. The students and farmers they criticized protested the farmer assassinations and the arrests of the nine as *unjust*. Yet the Young People linked *law* to *order*. As they proceeded from an area close to the governor's house on the banks of the Ping River up to Tha Pae gate, where the other protestors were massed, they handed out flyers, carried posters, and waved the Thai flag (*Thin Thai* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 12). When they arrived at Tha Pae, the massed students and farmers invited them to climb the podium and speak. The Young People refused, and instead used megaphones to criticize the students from the edge of the crowd (*Thai Niu* 13 August 2518 [1975]: 12). While the signifiers "communist," "law," and "order," may have been in the process of being emptied (or perhaps over-filled), *student* was not. The Young People refused the identification of *student*, although some of them must have been enrolled in secondary school, technical college, or university. Paradoxically, given their stated desire for peace and tranquility, by remaining at the edge of the crowd, the Young People defiantly refused its possibility.

The Release

The charges against the nine arrested activists did not stick. At 2 p.m. on 14 August, the Lamphun provincial prosecutor called the provincial office to inform the governor that the charges were being dropped against the nine individuals. At 5 p.m.,

---

[26] "เป็นการบ่อนทำลายความสงบเรียบร้อยภายในบ้านเมืองและยุยงให้ประชาชนเสื่อมความศรัทธาในกฎหมายซึ่งเป็นการไม่สมควรอย่างยิ่ง "

the regional prosecutor, the Lamphun and Chiang Mai provincial prosecutors, and the assistant provincial prosecutor for Lamphun (who was the official in direct charge of the case) went in person to the provincial hall to ask for their release. The nine were brought to appear in court at 5:30 p.m. The judge read the dismissal of the charges. At 5:44 p.m., after being held for eleven days, the eight farmers and one student were set free (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12).

Immediately following their release, the nine went to Chiang Mai to speak at the protests continuing in front of the provincial hall. Over 3000 people were waiting to receive them (*Sieng Chonabot* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 8). When they arrived, they climbed the stage and thanked the people present for protesting and ensuring their release (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12; *Athipat* 15-17 August 2518 [1975]: 12).

After their release, the NSCT sent an urgent telegram asking the nine to travel to Bangkok. The protestors refused to believe that the nine had been released until they saw concrete evidence of it. The nine traveled to Bangkok on 16 August and went to rallies at Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University, and Sanam Luang (*Thin Thai* 17 August 2518 [1975]: 12). At Sanam Luang, Chatri Hutanuwat cited his and the others' release as a victory for the people. He vowed to continue struggling for the rights of the farmers (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12). The events of the previous eleven days would make doing so, at least openly, difficult.

Upon the release of the nine, the NSCT met with PM Kukrit. He assured them in a written declaration that he was doing everything possible to find the assassins of the farmers (*Athipat* 15-17 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Yet he also encouraged the students to stop protesting "because it will instigate a reaction from another group" (*Athipat* 15-17 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[27] Upon hearing of PM Kukrit's statement, Thirayuth Bunmi, one of the thirteen people who arrest precipitated the events of 14

---

[27] "เพราะจะก่อปฏิกิริยาในคนอีกกลุ่มหนึ่ง"

October 1973 and one-time head of the NSCT, asked who precisely this unnamed group might be. Thirayuth suspected that it might be the powers of dictatorship (*Athipat* 15-17 August 2518 [1975]: 12). PM Kukrit's reference to an unnamed group, as well as the attribution of the earlier bombs in Chiang Mai to a "hidden hand" contributed to creating an atmosphere of insecurity. Here, as with the case of the unnamed assassins of the FFT leaders, the logic of unnameability is significant. Were the unnamed as such became their identities were literally unknown, or because too much was at stake in revealing their identities?

While the students and farmers did cease their protests, this was not enough to prevent another group from reacting strongly to the arrests. Although it is impossible to know whether or not it was the group Kukrit was initially worried about, the counter-protestors who decried the release of the nine soon gave Kukrit cause for concern.

The Counter-protests

The day after the release of the eight farmers and one student, a new set of people took to the streets -- in protest of the release. A group of over 1000 people calling themselves the "Patriots of Lamphun" ("กลุมพิทักษ์ชาติลำพูน") massed in front of the Lamphun provincial hall. Among the protesters were people from every occupation, including lawyers, farmers, and merchants (*Thin Thai* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 12). They demanded an explanation for the release of the nine from the prime minister. If he did not respond, or they were not satisfied with his answer they threatened that "we will resort to violent means to keep the law at work" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 16 August 1975: 3). The counter-protests engaged the law in a paradoxical fashion. The protestors claimed to do so in order to uphold the sacredness

of the law. Yet they actively broke the law in small ways, and threatened to break the law in dangerous and earth-shattering ways.

During their protest on 15 August, the Patriots of Lamphun began with conventional protest behavior. Various individuals made speeches decrying the release of the nine and they carried posters criticizing the students. The group made four specific demands to the PM Kukrit government:

1. For the government to examine and explain its actions (namely the release of the nine);
2. For the government to resign if they are unable to resolve the situation;
3. For the three armies to mass together to assure the independence of the nation;
4. For the government to answer the three demands within 24 hours (by 16 August) (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12).

For the Patriots of Lamphun, the release of the nine was an indication of the failure of PM Kukrit Pramoj to govern. Their demands contained calls for both radical democracy and the return of a potentially authoritarian power in politics. The Patriots demanded that the state, by which they seemed to mean PM Kukrit Pramoj (as it was unlikely that the career bureaucrats of the Ministry of Interior would resign), be accountable to them. Yet the Patriots were not willing to follow through on their call for power to the people: they also called for military action. When the Patriots tired of speeches, they projected three open-air films for the enjoyment of those present (*Bangkok Post* 16 August 1975: 1). In the afternoon, they decided to take their protest of what they viewed as the devaluation of the law further – by actively violating the law.

In front of the provincial hall, a group of Patriots opened and drank bottles of unlicensed alcohol. Then they pulled out cards and began to gamble. They played Hi-Lo and other popular card games (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Led by professional gamblers from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang, approximately fifty

people publicly gambled. After they began playing, it started raining and so they decided to take their gambling inside the provincial hall. As long as they remained outside, officials in Lamphun were willing to ignore their illegal actions. When they came inside, the Lamphun governor asked them to please stop breaking the law (*Thin Thai* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 12). The gamblers refused to stop and asserted that gambling was a small violation in comparison to the crimes of the nine released activists. When they refused to stop, the police arrested six of the gamblers (*Thin Thai* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 12). They were immediately granted bail, which was a total of 20,000 baht (*Sieng Chonabot* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 8). The bail was paid by Suwit Saenchai, a Lamphun lawyer who was himself one of the Patriots. Suwit claimed that he joined the protests because "the law is without sacredness" (*Thin Thai* 17 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[28]

Given that Suwit's fellow Patriots violated the law, it is difficult to take his claim seriously. Perhaps what was losing sacredness was not the *law qua law*, but the *control of the law*. As I noted in Chapters Four and Five, part of the transformative power, and threat, of the FFT's organizing around land rent control was that tenant and landless farmers understood and used their legal rights. This was in sharp contrast to the situation only twenty years earlier, when landowners and their allies within the bureaucracy could prevent farmers from even having the opportunity to use their legal rights. The law was changing, but the release of the nine activists was not the only, or even first, indication.

For some observers, the actions of the Lamphun protestors were an effective performance of the crisis Thailand faced. One editorialist in Chiang Mai argued that those who gambled inside the provincial hall in Lamphun acted correctly because

---

[28] "กฎหมายไร้ความศักดิ์สิทธิ์"

> It is a protest to show that when a group of individuals turns the law into something that is not the law, there will be a predicament like this. The actions of the citizens in front of the Lamphun provincial hall were an example and appropriate for the situation (*Thin Thai* 19 August 2518 [1975]: 3).[29]

Yet another news report quoted an unnamed villager who also respected the logic of the protests. S/he commented that "When (students and farmers) went against the law at the level of destroying the nation, the government released them. Why, then, ordinary citizens cannot even gamble a little?" (*Thai Niu* 16 August 2518 [1975]: 12).[30] By breaking the law, these two critics seemed to say, the Patriots of Lamphun illustrated the breakdown of the rule of the law that they believed was indicated by the release of the eight farmers and one student. But if we agree that the cases against the nine activists were marked by strong irregularities and problems, and themselves indicated the fragility of the judicial system in Thailand, then the illegal gambling of the Patriots of Lamphun is cast in a vastly different light. They may then be seen as *contributing* to the breakdown of the rule of law.

The Lamphun protestors did not receive a reply from the government by their deadline of 16 August. In response, they decided to drive to Bangkok. On 17 August, five representatives of the Patriots of Lamphun planned to travel to Bangkok to meet with PM Kukrit in person. Claiming to act in his capacity as a private citizen, the Lamphun provincial governor offered to drive them to Bangkok himself. Protestors who remained in Lamphun were soon joined by the police. The police joined them

---

[29] "แต่เป็นการประท้วงให้เห็นว่าเมื่อมีกลุ่มบุคคลทำให้กฎหายไม่เป็นกฎหมาย สภาพจะต้องเป็นอย่างนี้ การกระทำของประชาชนที่หน้าศาลากลางจังหวัดลำพูนเป็นเพียงภาพประกอบเท่านั้นและก็พอสมควรแก่เหตุ"

[30] "ในเมื่อทำผิดกฎหมายขนาดบ่อนทำลายชาติ รัฐบาลยังปล่อยได้ นับประสาอะไรกับราษฎรสามัญเหมือนกันจะทำผิดแค่เล่นการพนันบ้างไม่ได้"

not in order to arrest them or as adversaries, but as members of the growing protests (*Thin Thai* 18 August 2516 [1975]: 12).[31]

The Police Demonstrations

On 16 August 1975, the Provincial Police were threatening to strike on an unrelated issue.[32] On 17 August, 200 Lamphun police, in uniform, decided to join the join the protesting Patriots of Lamphun. In short order the protests grew in numbers, ferocity, and the magnitude of the threat they posed to open politics in Thailand. Throughout the day on 17 August, the initial 200 Lamphun police were soon joined by many additional civilians as well as police from Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Sawan, Uthaithani, Singburi and Chainat provinces. Approximately 150 police walked off duty in neighboring Chiang Mai to join the protests. In the middle of the day, the protestors marched through Lamphun city carrying photographs of the King and posters calling for the restoration of the sacredness of the law. They sang police march music as they paraded through the city. When they arrived in front of the Lamphun provincial hall, they sang the national anthem. By the end of the day, over 2000 police and civilians were massed in front of

[31] On the same day, 17 August, 200 protestors in Saraphi district protested in front of the district office. One of the things the Saraphi protestors said was that students were prohibited from coming to agitate in the district. If they came, the protestors warned that they would not take responsibility for their welfare (*Thin Thai* 18 August 2516 [1975]: 12).

[32] Within the Department of Police in the Ministry of Interior, the Provincial Police and the Metropolitan Police (who cover the greater Bangkok area) are two separate divisions. In August 1975, there was a bill in front of Parliament which would expand those with investigative powers to include provincial governors, district officers and assistant district officers as well as the Provincial Police (*Bangkok Post* 17 August 1975: 1). At the first reading, the bill passed 161:3. The bill was perceived by some as a slight against the Provincial Police, since the Metropolitan Police still retained sole investigative power in Bangkok. The Provincial Police claimed that if the bill was not withdrawn, then "all the chiefs of provincial police stations will strike and demonstrate in Bangkok seven days before the bill is deliberated for its second reading. Low-ranking policeman will remain in office and carry out their routine work" (*Bangkok Post* 17 August 1975: 1). The sponsor of the bill cited corruption among the Provincial Police as the reason for its proposal; he explained that "I found injustice in my province when police officers monopolise investigations but I don't want to go into details" (*Bangkok Post* 18 August 1975: 3). While the sponsor's claim is legitimate, he failed to account for the near-certain corruption practiced by some provincial governors, district officers, and assistant district officers.

the provincial hall. Reports came over the police radio station indicating that more police were on their way from every region in the country (*Thai Niu* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 16). The police were protesting for the return of the rule of law. Yet their decision to walk off the job can be read as a contribution to its breakdown – or perhaps a candid assessment of their own non-role in its maintenance.

Various police entities responded differently to the protests. On 17 August, Police Lieutenant General Sanan Narinsorasak, issued a circular asking the police to cease protesting, as he thought it would cause further unrest. (*Thai Niu* 18 August 2518 [1975]: 16). In a strategy reminiscent of the initial refusal of anyone to claim responsibility for ordering the arrests of the nine, Police Major Chan Khamwan claimed that no one was in charge of the protests. Yet at the same time, he also requested that all police present follow the rules. As the logical hosts (if not the leaders) of the protest, the Lamphun police collected between five and twenty baht per person to pay for food and to help offset the travel costs of police from other provinces.

By 18 August, there were over 10,000 police from around the country protesting in front of the Lamphun provincial hall (*Voice of the Nation* 18 August 1975: 1). As they massed in front of the provincial hall, they did so in orderly, straight lines. Among this number included 200 fully-armed Border Patrol Police (*Bangkok Post* 19 August 1975: 1). At this time, police were also protesting in Bangkok and other cities. On 18 August, Bangkok police officers issued a statement in support of the Lamphun protests and continued protests throughout the kingdom (*Voice of the Nation* 19 August 1975: 3). Primary among the demands of the protesting police was the restoration of the rule of law, rather than mob rule (กฎหมู่) (*Thai Niu* 19 August 2518 [1975]: 16). By 18 August, police were threatening to use "force" if their demands were not met (*Bangkok Post* 19 August 1975: 1). While this feels dissonant

to me analytically, as I consider this series of events over thirty years after they occurred, the police did not see their actions as an example of the breakdown of the rule of law. Instead, they cast themselves squarely as the protectors of the rule of law. This indicates the severity of the crisis in Thailand at that moment. Thousands of police thought that by walking off the job (and in some places, leaving police stations and prisons with either a skeleton staff or unprotected) and protesting in full uniform, they could protect the rule of law. Yet as became clear only a few days after the protests began, their very actions indicated and hastened the breakdown of the rule of law.

While some citizens joined the police protests, many more felt the negative effects of police deserting their jobs. These effects were felt particularly acutely in neighboring Chiang Mai. Asa Meksawan, the governor, called on the Boy Scouts to take over the duties of the traffic police as they had all gone to join the protests in Lamphun (*Prachathipatai* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Frustrated with the lack of experience of the Boy Scouts-cum-traffic police, many motorists yelled criticism at them. The Boy Scouts were harassed to such a degree that they wanted to cease working (*Thin Thai* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Individuals driving the black-plated cars belonging to civil servants were seen parking illegally and driving dangerously. In the absence of traffic police, the Chiang Mai city district education office called on people to join together to follow the law, and in so doing, protect the country (*Thin Thai* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 12). Perhaps most alarming, on 18 August, the police station was closed and there was no one guarding it. The deputy commander of the Chiang Mai provincial police went to the Lamphun protests to implore the Chiang Mai police to return to their jobs protecting the city (*Thai Niu* 19 August 2518 [1975]: 16). His voice could barely be heard.

On 18 August, other critics of the police protests began to speak out as well. Kriangkamol Laophairoj, secretary-general of the NSCT, issued a statement arguing that the protest of the police in Lamphun was against the law. He contrasted the police protests with those which took place the week before at Thammasat University. The protests at Thammasat were legal because Article 43 of the constitution allowed citizens to protest until they received an answer to their demands from the government. The police, Kriangkamol noted, could also protest, *as individual citizens*. However, protesting as police in uniform and armed with their weapons, was against article 166, numbers 1 and 2 of the criminal code. The violations carried a maximum penalty of ten years (*Athipat* 19-21 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). At this time, Buntheng Thongsawat, the Minister of Interior, also expressed concern that the police protests went against the code (วินัย) for civil servants, and joining them was therefore a punishable action (*Athipat* 19-21 August 2518 [1975]: 1, 12). Neither Kriangkamol not Buntheng's concerns caused the police to cease protesting.

Throughout the protests, the police demanded that PM Kukrit meet with them in person to address their demands. PM Kukrit refused to meet with them and maintained that they were under the administration of the Minister of Interior and should meet with him. The Minister of Interior, however, told the police that the release of the nine was not theirs to question (*Voice of the Nation* 19 August 1975: 1). When they received the final word at 3 p.m. on 19 August that PM Kukrit would not meet with them, the police instructed those in the Lamphun provincial hall and the court to lock up their documents and vacate the buildings.[33] Using police radio, they instructed police across the country to abandon their posts. At 4 p.m., the crowd of 20,000 police and civilian protestors burned puppets of PM Kukrit, Buntheng

[33] Everyone except the deputy governor, Sant Manikhancha, left the Lamphun provincial hall; Sant continued to work as usual. (*Thai Niu* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 15).

Thongsawat, and Aroon Issaraphakdi (the head of the Department of Prosecution) (*Thai Niu* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 15).[34] The police protestors threatened to close the provincial hall and the roads in Lamphun as well as release all those being held in the prison (*Thai Niu* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 12). It remains unclear how *this* would have hastened the return of the rule of law. Perhaps the police hoped to create a significant amount of overt chaos in order to prompt the necessity of military intervention. Yet, again, this is not quite the rule of law. The events in Bangkok that evening were to prove even more dramatic than those threatened in Lamphun.

Sacking the Prime Minister's House

Although the police protests were headquartered in Lamphun, over 3000 police and civilian supporters staged a solidarity protest at Sanam Luang in Bangkok on 19 August (*Thai Niu* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 16). Like the protestors in Lamphun, they demanded an immediate response from PM Kukrit as to whether Thailand was going to be ruled by the law or by mob rule (*Sayam Rat* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 16). When it became apparent that PM Kukrit was not going to respond to their demands, in late afternoon approximately 2000 of the police protestors moved the demonstration to his house in the Soi Suan Phlu area.

When they arrived at PM Kukrit's house, the police continued to demand that he meet with them. By they time they had arrived, PM Kukrit had already left the house and was waiting at the local police station. Thirty policemen had been sent to guard the house and were wearing bulletproof vests and were carrying batons and shotguns (*Bangkok Post* 20 August 1975: 1). When he learned of the large number of police massed at his house, PM Kukrit agreed to meet with them. However, he asked

[34] The assistant prosecutor for Lamphun, who had just joined the protests, opposed the burning of the puppet of Aroon, who was his boss. The crowd did not alter their plans (*Thai Niu* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 15).

that they meet him at the police station, rather than his house. Unsatisfied with this option, the police refused. Instead, shortly after midnight, 100 protesting and drunken police raided and looted his house. They stole French wine, brandy, and cigarettes. They smashed televisions and radios. They destroyed antique furniture and threw it into the goldfish pond in the PM's garden (*Voice of the Nation* 20 August 1975: 1; *FEER* 29 August 1975: 14). One report even noted that the police destroyed antique Buddha images (*Sayam Rat* 20 August 2518 [1975]: 16). While supposedly protesting mob rule, the police themselves acted like an out of control mob.

When he heard that his house had been attacked, PM Kukrit called an emergency Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet met until 3:30 a.m. on 20 August (*Thai Niu* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 16). In response to the destruction of his house, Kukrit chose to "forgive" the protestors, citing the many members of his family who had been in the police force as the reason for his willingness to do so (*Voice of the Nation* 21 August 1975: 4). In an interview with *Sayam Rat* newspaper, Kukrit explained that he did not criticize the police for protesting. Like ordinary people, he claimed, the police faced hardships and could choose to protest (*Sayam Rat* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 1). He felt that it would impossible to prosecute any specific policemen for their actions because discerning who was responsible would be very difficult (*Sayam Rat* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 16). When asked if he planned to declare a state of emergency, PM Kukrit replied no, because only one house was had been destroyed. However, he cautioned the police against further destruction: "It doesn't matter if (you) do this to the house of the Prime Minister. But (you) must not do it to the houses of other people, if do, things will proceed irrevocably" (*Sayam Rat* 21 August 2518 [1975]: 16).[35]

---

[35] "ทำกับบ้านนายกรัฐมนตรีไม่เป็นไรแต่ย่าทำกับบ้านคนอื่น มิฉะนั้นจะดำเนินการอย่างเฉียบขาด"

As PM Kukrit's house was being sacked, and even in the aftermath, the situation remained tense in Lamphun.[36] Even after PM Kukrit announced that he would not prosecute the marauding police, the police in Lamphun continued to protest. They continued to threaten to seize the provincial hall and release the prisoners in the provincial jail. Following a visit by Buntheng Thongsawat, the Minister of Interior, on 21 August, the police and civilians in Lamphun finally dispersed. Buntheng promised the assembled police that he would do everything possible within the law to meet their demands (*Thai Niu* 22 August 2518 [1975]: 16).

PM Kukrit asserted that the police, like any other group of citizens, could choose to protest. Of course. Yet during their five-day protest in Lamphun and Bangkok, the police chose to protest *as police*. In so doing, they irrevocably affected the possibilities open to citizens who wished to dissent and protest.

The Meanings of Law

Sally Engle Merry argues that law "is both a system of meaning and an institutional structure backed by the political power of the state" (2000:17). But what happens when the system of meaning is in flux and the political power of the state is fragmented, perhaps beyond repair? In the case of Thailand in 1975, the meaning of the *law* became a crucial site of contention and debate. In the presence of the disunified state, these debates stand as witness to its further disintegration.

---

[36] On 21 August, the Assistant Director of Police, Police Lieutenant General Chamrat Mangkhlarat came to visit the protests in Lamphun. Upon his arrival, the assembled police moved into formation of straight lines. He inspected the lines, and noticed one policeman whose collar was not buttoned correctly. Police Lieutenant General Chamrat Mangkhlarat attempted to correctly fasten the collar, but realized that the collar was awry because the policeman had a cluster of hand grenade pins dangling from his neck. Police Lieutenant General Chamrat Mangkhlarat removed his hands while laughing nervously. He inquired into the health and happiness of this policeman, and the proceeded with his inspection of the others assembled (*Thai Niu* 22 August 2518 [1975]: 16).

During the series of arrests, protests and counter-protests which came in the wake of the assassination of Intha Sribunruang, many individuals and groups cited the *law* as central to their actions. Chatri Hutanuwat, the arrested CMU student, spoke from jail saying "But I am not angry with the policemen who arrested me, they were merely acting under order from their bosses … Their bosses … must be held responsible for this unconstitutional arrest. They took the *law* into their own hands and shamelessly claimed that they were just enforcing it" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 6 August 1975: 1, emphasis added). For Chatri, the *law* seems to indicate both the power to rule, and the agreement between citizens and rulers sanctifying that power. *Prachachaat*, a progressive weekly, commented that the arrests indicated that "the government is creating a plan to change the current exercise of democratic rights by substituting mob rule for *law*" (21 August 2518 [1975]: 7, emphasis added); here the presence of *law* also references the ability to protest and dissent. When asked about the arrests on a radio program on 8 August, PM Kukrit said "whoever broke the *law* must be prosecuted" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 9 August 1975: 1, emphasis added). PM Kukrit explained that the arrests were ordered and carried out by local provincial police "who based their actions on the *law* only" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 14 August 1975: 1, emphasis added). Kukrit's comments seem to refer to the letter of the *law*. The *law* here refers at once to the printed legal code itself, as well as the rights and possibilities represented by the equal and just enforcement of that code.

Perhaps most ironic, and concerning, is that the looting police claimed to demand the return of the rule of law. Yet through their actions, they performed the very mob rule that they decried. After Kukrit's forgiveness, the police went back to work. Not only were they not punished, but PM Kukrit commented to the press of his smashed antiques that "I had been watching these things for so long, I began to get bored" (quoted in *Voice of the Nation* 21 August 1975: 1). The return of the police to

work without sanction, coupled with the Prime Minister's easy dismissal of their actions, made the disintegration of the Thai state a public event. Not only did Thai people witness the sacking of the PM's house, they witnessed his decision not to challenge the police. If the police could do this to the Prime Minister with impunity, what could they do to ordinary citizens? In this extremely divided and politically charged environment, what crimes might the police choose to ignore? Who would hold them, or the Ministry of Interior, or the Army, or anyone else for that matter, responsible for their actions or inactions?

Finally, rather than evaluating the series of events that followed in the wake of Intha Sribunruang's assassination as either a ploy or a mistake, I argue that we treat it instead as an example of how rule is accomplished. I suggest that this kind of rule not be read as unusual, or peculiar to 1970s Thailand, but as an example of how harassment, the creation of chaos, and official dissimulation are typical strategies of the actors and institutions operating under the banner of "the state." A little over a year later, the 6 October 1976 massacre demonstrated how some of the very worst rights violations could occur in the name of ending chaos and restoring law and order. The precise nature of *law* restored was one bereft of dissent.

CHAPTER SEVEN
UNWRAPPING AN(OTHER) BUNDLE OF SILENCES

In the previous chapter I traced the series of protests, arrests, and counter-protests that culminated in the invasion and vandalism of elected Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj's house by uniformed police on the evening of 19 August 1975. This event, I argued, indicated the disintegration of the Thai state. Yet the disintegrating democratic state continued to function, at least in name, for over a year until the 6 October 1976 massacre and coup returned Thailand to dictatorship. The intervening fourteen months between August 1975 and October 1976 were filled with mounting contention, polarization, and violence in the electoral as well as social and grassroots political spheres.

A variety of factors, including conflict within the military as well as the growing political power of some military factions, destabilized PM Kukrit's Social Action Party-led coalition government so severely that in January 1976, Kukrit called for new elections to be held on 14 April 1976. The April elections were incredibly violent, with more that thirty people killed during the course of campaigning, including Socialist Party candidate for MP in Chiang Mai, Dr. Bunsanong Punyodhayana (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 262).[1] In the election, not only did PM Kukrit fail to be re-elected, but his party lost as well. Instead, the Democrat Party won an overwhelming victory. Seni Pramoj, the head of the Democrat Party as well as Kukrit's older brother, became the new Prime Minister on 20 April 1976.

As electoral politics were reconfigured in late 1975 and 1976, those active in progressive politics adopted increasingly radical tactics as well. For some, this meant joining the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in the liberated areas or otherwise going underground. For others, this meant pushing parliamentary politics and public

[1] See Trocki (1977) and Somporn (2544 [2001]) for accounts of Dr. Bunsanong's life and work.

protest to its limits. The return of Thanom Kittikachorn, one of the three dictators ousted following 14 October 1973, on 19 September 1976 catalyzed a series of events which culminated in the massacre at Thammasat University in Bangkok on 6 October 1976. The massacre showed the limit of parliamentary politics in Thailand at that moment and made the flight to the jungle to join the CPT unavoidable for some.

As I explained in Chapter One, a massacre on 6 October 1976 was averted in Chiang Mai. However, it was avoided only by a margin of five or ten minutes in the estimation of M., a former Farmer Project activist who was present at the provincial building on 6 October. Like many other students and farmers, M. explained to me that she fled to the jungle to join the CPT directly from the provincial building. She was there with farmer colleagues, and she gave them money so that they could take *songthaew* buses back to their villages. For her, the decision to leave to join the CPT was immediate. She had been working underground with the CPT for many months, and felt confident that her name was on a government blacklist.[2] If she stayed in the city, she was sure that she would be killed or arrested by state forces. After leaving the provincial hall, she went to her dormitory at Chiang Mai University and picked up a change of clothing. She abandoned all of her books, including many progressive and leftist books that she wishes that she could recover now. On her way to meet the comrade who would take her to the liberated area controlled by the CPT, she passed through nearby Lampang province to pass news of the events on to farmers she

[2] As part of the right-wing backlash to the blossoming of progressive action during the period between October 1973 and October 1976, many different Thai state agencies and departments keep lists of activists, critics, and people otherwise deemed undesirable. These lists were compiled by the police, military and counterinsurgency agencies directly, as well as by civilians working for them in many different areas. One former CMU administrator commented to me that although he remained neutral during that period, among his colleagues there were both progressive activists and those who created blacklists. Further investigation of the blacklists, their authors, and the ways in which they were used is urgent and necessary.

worked with there with the Farmer Project, and to urge them to flee to the jungle as well.

Although it might seem logical, given that much of this dissertation has been about the lives, struggles, and deaths of students and farmers, this chapter is not about how the farmers and students who worked together in the Farmers' Federation of Thailand and the Farmer Project became an important part of the CPT. These histories are important, and fragments of them can be found in this dissertation, and increasingly they are being told and collected by former farmer, student, and CPT activists themselves.[3] Instead, this chapter takes up another piece of the histories of progressive activism and state violence as they unfolded in Chiang Mai following the coup: arbitrary detention and re-education.

The fear of M., the Farmer Project activist I mentioned earlier, that she would be arrested if she did not flee to join the CPT after the coup was an astute one. On 13 October 1976, the ruling National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) issued Order 22. In force until August 1979, Order 22 delineated nine categories of people deemed a "danger to society" (ภัยต่อสังคม) subject to arbitrary, potentially infinite detention and "re-education" (การฝึกอบรม).[4] Under Order 22, many people across Thailand underwent re-education to in order to facilitate their return to being good citizens including acceptance of "democracy with the king as head of state" (การปกครองระบอบประชาธิปไตย โดยมีพระมหากษัตริย์เป็นประมุข) as the only legitimate form of

---

[3] For example, see Chantana (2536 [1993]), Chayanit (2549 [2006]) and Pa Nan Na Doi Yao (2549 [2006]).

[4] When rendering Order 22 in English, the *Bangkok Post*, Amnesty International, the Center for International Policy, and the European Co-ordinating Committee for Solidarity with the Thai people all choose to use the term "re-education," to refer to "ฝึกอบคม." While "re-education," is not a direct translation of "ฝึกอบคม," I use it here following the convention already in place. A further discussion of the linguistic and political genealogy of this translation is needed, but is unfortunately outside the scope of this dissertation. Thank you to Parissara Liewkeat and Thak Chaloemtiarana for illuminating the difficulties of translating "ฝึกอบคม" in this context.

government. This chapter is about the lives of those in Chiang Mai who either could not or chose not to flee to the jungle to join the CPT after 6 October and were detained as political "dangers to society" under Order 22.

Even as the 6 October violence has been the subject of renewed academic and activist examination, the detentions under Order 22 as well as other restrictions and rights violations following the coup remain largely omitted from Thai and English-language academic analysis.[5] While the available evidence is partial and incomplete, similar to the event of 6 October 1976, I operate here with the assumption that Order 22 has not been left unstudied due to a lack of source material. Rather then being excised from the public record, the order itself and the many directives regarding its implementation are preserved in the *Ratchakitchanubeksa*, or the Royal Thai Government Gazette, the daily government record.[6] In addition, Bangkok and Chiang Mai newspapers, as well as Thai and international human rights groups, reported frequently on the detentions. In this sense, informed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Order 22 is part of the "particular bundle of silences" requiring continual identification and deconstruction that comprise the recent Thai past (1995: 27). Trouillot argues that each historical silence is different, and the approach to it must take account of this singularity. When addressing a colonel important to the Haitian Revolution who had

---

[5] The recent anthropological work of Morris (1998) and Klima (2002) emphasizes the relationships between 6 October 1976 and the violence of May 1992 in Bangkok. For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the massacre in 2001, the 6 October Fact-finding Committee published a detailed report about the deaths and injuries sustained by unarmed protestors at Thammasat University and identified current state officials who participated in the massacre (Ji and Suthachai 2544 [2001]). Recent gendered analysis of the 6 October massacre can be found in Cholthira (2001). For a recent memoir written by a female 6 October survivor and former Thammasat student, see Sucheela (2003). Other then the memory books cited later in this paper that were published after Professor Angun Malik's death (for example, Sinsawat ed. 2536 [1993], 2542 [1999]) and a brief reference to Surasingh Shimbanao's detention by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) after 6 October 1976 in Katherine Bowie's collection of his short stories (Bowie 1991), there are no significant secondary analyses of the detentions and re-education under Order 22 after the coup.

[6] In particular, while government announcements and directives made public can be accessed in any library that receives the *Ratchakitchanubeksa,* I suspect that the Metropolitan Police Bureau and the Ministry of the Interior have many documents relating to Order 22 which have not yet been released to the National Archives – and which may not be released in the foreseeable future.

been historiographically forgotten, despite the availability of evidence, Trouillot explains that "I only reposition that evidence to generate a new narrative. My alternative narrative, as it develops, reveals the silences that buried, until now, the story of the colonel" (1995: 27). The task of critical analysis, therefore, is to both redress the content of silence, as well as to unpack its form.

Resonantly, here I trace some of the state strategies which have obscured the histories of detention under Order 22. More specifically, not only is the status of Order 22 in the present moment constituted by a lack of analysis, but I argue that the law and its implementation between 1976 and 1979 were marked by a series of omissions and distortions. While I am not able to discern the *causes* of these historiographic, legal, and political omissions, here I write against and in response to them. In order to do so, in this chapter I build on my work in previous chapters and explicate another set of ways in which parts of the Thai state attempted to repress protest and difference in the 1970s. Re-education proved to be partially successful in eliminating dissent. By engaging the stories of those who experienced re-education in Chiang Mai following the 6 October 1976 coup, I illustrate the precise partiality of this success.

The remainder of this chapter can be divided into two parts. In the first half, I outline the specific dangers that can arise when mass arbitrary detentions take place in the service of a future democracy. I place Order 22 within a trajectory of legalized arbitrary detention dating to the regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1958-1963). By locating arbitrary detention following 6 October 1976 in relation to earlier moments, I am able, among other things, to question the shape(s) and length(s) of Thai state institutional memory.

Then in the second half of the chapter I examine a set of evidence about arbitrary detention of those deemed a "danger to society," in Chiang Mai. Following 6 October 1976, the political detainees in Chiang Mai were detained at the Karunyathep

Center, a re-education center for suspected Communists opened in 1968 and run by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC). I begin by historicizing the establishment and early programs of the Karunyathep Center. I then examine the coverage of the Order 22 arrests and detentions in the Chiang Mai newspapers. The newspaper accounts at once shamed those whose detention it covered, while also offering them safety through the creation of public knowledge about their cases. At the center of my analysis, I present the stories of three former detainees and one former guard at the Karunyathep Center. The detainees' lack of experience of physical mistreatment remains surprising to me, given the legal terms under which they were held. Yet the tension between what actually happened and what might have happened emerges as both a strategy of state repression and a clarion call for critical analysis. As a conclusion, I raise a final set of questions about detentions under Order 22, violence, and the unevenness of evidence.

Known dangers: arbitrary detention and its nullifications

Arbitrary detention is a frequently used tool of repression used by states against its citizens.[7] However, according to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, there is no clear definition of arbitrary detention in international law.[8] The Working Group therefore developed the following three categories of detention which is arbitrary: 1.) when there is no legal basis for the deprivation of liberty; 2.) when a person is deprived of liberty guaranteed either by the Universal Declaration of Human

---

[7] The U.S. government's detention without official charges of those deemed "terrorists" at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center is perhaps the most notorious present-day (2007) example (Butler 2004). Other notable examples include South Africa during the apartheid regime and Argentina during the Dirty War (Foster 1987; Merrett and Gravil 1991).

[8] The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention was established by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1991. The Working Group makes annual reports to the UN Commission on Human Rights, carried out research missions to countries suspected of employing arbitrary detention and accepts complaints from individuals and communities who have experienced arbitrary detention. See http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/detention/index.htm for more information on their history and work, including a full online library of all documents produced by the Working Group.

Rights (UDHR) or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and 3.) when a person has been deprived of their liberty without the benefit of a fair trial (The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention n.d.: n.p). A discussion of the UDHR and the ICCPR, and Thailand's relation to both, is well outside the scope of this dissertation.[9] However, I raise the lack of a clear definition of arbitrary detention in international law to frame my intervention into recent Thai histories of arbitrary detention and re-education within a broader frame. In response to this lack, here I examine three iterations of twentieth-century Thai legal instruments demarcating the practice of arbitrary detention: arbitrary detention and training of individuals deemed to be "hooligans" under Orders 21 and 43 of Sarit Thanarat beginning in 1958, the nullification of Sarit's decrees by the government of Sanya Thammasak in 1975, and the detention and re-education of individuals deemed to be a "danger to society" under Order 22 of the NARC following 6 October 1976.[10] Although the targets changed, the terms of detention and the precarious position of the court remained nearly constant.

A few weeks after declaring martial law, in November 1958, the government of Sarit Thanarat issued Decree 21, which defined the category "hooligan" (อันธพาล), and provided for their detention. Hooligans were defined as individuals who, either by their own actions or supporting others, "bully, persecute, coerce or harass and disturb the people" (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* [special edition] 2 November 2501 [1958], Book

[9] The ICCPR links the exercise of basic rights and freedoms with an individual's dignity. These rights and freedoms, and the mechanisms for their protection, are outlined in the covenant. The ICCPR was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966, and was ratified by enough countries (thirty-five) to enter into force on 23 March 1976. Thailand ratified the ICCPR on 29 October 1996.

[10] While there are other contexts one could read Order 22 in – including the other repressive orders issued by the NARC and then the Thanin Kravichien administration, I am primarily concerned with how detention and training/re-educated are iterated legally across time. Further, the 1976 Ministry of Interior locates these instruments together as well. In December 1976 they printed a handbook for distribution to local officials regarding the use of Order 22, and reprinted the Sarit and Sanya government instruments in the book for comparison and reference (Kongsak 2519 [1976]).

75, Part 89, page 1).[11] One example of a kind of hooligan that posed an economic danger to his fellow citizens was a gambling dealer. The decree noted that gambling dealers and other hooligans needed to be dealt with "for the happiness of the people and the progress of the homeland" (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 2 November 2501 [1958], Book 75, Part 89, page 1).[12] Those suspected of being hooligans could be apprehended and detained for investigation; during the first thirty days of detention for investigation, the police or other arresting official did not have to bring the case to a court. However, after thirty days, if the arresting official wanted to extend the period of detention of the suspected hooligan, the case had to be sent to court and a detention order issued following the procedure of criminal law (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 2 November 2501 [1958], Book 75, Part 89, page 2).

In January 1959, Sarit issued Decree 43, which further specified the implementation of Decree 21. In this decree, the role of the court vanished. In a decentralizing move which reappeared in Order 22 of the NARC, Decree 43 designated a vast amount of power concerning detention and release of suspected hooligans to the Director of Police in Bangkok, and to provincial governors in all areas outside Bangkok. During the first thirty-day period of investigation, "If those individuals continue to have the habits and behavior of a hooligan, then [the provincial governors and director of police] have the power to order those individuals to go to an occupational training center" (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* [special edition] 10 January 2502 [1959], Book 76, Part 5, page 2).[13,14]

---

[11] "รังแก ข่มเหง ขู่เข็ญ หรือรบกวนให้เกิดความเดือดร้อนรำคัญแก่ประชาชน"

[12] "เพื่ออำนวยความสุขแก่ประชาชน และความเจริญของบ้านเมือง"

[13] "บุคคลนั้นยังมีนิสัยและความประพฤติเป็นอันธพาลอยู่ก็ให้มีอำนาจสั่งตัวบุคคลนั้นไปยังสถานอบรมและฝึกอาชีพ"

[14] The two decrees seem to suggest that a court needed to be consulted if the investigation was going to continue longer than thirty days, but no court was needed if the decision to "train" was made before the end of the first thirty days. This point requires further investigation and clarification.

With the disappearance of the court, the Ministry of Interior was charged with establishing the training centers as well as a review committee or committees. To be clear, this meant that individuals suspected of being hooligans did not have the right to a court examination – and only needed to be judged a hooligan by the Director of Police or a provincial governor in order to be detained. Every three months, each case was to undergo review and a decision made whether or not it was appropriate to release or further detain each hooligan. No time limit was put on the length of detention. Those suspected of being hooligans were not guaranteed protection under the criminal code, yet could find themselves subject to it. Decree 43 placed suspected hooligans under the power of the investigating officials who detain them. Further, the decree specified that criminal law covering escape applied to them; if they tried to leave the center without permission, it was considered a legal offence (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 10 January 2502 [1959], [special edition] 10 January 2502 [1959], Book 76, Part 5, page 3). Paradoxically, this meant that the only way for suspected hooligans to find themselves before a judge was to attempt escape.

In his study of Sarit's despotic paternalism, Thak Chaloemtiarana argues that Sarit "believed that modernization and progress must start as a correct state of mind, much as a father might view the upbringing of his children (then 'development') as necessarily starting with proper moral education" (1979: 189). In concert with other measures, the intention of arbitrarily detaining hooligans was "to intimidate young people into adopting a more 'traditional' proper social life" (Thak 1979: 190). Under Orders 21 and 43, several thousand were arrested, "many of whom puzzled over their arrest" (Thak 1979: 190).[15] When the suspected hooligans were released, Sarit told

[15] Citing one of Sarit's funeral books, Thak offers a yearly breakdown of the arrests and detentions between 1958 and 1963. In total, 7539 people were arrested under Decree 21. Of that number, 2743 were detained for thirty days only, while 4738 were sent for further reform training (Thak 1979: 191, 51n).

them “that he did not hate them, but had to act for the good of the ‘family’” (Thak 1979: 191). In this sense, Sarit, correctional officers, and the Thai state writ large took over the training and instruction and instruction of “children” in social and political life. The state picked up where actual parents either left off, or failed.

Notable here is Thak’s comment that many of those arrested did not know why they were arrested. If those who apparently espoused improper social behavior did not know it, how could they change? Further, without checks on how the detentions were carried out, how can we be sure that those detained truly possessed this behavior? They could not, and we cannot. This uncertainty is at the heart of both the repressive power of arbitrary detention and the urgency of critically studying it. From the outset, I want to be clear that what is at issued with arbitrary detention is not only the presence or lack of physical mistreatment. Even if the actions taken while an individual was detained were themselves benign, the structure permitting them was not benign. The precise dangers of this structure to the futures of individual lives and Thai political life remain unspecified.

Yet actions by the governments which followed Sarit and later the NARC indicated that these dangers were a matter of concern for those in power as well. On 12 February 1975, the government of Sanya Thammasak nullified Decrees 21 and 43 with the passage of the “Occupational Training Law of 1975.” While the law retained some aspects of Sarit’s decrees, there were critical differences. Appended to the law was a note, which explained that Sarit’s decrees were nullified because they were “inappropriate and not in line with a democratic regime” (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 19 February 2518 [1975], Book 92, Part 41, page 43).[16] After the changes wrought by the events surrounding 14 October 1973, arbitrary detention, particularly that established by executive decree, no longer had a place in Thai political life.

---

[16] “มีบทบัญญัติไม่เหมาะสมและสอดคล้องกับหลักการตามระบอบประชาธิปไตย”

One of the significant changes between Sarit's decrees and the 1975 Act was how those subject to detention and training were described in the text of the instruments. Rather than creating a category such as "hooligan," this law instead labeled those affected by it as "individuals who ought to undergo occupational training" (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 19 February 2518 [1975], Book 92, Part 41, page 34).[17] Six categories of actions that indicated the need for training were as follows:

1. To bully, harass, or commit unjust acts against another in order to cause them to be afraid;
2. To not have a permanent residence, to be vagrant, and to not earn an honest living;
3. Make a living in a way that disturbs the peace and order or the good morals of the people;
4. Illegally stockpile weapons or other materials for wrongdoing, and to give a reason to believe that they will commit wrongdoing or behavior that indicates that they possess something that came from wrongdoing;
5. To harass other people so much so that they cannot complete their job or live a normal life;
6. To be involved with the procuring of women or organizing prostitution, forced or unforced.[18]

In contrast to Decrees 21 and 43 before, and Order 22 which followed in the next year, if an individual was suspected of committing these actions, then a warrant had to be

---

[17] "บุคคลที่พึงรับการอบรมและฝึกอาชีพ"

[18] "(๑) เป็นผู้ประพฤติตนกระทำการรังแก ข่มเหง ขู่เข็ญ หรือกระทำด้วยประการใด ๆ โดยมิชอบ ให้บุคคลอื่นเกรงกลัว

(๒) เป็นบุคคลจรจัดไม่มีที่อยู่เป็นหลักแหล่ง และไม่ปรากฏการทำมาหาเลี้ยงชีพโดยสุจริต

(๓) เป็นผู้หาเลี้ยงชีพด้วยวิธีการอันขัดต่อความสงบเรียบร้อยหรือศิลธรรมอันดีของประชาชน

(๔) เป็นผู้มีเครื่องมือ อาวุธหรือวัตถุอันอาจใช้ในการกระทำความผิด และมีเหตุอันควรเชื่อว่าจะกระทำความผิดขึ้นหรือมีพฤติการณ์แวดล้อมที่แสดงว่าสิ่งของในครอบครองได้มาจากการกระทำความผิด

(๕) เป็นผู้ประพฤติตนทำความเดือดร้อนแก่บุคคลอื่น จนทำให้บุคคลอื่นไม่อาจประกอบอาชีพการงานหรือมีความเป็นอยู่ได้โดยปกติ

(๖) เป็นผู้ประพฤติตนเป็นธุระจัดหา ล่อไป หรือชักพาหญิงไปเพื่อการค้าประเวณีไม่ว่าหญิงนั้นจะยินยอมหรือไม่"

issued for his/her arrest, detention, and investigation. If after seven days of detention additional time was needed for investigation, the court had to be addressed again. Following investigation, the decision to be sent for occupational training had to be made by a court. The length of detention was capped at two years. This law is striking in its reinsertion of the court in monitoring detention and the limit on the length of detention (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 19 February 2518 [1975], Book 92, Part 41, pages 33-43).

While the criminalization of poverty in the second category warrants further investigation, this Act and the note appended to it indicate that those individuals drafting and passing laws were aware that arbitrary detention was dangerous to something called *democracy*. Although precisely what constitutes *democracy* is a matter of some debate, here it is clear that it does not include the incarceration of individuals without the presence of evidence verified in front of a court. I do not want to uncritically celebrate courts and the officials who work in them as the penultimate guarantors of justice and fairness; at times they may be, and at others they may stand in its way. What is certain, however, is that when a case is brought to court, it becomes a public event. As such, what takes place and what decisions are made become public knowledge. They can then be made the subject of scrutiny and debate.

These protections disappeared when the 1975 Act was nullified by the issuance of Order 22 by the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) on 13 October 1976. Order 22 began with the following explanation of its *raison d'etre*:

> As it is apparent that there are kinds of individuals whose actions are a danger to society, individuals whose behavior disturbs the peace and well-being of the people, or whose actions are a threat, or cause economic or security loss for the country, it is appropriate to proceed by bringing the individuals with these aforementioned behaviors to return to be good citizens, for the peace and well-being of the people

> and the progress of the homeland (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* (special edition) 13 October 2519 [1976], Book 93, Part 128, page 1).[19]

Through arbitrary detention and re-education, the wayward dissidents were promised *return*. In the preamble that I cited above, there is an allusion to the creation of an undivided nation. Yet the first step to this undivided, progress-and-happiness-filled nation was to identify individuals already existing within it who were a (potential) *danger* to it. Then, once these "dangers to society," were reformed and returned as good citizens, happiness and progress would ensue. I want to suggest that written into the order from the very beginning was a tension about the position of those deemed a "danger to society," vis-à-vis the Thai nation. This tension rests on how one interprets the topography of *danger*. While the violence leading up to and on 6 October 1976 was justified as being against alien non-Thais, Order 22 instead created a category of people neither inside nor outside the nation.[20] In one sense, those deemed a "danger to society," were problematic elements existing within Thai society itself. Yet, at the same time, if we understand *danger* in this order as being something that threatens the very integrity of the society and nation, then it is implied that they were *outside* the nation. There is a similar ambiguity raised by the issue of *return. Return* to Thai

---

[19] "ด้วยปรากฏว่าได้มีบุคคลบางจำพวกมีพฤติการณ์เป็นภัยต่อสังคม โดยประพฤติตนก่อกวนความสงบสุขของประชาชน หรือกระทำการอันเป็นภัย หรือเสียหายต่อเศรษฐกิจหรือความมั่นคงของประเทศชาติ สมควรที่จะดำเนินการแก่บุคคลผู้มีพฤติการณ์ดังกล่าวเพื่อให้กลับตัวเป็นพลเมืองดีต่อไป เพื่อความสงบสุขของประชาชนและความเจริญของบ้านเมือง"

[20] Radical students at Thammasat were identified during 1976 in military propaganda as "scum of the earth (*nak phaendin*), the enemy of the nation (*sattru khong chat, satsana, lae phra mahakasat*) or lackeys of communist aliens (mainly of Vietnam)" (Thongchai 2002: 244). Thongchai cites a radio address after 6 October, noting that Salang Bunnag, one of the police commanders who went into Thammasat, "made fun of those students who had been beaten until they could not speak. They said those students must have been the 'Yuan' (the derogatory term in Thai for Vietnamese), otherwise they would have been able to speak. Then they laughed" (2002: 253). In the statement of the NARC abrogating the constitution and announcing the coup on the evening of 6 October 1976, direct reference was made to the "Vietnamese Communist terrorists who fought the police" (ผู้ก่อการร้ายคอมมิวนิสต์ชาวเวียดนาม ต่อสู้กับเจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจด้วย) (*Ratchakitchanubeksa*, 6 October 2519 [1976], Book 93, Part 120, Page 1).

society as a good citizen was promised to individuals detained, if only one cooperated; yet this *return* was premised on an as-yet-unrealized future time.[21]

Order 22 identified nine categories of individuals as a "danger to society" (ภัยต่อสังคม) as those who:

1. Bully, harass, coerce, or terrorize others individuals;
2. Do not have a permanent residence, are vagrant, and do not earn an honest living;
3. Make a living in a way that disturbs the peace and order or the good morals of the people;
4. Illegally stockpile guns, bullets, or bomb-making supplies, either for the purpose of selling or in order to commit other illegal activities;
5. Inciting, provoking, using, or supporting the people to create confusion or unrest in the homeland;
6. Causing the people to respect or go along with another form of government that is not a democracy with the king as the head of state;
7. Establishing an illegal casino or brothel, or dealing in gambling sweepstakes or illegal lottery;
8. Hoarding commodities in order to make a profit, or illegally raising the price;
9. Organizing to strike, or illegally stopping work (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* (special edition) 13 October 2519 [1976], Book 93, Part 128, pages 1-2).[22]

---

[21] Parissara Liewkeat's careful reading of an earlier version of this paragraph forced me to re-think and re-consider many of my earlier assumptions.

[22] "(๑) ประพฤติตนกระทำการรังแก ข่มเหง ขู่เขญ หรือกระทำด้วยประการใดๆ โดยมิชอบให้บุคคลอื่นเกรงกลัว
(๒) เป็นบุคคลจรจัดไม่มีที่อยู่เป็นหลักแหล่ง และไม่ปรากฏการทำมาหาเลี้ยงชีพโดยสุจริต
(๓) หาเลี้ยงชีพด้วยวิธีการอันขัดต่อความสงบเรียบร้อยหรือศิลธรรมอันดีของประชาชน
(๔) สะสมอาวุธปืน เครื่องกระสุนปืน หรือวัตถุระเบิด ไม่ว่าชนิดใด โดย ไม่ชอบด้วยกฎหมายไว้เพื่อการค้าหรือเพื่อตระเตรียมการกระทำความผิดอย่างอื่น
(๕) ยุยง ปลุกปั่น ใช้ หรือสนับสนุนให้ประชาชนก่อความวุ่นวายหรือก่อความไม่สงบขึ้นในบ้านเมือง
(๖) กระทำด้วยประการใด ๆ ให้ประชาชนเลื่อมใสหรือเห็นคล้อยตามในระบอบการปกครองอื่น อันมิใช่การปกครองระบอบประชาธิปไตย โดยมีพระมหากษัตริย์เป็นประมุข
(๗) ดำรงชีพด้วยการตั้งบ่อนการพนันโดยไม่ชอบด้วยกฎหมาย ตั้งซ่องค้าประเวณีหรือเป็นเจ้ามือการพนันสลากกินรวบ หรือหวย ก.ข.
(๘) กักตุนสินค้าเพื่อค้ากำไร หรือขึ้นราคาสินค้าโดยไม่ชอบด้วยกฎหมาย

A book issued by the Ministry of the Interior to help officials cope with all of the complexities of dealing with those deemed a “danger to society” separated these nine categories into three broader ones. Categories 1-4 included were individuals who disturbed the order, peace, and well-being. Categories 5 and 6 were politically dangerous individuals; category 5 was rearticulated as those who agitated (ปลุกระดม) to create negative impacts and category 6 as the intention to create regime change. Categories 7-9 comprised economic dangers (Kongsak 2519 [1976]: 19*n*). In this chapter, I am most interested in the politicals, or those individuals who fell into categories 5 and 6. As will become clear, these categories grew broad enough to include almost anyone, and any action.

Like Decree 21 under Sarit, Order 22 allowed detention for up to thirty days while an investigation into the suspected individual was ongoing. After 30 days, if in the opinion of the Director of Police in Bangkok or the provincial governor outside of Bangkok the suspected individual continued to have actions or behavior that was a “danger to society,” then s/he could continue to be held – in a re-education center, not a jail. The Ministry of Interior was charged with the construction of the re-education centers and the establishment of review committees. These committees were charged with deciding every sixty days if each individual should be detained further or released. No limit was specified regarding the length of detention (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* (special edition) 13 October 2519 [1976], Book 93, Part 128, pages 1-5).

Shortly after Order 22 was issued, a plan to construct five re-educations centers to accommodate the mass arrests was announced. Allotted a budget of 45 million baht for construction, the centers were to be under the administration of the Department of

---

(๘) ร่วมกันยุดงาน หรือปิดงานงดจ้างโดยไม่ชอบด้วยกฎหมาย”

Corrections and were planned for Rangsit, Lampang, Ayutthaya, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Khon Kaen (*Bangkok Post* 29 October 1976: 5). As the planned centers would not be finished until mid-to-late 1977, in the interim the Ministry of Interior designated a number of temporary re-education centers, often within already existing prison facilities.[23] In addition, while the Ministry of the Interior gave the Department of Corrections the role of constructing and administering the five new re-education centers, provincial governors and the Director of the Metropolitan Police Bureau were able to designate police stations, police and military training areas, and other sites as temporary places of detention and re-education. By placing the administration of the order into the hands of provincial governors, the order decentralized the implementation and record-keeping of the order. The frequent refrain in Bangkok-based newspapers and human rights reports that obtaining information outside of Bangkok was difficult indicates that the administration *and* record-keeping of these centers may have been particularly obscured.

Finally, immediately striking is the complete absence of the court in this order. At no point was a court or any authority other than the Director of Police or provincial governor required to authorize the detention of an individual. At no point did those deemed a "danger to society" have the right to a lawyer or outside review of their case. In addition to the dangers I noted above in relation to similar provisions in Sarit's Decree 21, the European Co-ordinating Committee for Solidarity argues that this opened a space for additional abuses. In a 1978 report, they succinctly noted that Order 22 "permits every possible abuse, and legitimates every arbitrary act of the military, the police, and the para-military groups … gives local officials the power to detain 'suspects' for at least 30 days without informing the legal authorities and

[23] Temporary centers included: Bang Khen (Bangkok), Phitsanulok, Songkhla, Lad Yao (Bangkok), Ratchaburi, and Sethsiri (Bangkok). Further, every police station was designated a temporary re-education center (Kongsak 2520 [1977]: 50-72).

without advancing the slightest proof of guilt" (52). I noted earlier that Order 22 created an ambiguous space, neither inside nor outside the nation, for those deemed a "danger to society," who underwent re-education under it. This ambiguity is further underlined by the lack of complete records available about detentions under Order 22

The first example that I wish to highlight is the fact that the total number of individuals detained under Order 22 remains unknown. Recalling that some detainees were held under the Department of Corrections, and some were held under local police, ISOC counterinsurgency personnel, or other authorities appointed by the Director of Police in Bangkok or provincial governors, this may not be surprising. The reported number of those detained varied widely, and changed during and after the period Order 22 was in force. According to a report by the Department of Corrections (2520 [1977]), 2,188 people were detained as of December 1976. As of March 1977, the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS), a Thailand-based human rights group established in the aftermath of the coup, reported that 8000 people had been arrested since October 1976, and perhaps 2000 remained in detention (CGRS 1977a: n.p.). By June 1977, the CGRS estimated that 1105 "dangers to society" remained in detention, with only 20% of that number being political detainees (CGRS 1977b: 1-2). A late 1977 newspaper account cited a source within the counterinsurgent ISOC claiming that arrest lists included over 60,000 names (*Siam Rat Sabda Wijarn*, 18 December 2520 [1977]: 16). In a U.S. Library of Congress country study of Thailand published nearly ten years after the nullification of Order 22, John Haseman reported that 12,000 people were detained over the three-year period the order was in force (1989: 269). The lack of a consistent record of how many individuals total were detained under Order 22 may be both an outcome of the thorough decentralization of its administration, as well as one of the intentions behind it.

Even in the case of the detainees under the direct supervision of the Department of Corrections, there were notable discrepancies in state record-keeping. In their 1976 annual report, the Department of Corrections noted that on 13 October 1976, they changed the category of "hooligan"/ "อันธพาล" to "misconduct"/ "ผู้ถูกฝึกอบรม."[24] They further noted that 2188 people were arrested under Order 22 (Department of Corrections 2520 [1977]: 75). These detentions were duly reflected in the charts and diagrams showing the proportion of each kind of prisoner represented in the total national prison population. Given that Order 22 was in force until August 1979, I checked the annual reports for the years 1977, 1978, and 1979 as well. The category "misconduct" disappeared without a trace after the 1976 report (Department of Corrections 2521 [1978], 2522 [1979], 2523 [1980]). Not only did the category disappear, but the diagrams showing the proportion of each kind of prisoner disappeared as well. The category, and any possible diagrams where it might be missed, simply ceased to be included in the reports. As we know that arrests and detentions continued until the nullification of the law in 1979, this absence is jarring. Given their initial willingness to report on the detentions, what caused the Department of Corrections to cease including the existence of the detainees in their annual report? Even before one questions the various abuses of detainees which may have taken place under Order 22, an official accounting of the precise number of detainees remains impossible.

---

[24] The annual reports of the Department of Corrections are bilingual. I use both the Thai and English words used by the Department here. The transition to a new category of criminal was not smooth. Although Order 22 was created on 13 October 1976, it was not until 21 October 1976 that the Ministry of Interior sent an express letter to the head of the police department, the attorney general, the head of prisons, and every provincial governor with instructions on the order and how to use it. Along with this are two new pieces of paperwork, a document recording the number and kinds of people who are a danger to society, and a booking sheet for use at the place of arrest (Kongsak 2519 [1976]: 29 – 44). As K., a former detainee in Chiang Mai explained to me, upon being taken to the police station shortly after 6 October 1976, a form from the Sarit era was used. She was furious -- at the top of the form was the label "hooligan."

In an attempt perhaps to allay the fears engendered by the order, shortly after it was issued, the *Bangkok Post* reported that the NARC's public relations division "emphasized that students, laborers, and those people who had been exploited or become unintentionally involved in communist-inspired activities were regarded as innocent persons who would be forgiven" (20 October 1976: 1). In a special report nearly a year after the order had been in force, the re-education centers were noted as being "for those who didn't realize the wrongness of what they had done in the past" (*Siam Rat Sabda Wijarn* 18 December 2520 [1977]: 15). Although some people reported that their experiences of arbitrary detention under Order 22 were characterized by fear, intimidation, and humiliation, rather than physical mistreatment, evidence suggests that torture did occur in some cases of detention. Although Samak Sundaravej, Minister of the Interior, claimed that there would not be torture or beating of detainees, there were no concrete checks in place to insure that this did not occur (*Bangkok Post* 29 October 1976: 5). Complicating matters, in 1977 *Siam Rat* newspaper reported that it was very difficult to find specific information about torture in Thailand (18 December 2520 [1977]: 15). The CGRS and other human rights groups reported that they faced harassment and other difficulties investigating and disseminating information about torture and other rights violations in the period immediately following 6 October 1976 period.

What is very clear, even from my brief discussion here, which I will revisit in the conclusion, is that far more research is needed about the specific forms of violence perpetrated by Thai state officials during this period of time. A complete accounting of the total number of people detained under Order 22, where, and for how long, would be an excellent beginning.

At the margin's of the state's compassion: arbitrary detention in Chiang Mai

Not among the five planned centers or the temporarily designated centers of detention was the Karunyathep (การุณยเทพ), or "Angel of Compassion," Center in Chiang Mai.[25] The Karunyathep Center was established within the walls of the old city near Suan Buak Hat in 1968 by the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC).[26] When the CSOC became the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) after 14 October 1973, the ISOC continued the administration of the Karunyathep Center.[27] After the 6 October 1976 coup, the Center was pressed into service under Order 22 and as a detention center for forty-one *political* "dangers to society" in Chiang Mai (CGRS 1977b: 33).[28] In contrast to reports from other centers, those detained at the Karunyathep Center did not report experiences of violence or torture. They reported being given three meals a day, going on sightseeing trips to important national and religious sites in the city, and playing ping-pong and badminton. Yet, they were locked in every night, subject to interrogation, and never given the reason for their detention. As I will demonstrate in this section, the reported lack of mistreatment at the Karunyathep Center does not nullify the dangers of arbitrary detention. Instead it makes particular demands for critical analyses of it.

---

[25] Although I translate "thep," as "angel," here, I want to point to the difficulties of rendering "thep" in English. Erick White notes that "'Thep' in Theravada Buddhist cosmologies are generally seen as beings of great accumulated merit who drift around in self-absorbed pleasure and happiness but can be called upon in a beseeching manner for assistance, protection, etc" (personal communication, 7 July 2004).

[26] In 2006, the Karunyathep Center still stands in Chiang Mai. However, it is now used as office space for the Special Branch police/intelligence. Thank you to Tze May Loo for locating the center.

[27] See Thak (2524 [1981]) for an excellent introduction to the ISOC and its place as part of the Thai state.

[28] Between 15 and 30 October 1976, 159 people total deemed a "danger to society," were arrested in Chiang Mai; of the 159 total arrests, there were 132 men and twenty-seven women (*Thai Niu* 18 November 2519 [1976]: 1, 12). People were detained on a range of charges across the nine categories of dangerous behavior that I noted earlier, including gambling and hoarding commodities. The location(s) of their detention remains unknown. The details of their detention remain an important site of further inquiry.

The particular history of the Karunyathep Project and Center in Chiang Mai may offer insight into the conditions of detention for the forty-one individuals detained there. The Karunyathep Project was conceived as a political alternative to armed counterinsurgency (CSOC n.d.: 2).[29] The targets of the Project were individuals who had been tricked, incited, persuaded into changing their thinking or misunderstood politics, economics, and society. Outside causes -- including poverty, being taken advantage of, or experiencing a lack of trust from some government officials – were identified as the cause of these individuals' insurgent, or sympathetic to insurgency, behavior. As with earlier incarnations of counterinsurgency that I discussed in Chapter Two, the possibility that an individual might *choose* communism was inconceivable. Or, if not inconceivable, the recognition of that choice might have rendered the wayward individuals ineligible for recovery.

The CSOC's understanding of communism was a broad and generous one, capable of incorporating a wide range of activities. This was reflected in the stated goal of the project: "The Karunyathep Project will protect and forgive those individuals who misunderstood or who repent. The project will rehabilitate the consciousness of these individuals so that they will return to the side of the government" (CSOC n.d.: 2).[30] Within this frame, *any* perspective differing from that of the Thai state could come to be seen as in need of reform and correction.

Those eligible for the Karunyathep program were broken down into three categories: 1.) Individuals arrested under the Anti-Communist Activities Act; 2.) Individuals who turned themselves in; and 3.) Individuals who had already undergone

[29] Although I address the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai in this essay, it was part of a national program. See *Prachachaat Weekly*, volume 1, number 9 (17 January 2517 [1974]), pages 14-15 for a news overview of the entire Karunyathep Project. See *Yuthakot,* July 2520 [1977], pages 59-90 for a report on the Karunyathep Project in southern Thailand.

[30] "โครงการการุณยเทพ จะให้ความคุ้มครอง และอภัยโทษแก่ผู้หลงผิดหรือผู้ที่กลับใจแล้ว โดยจะดำเนินการอบรมฟื้นฟูจิตใจบุคคลเหล่านี้ ให้กลับมาเป็นฝ่ายรัฐบาล"

training, but were not yet ready for release. Once arrested, detainees underwent a seven week (or another appropriate length) course comprised of lectures, discussion and conversation designed to convince them to return to the side of the state. Their primary instruction was in "political re-education" (การอบรมด้านการเมือง), although training in growing vegetables and raising animals was also available.

While undergoing re-education, food, clothing, and bedding were provided (CSOC n.d.: 2). Detainees were given three meals a day and had access to sports such as badminton and pingpong. A television was available and sometimes detainees were taken to watch movies outside (CSOC n.d.: 3). Health services were provided and in the case of severe illness detainees were taken to the hospital (CSOC n.d.: 4). Those detained were evaluated through interviews, written tests, and observation. Upon release, detainees were provided with clothing, bus fare, and a small amount of money (CSOC n.d.: 3).

At the time of production of the internal history from which I have drawn the information in the preceding paragraphs, which was approximately 1973, 536 people had already successfully passed through the Center's program, and 32 were currently being held.[31] The internal history closed by arguing that the project could be considered a success. Following completion of training, the perspective of people who misunderstood was changed and they reportedly returned to support and cooperate with the government fully (CSOC n.d.: 4).

The internal history is notable for the emphasis placed on the relatively good treatment of the detainees. The history does not mention beating, torture, or other forms of physical mistreatment. However, physical mistreatment is not the only dangerous practice in the hands of the state. The identification of a kind of thinking as

---

[31] The person who gave me the internal CSOC document believed that it had been produced shortly before 14 October 1973.

criminally dangerous is concerning because it reflected a deep fear of explicitly dissenting perspectives, or in fact *any* perspective other than the state's. The people detained and re-educated as part of the Karunyathep Project were deemed to either possess misunderstandings or have been tricked into the wrong kind of thinking. The idea that one possessed criminally dangerous thinking not out of any action of one's own – but through misunderstanding or being the victim of trickery or external persuasion – reflects the state's contempt for citizens and their critical consciousness.

This fear and contempt was harnessed and made into national policy with the issue of Order 22 after 6 October 1976. The forty-one people deemed a political "danger to society" detained at the Karunyathep Center in later 1976 included farmers, workers, teachers, students and other people. For reasons which I will partially address below, the largest single group among the detainees was teachers, who comprised twenty-four of the total forty-one detainees. The political detainees were overwhelmingly male, with only four female detainees in the group (CGRS 1977b: 33).

While unmentioned in Bangkok-based newspapers, the arrests of those deemed a "danger to society" and their detention at the Karunyathep Center were covered in detail in *Thai Niu* and *Thin Thai*. The coverage in both papers is significant – both for the unambiguous and harsh language employed to describe those targeted by Order 22 and because through their reporting, the searches, arrests, and releases under Order 22 became public knowledge. The making public of the detentions created a paradoxical situation for those detained. On the one hand, it allayed some detainee's fears that they would be mistreated or killed while detained. One former detainee, P., conveyed to me his relief at learning of his photograph and name being printed in the paper. Even though they misspelled his family name, he felt that once his case was in the public eye, he was safe. At the same time, the newspaper coverage marked detainees

publicly as those whose existence constituted a threat to society. For some former detainees, the shame of this designation endures over thirty years later.

Thai Niu printed the verbatim text of Order 22 two days after it was issued by the NARC (15 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12). If there may have seemed to be an ambiguity in Order 22 itself about the status of those deemed a "danger to society," the language used in *Thai Niu* was unambiguous. A phrase meaning "to purge," "to wipe out," or "to get rid of," or "กวาดล้าง," was the one most often used to talk about the arrests under Order 22. In addition to the phrase "danger to society," they use the terms "the evil of society" (มารสังคม), and "that which is blemished, impure, tainted" (พ้นมลทิน), to refer to those arrested (*Thai Niu* 28 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12; 16 November 2519 [1976]: 1, 12).

On 17 October 1976, a front-page article reported that police and army soldiers captured the first wave of "dangers to society" (*Thai Niu* 17 October 2519 [1976]: 1). Students were reported as fleeing the purge in the city (*Thai Niu* 19 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12). Concurrent with the arrests were publicized searches of campuses, bookstores, and private houses for subversive literature and other materials (*Thai Niu* 18 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12; 19 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12; 20 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 12). On 16 October, over one hundred police participated in a search in which 7878 books were reported as being seized from the CMU dormitories (*Thin Thai* 17 October 2519 [1976]: 1). On 20 October, two big boxes containing 257 books were found in front of Wat Rampoeng, which is a located in an area near CMU (*Thin Thai* 21 October 2519 [1976]: 11).

By 19 November, most bookstores had turned over their suspect merchandise to the police. Individuals were urged to call the police and request a search (of their own or other's houses) if they thought something might be awry, because "documents

and printed materials are a great, serious danger to the security of the country" (*Thai Niu* 19 October 2519 [1976]: 3).[32]

For those individuals who did not discard, bury, burn, or otherwise dispose of their leftist or progressive books, possession became a strong liability. In newspaper accounts of two arrests under Order 22, the presence of books and other materials was cited as evidence of danger. For example, a senior teacher from Sanpatong district was arrested because "he was interested in communist ideas and had helped students who came to agitate the masses in different villages in Sanpatong many times" (*Thai Niu* 21 October 2519 [1976]: 12).[33] When officials searched his house, they did not find weapons, but they did find twenty-six books about communism and destroying absolute monarchy, including a transcript of a speech given by Pridi Banomyong. Similarly, a rural development researcher in Samoeng district who had graduated from Chiang Mai University was arrested under Order 22. When his house was searched, seventy allegedly communist books were found, five music-for-life tapes, and a map of Samoeng (*Thin Thai* 23 October 2519 [1976]: 1, 11). The newspaper report of his arrest did not explicate why each item indicated the need for detention. His possession of a map of Samoeng district seems hardly subversive, or surprising, however, given that he worked as a rural development researcher in that district.

Along with the senior teacher from Sanpatong and the development researcher from Samoeng, the other "danger to society" detainees were kept behind the walls of

---

[32] "ซึ่งเอกสารและสิ่งพิมพ์เป็นภัยอย่างใหญ่หลวงต่อความมั่นคงของประเทศ"; I would add that it is likely that some people called in searches of other people as form of spite. People reported on their neighbors and enemies. I note this hear in order to highlight another layer of the meaning of *arbitrary* in arbitrary detention. One of the many unanswered questions about the Order 22 detentions is how and why individuals were selected for arrest. As the cases did not have to go to trial, there was no public legal presentation of concrete evidence or accounting of an individual's wrongdoing. Newspaper reports, as well as some of the individual stories I will relate below, suggest that the arrests came largely from blacklists compiled by the police, military, and ISOC intelligence.

[33] "เป็นผู้ฝักใฝ่ในลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์และเคยให้ความร่วมมือกับกลุ่มนักศึกษาที่ออกไปปลุกระดมมวลชนตามหมู่บ้านต่างๆ ในอำเภอสันป่าตองหลายครั้ง"

the Karunyathep Center in of small, wooden houses on stilts. Each house held six to eight people and the detainees were kept in gender-segregated groups. One former detainee, K., told me that the architecture was designed to foster a friendly atmosphere. She explained that, "Everyone was friendly, it was like a school. Except that they locked the doors at night. Our friends and family came to visit, not university friends. They had already fled. In the afternoon, we went to classes on the topic of good citizenship."[34] She hastened to add that they were also interrogated during their period of detention.

As part of the classes on good citizenship, state officials and other visitors often came to the Karunyathep Center. On 27 November 1976, the Supreme Patriarch, or head Buddhist monk in Thailand, visited the Karunyathep Center. He reportedly told the detainees that "… consider that it follow the laws of karma. Whoever commits evil deeds inevitably receives their fate accordingly" (*Thai Niu* 28 November 2519 [1976]: 12).[35] His speech in *Thai Niu* was only excerpted, and there was no indication as to whether or not he made this comment in direct reference to the situation of his audience, the detainees at the Karunyathep Center. However, let us imagine for a moment that he did. Considered together with the state's admonition that those who sincerely repented for opposing the state – which they were tricked into doing – would be forgiven, the Supreme Patriarch's words removed another layer of agency from the situation of arbitrary detention. In this case, it was not the agency of the detainees, but that of the Thai state. Perhaps his statements were simply meant as part of a general lecture about Buddhist dharma teachings. At the same time, though, given the time and space, his words seem to suggest that that the detention of the detainees at the

---

[34] "ทุกคนเป็นมิตรกัน เป็นแบบโรงเรียน มิตรกันแต่ ปิด lock ประตู ตอนกลางคืน เพื่อนๆ น้องๆ ญาติ มาเยี่ยม ไม่ใช่เพื่อนนักศึกษา ทุกคนก็หนีไปแล้ว ในตอนบ่าย เรียนหนังสือ เรื่องผลเมืองดี"

[35] "นับว่าเป็นไปตามกฎแห่งกรรม ใครทำกรรมมาอย่างได้ก็ย่อมได้รับกรรมไปตามนั้น"

hands of the state was something that they brought upon themselves. The Supreme Patriarch's comments left little room for a critique of the state's immoderate actions.

Although five individuals were released in mid-November, all of those deemed a political "danger to society" who were detained at the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai were released with great fanfare on 14 November 1976 (*Thai Niu* 16 November 2519 [1976]: 1, 11; *Thai Niu* 15 December 2519 [1976]: 1, 11). Chalor Thammasiri, the governor of Chiang Mai, presided over a ceremony and party celebrating the release. A photograph of the party, complete with a banner in the background reading "Ceremony to end re-education and release, Karunyathep Center, Civilian, Military, and Police Intelligence Center, Region 5," appeared on the front page of the newspaper (*Thai Niu* 15 December 2519 [1976]: 1).

At the celebration, at which the now-liberated detainees were presented with certificates of completion, Chalor proclaimed that:

> The advice that I want to give to those liberated can be summarized like this: Each of us is born with different opinions. It is the freedom of each person to have different opinions. Some people might be persuaded by others to believe in what they believe and sometimes consequently they are induced to go down the wrong path. Therefore, in our hearts, we must force our consciousness to not become an instrument of other people" (*Thai Niu* 15 December 2519 [1976]: 11).[36]

Chalor's closing echoed the text of Order 22 and the earlier frame of the Karunyathep Project. The released detainees were people who had been deceived, and were urged to make sure that they did not become the tool of anyone else's thinking. Perhaps a strong and repeated emphasis was placed on the detainees as people who were tricked because acknowledging that they might have chosen to read Jit Phumisak or V.I.

---

[36] "ในโอวาทแก่ผู้ได้รับการปลดปล่อยมีความโดยสรุปว่า คนเราที่เกิดมานี้ก็ส่วนต่างจิตต่างใจต่างคนก็มีความคิดเห็นเป็นอิสระของตน บางคนอาจจะถูกคนอื่นมาเกลี้ยกล่อม ให้หลงเชื่อตามความคิดของคนอื่น ซึ่งบางครั้งก็อาจจะถูกชักจูงไปในทางที่ผิดก็ได้เพราะฉะนั้นจึงอยู่ในใจของเรา เราต้องบังคับจิตใจของเรา อย่าให้ตกเป็นเครื่องมือของคนอื่น."

Lenin, or to work with the Socialist Party or the Farmers' Federation, or to join a discussion group about injustice in society was very threatening to the Thai state, and its self-perception.

After the party, each person was given a small amount of money to return home. The teachers were required to periodically report to the head of education for Chiang Mai province, while everyone else was compelled to come to the Center every month (*Thai Niu* 15 December 2519 [1976]: 11). In addition, all of the released people deemed a "danger to society" were followed and observed overtly and secretly by intelligence and other officials from the Karunyathep Center over the next few years.

Four narratives of arbitrary detention

The four narratives of life at the Karunyathep Center that I present here – those of three former detainees and one former guard – comprise a different set of pictures than those offered by the CSOC, Chiang Mai newspapers, and Chalor Thammasiri. Absent from the stories of the three former detainees that I examine is any indication that they were tricked into the politicized behavior that led them to be deemed dangerous to society. Also absent from their narratives, and echoed in a human rights report issued by the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society, were references to physical mistreatment at the Center (CGRS 1977b: 33). In contrast to my analysis of the space for potential abuses opened up by the legal space of non-protection opened up by arbitrary detention, these abuses seem to have been absent from the experiences of the political detainees at the Karunyathep Center. However, there are references to violence elsewhere at the margins of the stories of each of the three former detainees and one former guard that I engage here. These marginal references upset their assertions of the lack of physical mistreatment at the Karunyathep Center, and suggest

the production and circulation of knowledge about violence. This, in turn, I ague, offers insight into the strategies of terror employed by the Thai state.

The path of justice

I first learned about arbitrary detention under Order 22 by reading funeral and commemorative books published in honor of *Ajarn* (Professor) Angun Malik. As I described in Chapter One, during the first oral history interview I conducted as part of my dissertation research, J., a former Chiang Mai University student urged me to learn more about Ajarn Angun, whom she described as "a special woman, an unusual professor" who challenged hierarchies and oppression inside and outside the classroom. Our interview took place in the morning, and in the afternoon I went to the CMU library and began reading about Ajarn Angun's life in one of the books published in her honor. I was immediately captivated by her life and her wide-ranging commitment to social change – including her maverick teaching, advocacy work for children, and Buddhist practice.

More than anything, however, I was intrigued, and confused, by references to her detention (ถูกกักกัน) at the Karunyathep Center in the period after 6 October 1976. I didn't yet know the history of the Karunyathep Center, and wondered why Ajarn Angun was held there. Although I was aware of the arrests of thousands of people at Thammasat University on 6 October 1976 and the well-publicized trial of the Bangkok 18, I had never read or heard about other arrests. My ignorance of Order 22 led me to open my Thai-English dictionary to search for alternate definitions of the word used to describe her detention. Finding "quarantine" listed, I wondered if perhaps Ajarn Angun had contracted a contagious illness shortly after 6 October.

As I read more about her life, and met those to whom she was close until her death in 1991, I grew both more and less confused. The mystery of her

detention/quarantine was solved: Ajarn Angun was not sick, instead along with many other she was detained as a "danger to society" under Order 22. In early November, Ajarn Angun was purged (ถูกกวาด) and was detained for a month and a half (Aet 2538 [1995]: 23). But why? What behavior did she possess that required re-education?

In Chapter One I described Ajarn Angun's life and her participation and support of student social and political action at CMU. Drawing primarily on the remembrances of her by former students and colleagues collected in the funeral and memory books published after her death, here I offer an account of her detention.

In 1976, Ajarn Angun was fifty-nine years old and close to retiring from her position teaching in the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at Chiang Mai University. Although she was active with students at CMU from her arrival there in 1968, the transformations of 14 October 1973 gave her work an explicitly political, and later, dissident, inflection. She opened her house and garden, Suan Anya, to the farmers of the newly-formed Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) and the students of the Farmer Project. When a house occupied by members of the Farmer Project was raided and students and farmers were arrested on alleged possession of weapons and seditious documents in May 1976, Ajarn Angun put the title for Suan Anya up as bond for their release (Nitirat 2542 [1999]: 153-154).

Her involvement with the farmers and students may have been one factor leading to her arrest and detention under Order 22. After 6 October 1976, however, she did not think about fleeing, because her participation with the farmers and students had been just (Aet 2543 [2000]: 71). Recalling his concern when Ajarn Angun was arrested, one of her former students, Aet Piramon explained:

> No one could guess things could follow a good path, or how the situation could end in a good way. In the first period of arrests and detention, there was no way to imagine whether people would be released in a short amount of time, or if cases would be brought against

> those arrested, of if they would be locked up and forgotten, or if they would be coerced and tortured. Anything was possible, because we had just witnessed the cruel, atrocious acts at Thammasat on 6-7 October (2543 [2000]: 71).[37]

Aet's concerns reflect the range of possibilities for abuse imagined in the aftermath of the 6 October 1976 massacre and in the absence of information about conditions of detention and dates of release. As I noted earlier, the Minister of Interior, Samak Sundaravej, promised that there would be no torture or beating of those detained. However, what guarantee did detainees and their colleagues have that this would be true?

Ajarn Angun was released a month and a half after she was initially detained, but there was no way to know this when she was arrested. Ana Malik, who Ajarn Angun took care of as a daughter, went to visit Ajarn Angun in the Karunyathep Center on Saturdays and Sundays. Ajarn Angun's main activities were to clean, mop, sing, read books, and exchange ideas with the other detainees (Ana 2538 [1995]: 43). Life at the Center was very regimented and bells were rung to signal the end of one activity and the beginning of another. R., a colleague and close friend of Ajarn Angun's, recalled that she was very calm while at the Center and that she advised her fellow detainees to do what the staff told them to do, without becoming like them. In other words, Ajarn Angun urged those detained at the Center to appear to repent, while retaining their own beliefs. This calls into question both the sincerity of the repentance of the former detainees, and, more importantly, the Thai state's claims to the success of their project.

In a book commemorating Ajarn Angun's life printed nine years after her death, the contents included part of a report on her own behavior and conduct that

---

[37] "ไม่มีใครคาดเดาไปในทางที่ดีได้เลย ระยะแรกๆ ของการถูกจับ ไม่มีทางจะคิดฝันได้ว่า จะถูกปล่อยตัวในเวลาอันสั้น การถูกดำเนินคดี ถูกขังลืม หรือถูกบีบคั้นทารุณกรรมย่อมเป็นไปได้ทั้งนั้น เพราะเหตุการณ์อันอำมหิตโหดร้าย ของวันที่ ๖-๗ ตุลาในธรรมศาสตร์ เป็นที่ประจักษ์อยู่"

Ajarn Angun was asked to write and submit to the director of the Karunyathep Center while she was detained. Dated 9 November 1976, the report was titled "Report of the behavior of Mrs. Angun Malik who is close to the university students" (Angun 2519 [1976]: 7).[38] Although her statement was called a report (รายงาน), not a self-criticism (คำวิจารณ์ตัวเอง), there is a resemblance between the two. The difference, of course, is that Ajarn Angun was asked to write her report by Thai state counterinsurgency officials, and Communist Party of Thailand cadres were engaging in self-criticism as part of their attempt to overthrow the Thai state.

Ajarn Angun began her report by explaining that in order to show a clear picture of how she possessed the kind of behavior that brought her to the Karunyathep Center she must tell a story that began a long time ago (2519 [1976]: 7). Ajarn Angun then traced the trajectory of her education and teaching. At the time she wrote the report she was age fifty-nine and except for five or six years while she was engaged in other work, she had been a teacher for her entire life. She separated from her husband in 1956 and since then, she had spent her life engaged with "students, school sports, gardening, developing myself, developing my workplace, and searching for knowledge" (Angun 2519 [1976]: 7).[39] Ajarn Angun's family history meant that she could have a chosen a much different life, one of luxury and leisure.

Ajarn Angun came to the Chiang Mai in 1968 to teach psychology at CMU. She wrote that at first,

> I met many students, men and women, who were immersed in only having fun – going out at night, dancing, dating, and gambling. These are activities without meaning, activities that do not create anything. Perhaps they undertook these activities because they didn't know about

---

[38] "รายงานพฤติกรรมของนางองุ่น มาลิก ที่สัมพันธ์กับนักศึกษา"

[39] "อยู่กับนักเรียน การกีฬาโรงเรียน การทำสวนดอกไม้ การพัฒนาตนเอง พัฒนาสถานที่ทำงาน และแสวงหาความรู้"

> a better life, they didn't know that they could have a life with a purpose for themselves and for society (Angun 2519 [1976]: 7).[40]

R. told me that she was a woman of many different perspectives – she didn't want the students to all unite under any one banner or ideology. She did, however, want them to operate with an awareness of a world larger than themselves.

Ajarn Angun then detailed activities that she undertook with students in 1969 and 1970 to rehabilitate Wat Fai Hin, the temple adjoining the university campus. Students from the education, medical, and agricultural faculties came to help with the rehabilitation. None of the students who came to help were students she taught directly, but she "assumed that they came to help because from their heart they wanted to work for the public good" (Angun 2519 [1976]: 7).[41] Even as those who detained Ajarn Angun and compelled her to write a self report were unable to acknowledge that her actions came out of a desire to improve other people's lives, Ajarn Angun retained her faith in other people.

She concluded her self report by noting that the work at Wat Fae Hin was the beginning of both broader activist organizing by the students and her interest in student activities. She writes:

> My interest grew to expand to include every group that organized activities, so that whatever was organized I participated as well. Until people joked that if the students did something, it will never happen that Ajarn Angun will not show up. This is talk more than truth. In the end, I relinquished my work at Wat Fai Hin because the university became the patron. My life is dedicated to working to help those who have suffered and had problems (Angun 2519 [1976]: 8).[42]

---

[40] "ข้าพเจ้าก็พบว่านักศึกษาส่วนใหญ่มัวเมาอยู่กับการสนุก เที่ยวกลางคืน เต้นรำ เล่นรัก การพนัน ทั้งหญิงชาย นับเป็นสิ่งไร้ความหมายและไร้สร้างสรรค์ อาจเป็นเพราะเขาขาดความรู้ว่าชีวิตที่ดีกว่านั้นยังมีชีวิตประเสริฐที่ยังประโยชน์ต่อตนเองและต่อสังคม"

[41] "จึงสันนิษฐานว่าเกิดจากดวงใจที่จะทำงานเพื่อสาธารณประโยชน์ของเขา"

[42] "ข้าพเจ้าขยายความสนใจให้แก่ทุกทุกกลุ่มใครจัดอะไร ข้าพเจ้าก็ร่วมด้วย จนเป็นที่ล้อเลียนกันว่า นักศึกษาทำอะไร อาจารย์องุ่นไม่ไปเป็นไม่มี ซึ่งเป็นการกล่าวเกินความจริง ในตอนท้ายๆ นี้ข้าพเจ้าจึงวางมือจากวัดฝายหิน

I suggest that we read Ajarn Angun's self-report as a direct refutation of her designation as a "danger to society," and a critique of the category in a broader sense. Rather than claiming that she was deceived or possessed misunderstandings, Ajarn Angun traced how she became active in the struggle for social justice. Further, through her explanation of becoming involved with students to rehabilitate Wat Fai Hin after witnessing that many young people had lives devoid of personal or social meaning, she offered her own critique of society. Her final sentence reflected an unmistakable confidence in the integrity and justness of her life and actions.

Documenting history

In early November 2004, I spent a morning with P., a history teacher who was detained for thirty days under Order 22 at the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai. At the time of his detention, there were forty-one people detained in total: three students from Chiang Mai University, ten farmers, one professor from Chiang Mai University (Ajarn Angun), three professors from Chiang Mai Teachers' College, and twenty-four primary and secondary school teachers. When I asked him why there were so many teachers detained, he responded that it was because primary school teachers were closest to the villagers (ชาวบ้าน).

A historian, he has documented his entire detention experience. When we met, he shared all of the evidence he has collected and preserved with me, including the newspaper articles about his detention, the provincial order releasing him from the Karunyathep center, and then a declaration of his innocence that allowed him to return to teaching.

เพราะมหาวิทยาลัยรับเป็นผู้อุปการะแล้ว การทำงานเพื่อช่วยบุคคลที่ตกทุกข์และมีปัญหา เป็นปัจจัยชีวิตของข้าพเจ้า"

When he was arrested, the people who arrested him were not wearing uniforms and were using their own vehicles, rather than official state vehicles. They did not tell him where they were taking him. They simply knocked on the door and told him to gather clothes and toiletries and come with them. As he explained to me, he didn't know where he was going to be taken – if he was going to be taken and killed and thrown in the river or otherwise detained (ปิดตัว). He told a neighbor to write down the car license numbers. If there was no news about or from him in the next day, the friend was to tell people about the car license numbers.

When the car stopped and he arrived at the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai city, he felt relieved. He worried initially that he was going to be taken somewhere outside the city, he didn't know where. Upon arriving at the Center, he was photographed by the newspaper. At this point he felt very safe, because he knew that the information about him was out in the open and was public. Of course, as he commented to me, the newspaper misspelled his family name and printed misinformation about his house being searched. His house was never searched before he was detained.

Even today, he remains uncertain as to why he was detained. While he was a student at Chiang Mai Teachers' College he was active in the student organization and in the student publication. However, he had not joined demonstrations or written his own political articles or tracts.

While at the Karunyathep Center, he and the other detainees sometimes went out to movies and to see important monuments and *wats* (temples) in the area. Life in the Center wasn't like jail. In jail, he commented, there are only two meals per day and in the Center there were three. The staff wanted everyone there to feel like they were part of the same family, the same group (พวก). There were places to play badminton and pingpong. The beds were okay, he said. But the doors were locked at

night. When I asked about violence, he said they did not use violence against the detainees in the Karunyathep Center. Raising a question about the use of violence elsewhere, when I asked about violence against women he said no, he had never heard about violence against women in the north.

He was released in the first group after being detained for only thirty days. At this time the judgment was made that he was innocent (เป็นผู้บริสุทธิ์) and so could continue in his job as a teacher. The document releasing him noted that although he had participated in different political activities, it was the environment of the time that had caused him to do this and not his intention. Therefore, he was forgiven. He was declared to be "an innocent person, without stain" (Chiang Mai Provincial Order xxx/2520 [1977]: n.p.).[43] Although he returned to work after his release, and was even asked to lecture about Thai history to the remaining detainees at the Karunyathep Center, he did not receive his salary for another seven months. The paper trail between the police, ISOC, and director of the school where he taught to restore his salary was nearly endless.

Before our conversation ended, he asked if I had any other questions. I made reference to his comment at the beginning about disappearances – and asked if many people were disappeared. He was silent for a few minutes. I didn't ask again, and instead we moved on to talk about the continuing difficulty of finding the political books banned after 6 October 1976.[44] At the end of the conversation, he told me that I was the first person to be interested in his detention. I was the first to ask him about it, nearly thirty years later. Today, he teaches his students about parts of the recent past not in their textbooks. He shows his students photographs of the 6 October 1976

---

[43] "เป็นผู้บริสุทธิ์ปราศจากมลทิน"; This provincial order is cited with "xxx" rather than its actual number in order to protect the anonymity of the former Karunyathep detainee who shared it with me.

[44] 100 books were specifically banned under the NARC. See *Ratchakitchanubeksa* (11 March 2520 [1977], Book 94, Part 18, Pages 1-12) for a complete list.

massacre in Bangkok and passes around news clippings of the arrest and detentions in Chiang Mai after the coup. He told me that they are surprised, even incredulous, when they learn about this recent history.

Education for the people

Although P., the teacher I discussed in the last section, did not know why he was detained following 6 October, many teachers were not surprised by their arrest. In addition to students, farmers, and workers, teachers organized as a group after the events of 14 October 1973. In 2005 and 2006, I had long conversations with T., a former teacher who was active in Teachers for the People (กลุ่มครูประชาบาลเพื่อประชาชน), which was a progressive teachers' political group active in Chiang Mai and Lamphun.[45]

T. completed his teaching degree at Chiang Mai Teachers' College in 1970 and immediately began teaching at the primary school in his home village in Hang Dong district. He was only twenty years-old at that time. For the first few years, he concentrated solely on teaching. But as society began to change after 14 October 1973, so did his life. T. recalled the near-overnight proliferation of many new kinds of books, especially leftist and progressive books. He bought and read many of the new books. Then, with a few fellow teachers, he organized a reading and discussion group about injustice. T. explained the genesis of the group to me: "We teachers got together

[45] Following 14 October 1973, a 1972 graduate of the Faculty of Political Science at CMU, Chatchawan Neelaprayoon, decided to return to Mae Chaem district in Chiang Mai province, where he was from, and accept a position as a primary school teacher. He organized a primary school teachers' group to act in solidarity with farmers and workers (Phadungsak 2549 [2006]: 164). In late 1974, this group was formalized and given the name "Teachers for the People" (กลุ่มครูประชาบาลเพื่อประชาชน). Teachers for the People had an office, Kingkaew House (บ้านกิ่งแก้ว) on Wualai Road in Chiang Mai city, and branches in various districts in Chiang Mai and Lamphun.

into a group, it was a group of people who loved justice, not an ideological group."[46] Their group became part of Teachers for the People in Chiang Mai.

T. lived in the same village as Inson Buakhiew, who was very active in the newly-formed Socialist Party of Thailand (SPT). Inson ran for MP as an SPT candidate in early 1975, and many members of Teachers for the People campaigned for him, Inson won the election, and over the first half of 1975, Teachers for the People and the SPT increasingly worked together closely.

What T. remembered most enthusiastically were the weekend organizing sessions organized by Teachers for the People and the SPT. Smiling, and sprinkling his explanation with English words (italicized) for emphasis, he said:

> Na, little sister, the organizing work was very relaxed. We got together to talk, to learn, to eat, and to sleep -- we slept in the seminar space itself – wherever it was – if it was a school or another place or wherever – we called this "sleeping assembly." Now it's not like this anymore. When university students go to organize – it's like they go *camping*. Then we didn't need to have an air-conditioned room, we didn't need to stay in a *resort*. We didn't need to stay in hotels.[47]

T.'s nostalgia for the past was sharpened by his disappointment and concern for the present. For him, the fact that many young teachers, and so many people in general, are more concerned with their cell phones and cars than they are with struggling against injustice is a tragedy. For him, "It's a shame, because democracy is something for which people have sacrificed flesh and blood."[48]

---

[46] "มีความรวมกลุ่มครู ที่รักความเป็นธรรม ไม่ใช่กลุ่มลัทธิ"

[47] "น่ะ น้อง งานค่ายเป็นแบบลักษณะง่ายๆ เราก็มารวมคุยกัน เรียนกัน กินกัน นอนกัน นอนที่พื้นที่สัมมนาเอง ที่ไหนก็ได้ เป็นโรงเรียนหรือเป็นที่อื่นก็ได้ เราก็เรียกนี้ว่าเป็น 'นอนสามัคคี' ไม่ใช่แบบปัจจุบัน ตอนที่นักศึกษาไปค่าย ก็เป็นแบบ camping ตอนนั้นไม่ต้องใช้ประชุมที่มีแอร์ ไม่ต้องใช่ resort ไม่ต้องใช้โรงแรม"

[48] "เสียดายเพราะว่าประชาธิปไตยเป็นสิ่งที่ประชาชนเสียเลือดเสียเนื้อ"

During the first half of 1975, Teachers for the People held weekend consciousness-raising seminars about land rent control, the dangers of U.S. and Japanese imperialism and the basic ideas of socialism on the grounds of schools across Chiang Mai and neighboring Lamphun province. However, the seminars were forced to an abrupt end in June 1975.

In early June, Teachers for the People organized a two-day seminar at Don Kaew School in Hang Dong. More than 100 people attended, including students, teachers, and farmers. Intha Sribunruang, the national vice-president of the Farmers' Federation, was one of the facilitators, as well as Ajarn Boonyen Wothong, a professor at the National Institute for Development Administration and an SPT MP from the northeast. T. was one of those in charge of the seminar, and borrowed a friend's jeep for the weekend in order to pick up the food, rice, and the facilitators.

The first day went as planned, and T. was pleased with the turnout. Then things rapidly began to change. T. explained to me that, "The first night it was fine – but the second night, the Krathing Daeng, the Nawaphon told the villagers that the people inside were communists. The villagers came to sing, to sing the song 'Scum of the Earth …"[49] His voice trailed off.

By 8 p.m. on the second night, the school was surrounded by right-wing villagers and Nawaphon. Those attending the seminar inside the school scattered throughout the building, and the former organizer remembered his fear at the time. He was especially worried about his wife, who was coordinating the food and provisions for the seminar. Then, the group assembled outside the school set two cars on fire – the car that Ajarn Boonyen had driven up from Bangkok, and the jeep that the T. had

---

[49] "คืนแรงก็ไม่มีปัญหา แต่คืนที่สอง กลุ่มกระทิงแดง กลุ่มนวพล บอกชาวบ้านในเขตว่าคนนี้เป็นพวกคอมมิวนิสต์ ชาวบ้านมาร้องเพลง มาร้องเพลง 'หนักแผ่นดิน'"

borrowed for the weekend. When they saw the burning vehicles, the seminar participants inside the school called the police.

The police did not immediately respond to their call. When they finally arrived at 2 a.m., however, they did not arrest the right-wing villagers outside the school who destroyed the two vehicles. Instead they arrested those attending the seminar. The seminar participants were loaded into one vehicle and taken to the police station in nearby Chiang Mai city. T. commented that

> There was only one vehicle for all of us. It was the same as Tak Bai. My back was hurt, it's been a problem for a long time. They searched each of us – and they only found three pistols in the whole group. It was like Tak Bai – but it was our good luck that they only took us to the police station in the city.[50]

T.'s reference to the Tak Bai massacre, which took place in October 2004, is significant in two registers.[51] First, it suggests that the practice of stacking arrestees one on top of another in horizontal rows may not be a one-time accident, but may be an accepted strategy for the Thai police and army. Second, it reflects an entrenched disregard by various Thai state officials for the rights and safety of citizens perceived as dissident.

When the arrested Teachers for the People seminar participants arrived at the police station, they were fingerprinted and interrogated and then released. After listening to his story, my shock was apparent on my face. I said, "You were arrested,

---

[50] "มีรถคันเดียวสำหรับทุกคน ก็เหมื่อนเหตุการณ์ตากใบ เจ็บหลัง ก็เป็นเรื่องอย่างนั้น ค้นตัวคนทุกคน หาได้ปืนสั้นสามอันอย่างเดี่ยว ในทั้งกลุ่ม เป็นแบบตากใบ ก็โชคดีที่ไม่ไปไกลไปถึงโรงพักอำเภอเมืองอย่างเดียว"

[51] Eighty-five people died in the Tak Bai massacre on 25 October 2004. Seventy-right of this number died when over 1500 protestors were arrested and stacked, in horizontal layers, in trucks and transported to the Inkarayuth military base six hours away from the Tak Bai police station, where the protest took place. The 1500 citizens were protesting what they believed was the unjust arrest of six villagers on charges of allegedly stealing guns from the local defense forces. One survivor of the massacre recalled that in his truck, there were four layers of people; everyone on the bottom layer died (Notes from Two-year Anniversary of Tak Bai seminar, Bangkok, 25 October 2006). For more information on the Tak Bai massacre, and the continuing need to hold the state officials responsible for the massacre accountable, see the material and articles collected in Surachai (2549 [2006]).

but you weren't the people who burned the cars?"[52] He nodded yes. What happened to the people who burned the cars, I wanted to know. "Nothing. Nothing at all."[53] He told me that the experience broke his spirit and caused him to be afraid of organizing publicly. He was too afraid even to go to the funerals of the assassinated Farmers' Federation leaders in July and August 1975.

T. and others were afraid to go to the funerals because they suspected that there were intelligence and Nawaphon present. To attend was to mark oneself as a progressive, and therefore a future candidate for assassination. As a result, most of the funerals were only attended by the families of the assassinated people. In turn, T. explained, the opposing side was able to say "Look, this person wasn't important, wasn't beloved by the people."[54] The polarized and contentious atmosphere made it impossible even for people to mourn and honor the dead properly.

After the 6 October 1976 massacre, T. anticipated that he would be pursued, and so initially went underground. He asked his activist colleague and neighbor, Inson Buakhiew, for suggestions on where to go. On Inson's advice, he went to Bangkok and stayed in a house in the compound of Ajarn Boonyen Wothong, one of the facilitators at the fateful June 1975 seminar. However, he didn't stay there for long. His wife was pregnant with their first child, and close to her due date. He returned north to Hang Dong.

He was home in Hang Dong for only one day before he was arrested as a "danger to society" under Order 22. In his case, he was not taken to the Karunyathep Center immediately, but was held at the Hang Dong police station for thirty-two days. Then he was taken to the Karunyathep Center and detained there for an additional

---

[52] "อาจารย์ก็ถูกจับ แต่ไม่ใช่เป็นคนที่เผารถ"

[53] "ไม่มีอะไรไม่มีอะไรเลย"

[54] "ดูซี ไม่ใช่เป็นคนสำคัญ ไม่ใช่เป็นคนที่ประชาชนรัก"

thirty-three days. He described the Karunyathep Center as being similar to an army camp. Using his hands to indicate a row, he described the line of beds in the wooden house in which he slept. They were given food and a place to exercise, he said. Consistent with other accounts, he remembered the trips to local monuments and temples. What he remembered most acutely was the question the interrogators repeatedly asked him: "Are you planning on destroying the country with weapons?"[55] His response: "No. We are only people who love justice."[56] He was not mistreated while at the Center, but had heard that there was an underground cell on the grounds.

I asked him why he thought he and so many other teachers were detained. His response was an elaboration on the idea that teachers are close to the people. He said that it was because teachers were perceived as the leaders, "From the perspective of the state, farmers must have a leader. Teachers tend to be leaders in communities when there is a meeting or other activities."[57] In many communities, teachers were the leaders, chosen or de facto, on the basis of their relatively high level of formal education in comparison to other villagers. In another sense, however, his statement is very telling, and suggests, again, that the Thai state did not perceive farmers as capable of leading themselves.

T. was released along with the other political "dangers to society" held at the Karunyathep Center on 14 December 1976. Unlike P., the teacher who obtained early release, he wasn't cleared to return to his teaching job until mid-1977. He told me, with a smile, that he didn't mind being prevented from teaching for six months. His wife had their first child while he was being held at the Hang Dong police station. He

---

[55] "จะทำลายประเทศด้วยอาวุธหรือไม่"

[56] "ไม่ครับ เราเป็นคนที่รักความเป็นธรรมอย่างเดี่ยว"

[57] "ในความคิดเห็นของรัฐ ชาวนาต้องมีผู้นำ แล้วครูน่าจะเป็นผู้นำในชุมชน ตอนที่มีประชุมหรือกิจกรรม อื่นๆ"

stayed home and took care of his new son for the six months that he was banned from working.

The broken hearts of counterinsurgency

The final (counter)narrative of arbitrary detention and re-education that I wish to relay differs from the earlier three in one particularly significant manner. This narrative is based on a conversation I had with K., a former detainee, and N., a former guard at the Karunyathep Center. N.'s comments both deepen the urgency of tracing the history of what happened to those detained under Order 22, while also refusing any easy or single categorization of those in the employ of the state.

N. was a former low-ranking policeman who was on loan to the ISOC and stationed at the Karunyathep Center between 1975 and 1981. K., who was a university student detained at the Center under Order 22 following 6 October 1976, remained in touch with N. after her release because he was kind to her and other detainees. In the last month before I left Thailand to return to Ithaca to write my dissertation in August 2005, K. took me to meet N., and the three of us talked about the past, and by necessity, the present.

Our conversation took place on a sunny morning in the middle of the rainy season. K. introduced me to N. as her *nong*, or younger sister, and explained that I was interested in the detentions at the Karunyathep Center. She noted that over the course of the last year and a half I had spoken to a lot of former student and farmer activists, and a lot of people who had gone to the jungle. I had not, she noted, talked to a lot of state officials, who likely had a different perspective on the whole situation. When K. commented that it was shocking to her how much information on the 1973-1976 and post-6 October 1976 period had seemed to disappear in the intervening thirty years, N. didn't seem surprised. He nodded his agreement. At the beginning, I was nervous and

afraid that I would ask a question that N. could not or would not want to answer. But after we went through the usual questions of our ages, my unmarried yet advancing (at the time, twenty-eight) age, they both urged me not to feel like I was imposing or asking something that I should not and we turned to politics.

I began by asking N. if he remembered 1976 and the contention and disagreement in society. N. responded by explaining that he was in the police force from 1976 until 1985. Then the contention within the police force led him to leave and become a businessman.

"*Na*, there's still disagreement within the government. Especially with Thai Rak Thai."[58] N. saw many similarities between the conflict in the South since the declaration of martial law in January 2004 and the contention during 1975 and 1976. Lowering his voice, he told us that his friends who were soldiers told him that many people in the South have been disappeared.[59]

In N.'s opinion, many of those detained at the Karunyathep Center were victims of the disagreement within the Thai state, and within society. My own initial failure to see diversity among state officials meant that I was surprised by his word choice: "The people who were detained were oppressed, it was too harsh."[60]

He continued, and said "The people may have had no idea, may have never been involved. But they came under suspicion because they were friends of those in the movement. Then they were accused of inciting, agitating."[61] He extended this to K. Throughout our conversation, he repeatedly said to her, you never did anything wrong, maybe you gave water or food to the students, but you never did anything wrong. At

---

[58] "น่ะ อยู่ในรัฐบาลมีความขัดแย้งเยอะ โดยเฉาะปัจจุบันนี้ โดยเฉพาะไทยรักไทย"

[59] See Human Rights Watch (2007) for more information on disappearances in the South.

[60] "สำหรับคนที่ถูกกักกัน มันเป็นการกดขี่ หนักเกินไป"

[61] "เป็นคนที่น่าจะไม่เคยรู้เรื่อง ไม่เคยมีส่วนเกี่ยวข้อง แต่ถูกสงสัยเพราะว่าเคยเป็นเพื่อนของคนที่อยู่ในการเคลื่อนไหว คนที่ถูกสงสัยว่า ยุยง หรือ ปลุกปั่น"

that time, he said, one could be detained even for doing business with the opposite site (i.e., the Communist Party of Thailand), even if one did not know that they were Communists. He told the story of a man from Chieng Khong, across the Mekhong from Laos, who was detained for a year at the Karunyathep Center for selling rice and other supplied to the CPT in the late 1970s. For N., this was one of the most oppressive aspects of the time. The detained man was only trying to make a living and take care of his family.

Given that I had only heard or read about actual detentions of a few months, I asked N. how long people were usually detained. He said "It depends, some people were there for more than a year. But it was hard, because if you have a family … and many people had problems with making a living. The result of being arrested was to lose face."[62] K. agreed strongly on this point, and then we turned to talk about the dissimilating language of detention, which compounds this.

They began by laughing over one of the terms used – "invite to fix behavior."[63] They laughed over the use of the word behavior/character during that period. People said, "to fix behavior, to investigate behavior."[64] Then N. leaned back in his chair, and said, almost conspiratorially, "Na, invite for training or arrest? Which was it?"[65] Throughout our conversation, he had been using the phrase, but now he noted, "Ah, that's the polite way to say it. If you are going to be direct, it was arrest."[66]

---

[62] "โอ แล้วแต่ บางคนอยู่หนึ่งปีกว่า แต่ยากน่ะ เพราะว่าถ้ามีครอบครัว ... แล้วหลายๆคนที่อยู่มีปัญหาทางการประกอบอาชีพ ผลจากการจับกุมก็คือถูกเสียหน้า"

[63] "เชิญมาแก้พฤติกรรม"

[64] "แก้พฤติกรรม สอบสวนพฤติกรรม"

[65] "เชิญมาอบรมหรือจับกุม"

[66] "อา เป็นภาษาสุภาพ แต่จะพูดตรงๆ เป็นจับกุม"

"Oh, it was definitely arrest. You had to have your fingerprint made."[67] K. said, making an imaginary fingerprint on the table in front of us. This is yet another way in which the practice of arbitrary arrest under Order 22 in Chiang Mai seemed contradictory. Precise records of each detainee, including fingerprints were kept. Each detainee in Chiang Mai was the subject of *at least* two provincial orders, one authorizing detention and one authorizing release. Yet the order itself created a space where there was no way to track whether or not these regulations were followed.

In order to accommodate and keep track of all those at the Karunyathep Center, N. explained that more than 100 people worked there. Some were direct employees of the ISOC, but many were like him – police, soldiers, or civilians on loan from another agency. He thought that there were more than 1000 people working for the ISOC in Chiang Mai province.[68]

Not only were there many people wearing civilian clothes who drew a special salary from the ISOC for reporting on their coworkers or neighbors, but there were dissidents within the government too. N. explained "There people in the government who were part of the movement too. They didn't fight because they had to make a living and support their families. I can't tell you their names, they're still alive."[69] I quickly nodded, and said of course, for sure, I don't need to know their names.

The last question I asked N. was about the documentation of the Order 22 detentions. *Where* were all of the provincial orders authorizing detentions and releases.

---

[67] "เป็นจับกุมแน่ๆ"

[68] N. commented that this all ended by 1980, when what he termed the "foreign money" (เงินมาจากต่างประเทศ) dried up and the counterinsurgency began to dwindle. In his assessment, this money, whose country of origin he never noted, was what funded the surveillance of student activists, as well as all of the other counterinsurgency. As with so many other allegations repeated to me regarding either foreign or Thai government money, the evidence to prove or disprove this assertion is not yet available.

[69] "มีคนในรัฐบาลที่อยู่ในการเคลื่อนไหวด้วย ไม่ได้ต่อต้านเพราะว่าต้องประกอบอาชีพต้องเลี้ยงครอบครัว ไม่ได้บอกชื่อเขาแต่ยังอยู่"

And where were copies of the reports that detainees had written, like Ajarn Angun? I commented that I wondered if they might be at the Chiang Mai provincial building, now located on the highway to Mae Rim. The orders at the Chiang Mai provincial archives stopped with those from 1972, but surely those from later years still existed. And where were all of the other documents about the detentions kept – did they still exist? What kind of material record remains?

N. answered slowly, "The documents are probably at the ISOC Center at Ruan Rudee in Bangkok, na. But as for the people who were arrested and taken to the Karunyathep Center in Chiang Mai, the documents are probably still there. I'll contact my friend there, and if it's possible to get them, I'll call you. If it's possible …"[70]

We ended our conversation there, and K. and I left so that N. could go back to work. We went to eat noodles afterward, and I told K. about reading about the release party thrown by Chalor Thammasiri in the newspaper. K. said "Yes, it was ridiculous, incredible. We were even given certificates. I looked for mine at home so I could show you, but I couldn't find it." She shook her head again, and we both went back to eating.

N. didn't call me, and I assumed that either his friend remaining at the Karunyathep Center refused to give him copies of the documents for me, or that he changed his mind about the offer. I was relieved. I didn't want N. to possibly get in trouble due to me.

My conversation with K. and N. remained with me for a long time, and I saved it to write about until the end of my dissertation. Most immediately, N. forced me to re-evaluate my perspective on the Thai state. Even within my operating recognition of the state as a diverse and contradiction-ridden entity, at times I still refused state actors

[70] "เอกสารน่าอยู่ที่ศูนย์ ruan ที่กรุงเทพ แต่สำหรับคนที่ถูกจับในที่ศูย์การุณยเทยที่เชียงใหม่ น่าจะมีเอกสารที่ศูนย์เอง จะติดต่อด้วยเพื่อนอยู่ที่นู่น และถ้าเป็นไปได้ จะโทร ถ้าเป็นไปได้"

the status of humanness. This is perhaps ironic, and perhaps problematic, given that one of my goals has been to write in the service of the humanity of the farmers, students, teachers, and other people who suffered at the hands of state and para-state actors. N. was openly critical of the Karunyathep Project, and the harsh measures meted out to people who came under suspicion of the state during the 1970s. Listening to N. and K. together that morning, it became clear that the Angel of Compassion project and counterinsurgency in general broke not only the hearts of those targeted by it, but those who administered it as well.

Nullification and lingering concerns

Order 22 was nullified on 7 August 1979 during the government of Kriangsak Chomanand. The nullification freed all of the people still under detention. If anyone was still being investigated, a warrant of detention from the court needed to be procured within two days. A note appended to the nullification law lends an additional layer of urgency to the questions about abuses made possible under the law that I have highlighted here. Commenting that the law gave state officials the power to investigate, detain, and train people in detention centers, the law noted that people were deprived of their freedom and the ability to practice their profession and take care of their families. Identifying the arbitrary nature of the order, the law noted that the detained individuals may have never done anything wrong, but were detained because they were the object of spite of the police or government officials. The appended note then explained that this order gave police and government officials too much power. Using the language of Order 22 itself, the note explained that this, in fact, was a very large danger to society and to a democratic government (*Ratchakitchanubeksa* 8 August 2522 [1979], Book 96, Part 135, Pages 1-4).

The assessment in the nullification law of the threats posed by Order 22 is astute. However, I want to call for a much broader and deeper explication and accounting of Order 22. Even the authors of the nullification were aware of the unbridled power given to power and other government officials. What were the specific manifestations of how that unbridled power was abused? In the zone of legal ambiguity created by the order, what did state officials do? At the very least – and far more simple – how many people were detained and for how long in each province?

Despite my stated desire to address the omissions and silences marking the histories of Order 22, my work here has raised many more questions than I have answered. Over the nearly three years that it was in force between October 1976 and August 1979, Order 22 provided for the arbitrary detention and re-education of an as yet uncounted number of people deemed a "danger to society." Once deemed a "danger to society," individuals were urged to "return" to the Thai nation. Yet given that this return was premised on first being recognized as possessing thought or actions that were a direct threat to the nation, this return was at once demanded and impossible.

Accessing information about detentions was complicated further by the explicit decentralization written into the administration of the order. Outside of Bangkok, provincial governors were given complete power regarding detentions and the designation of re-education center sites. Against the absence in Bangkok-based newspapers and human rights reports of analysis of Order 22 outside of Bangkok, here I have drawn on oral history, memory books, local newspapers, and a government document to examine detentions in Chiang Mai at the Karunyathep Center.

Unlike the temporary centers designated by the Ministry of the Interior or the widely-publicized five planned re-education centers to be operated by the Department of Corrections, the Karunyathep Center was operated by the Internal Security

Operations Command (ISOC), Thailand's counterinsurgency coordinating agency. While my interviews with former detainees corroborated a government account of the center as a place where people were not mistreated, at the edges of the accounts of former detainees were references to other kinds of violence. In particular, concerns about disappearance, unlimited detention, and torture were raised.

These practices, of course, are not mentioned in the text of Order 22. Yet many accounts indicate that they existed side-by-side with the arbitrary detention and re-education legitimated and even encouraged by the government during the period of time Order 22 was in force.[71] In this sense, I suggest that the legal and administrative ambiguities of Order 22 must be read as a red flag indicating a need to explore other possible, simultaneous violences. If anything, what I have made clear is that as soon as one, however partially, investigates one historiographic absence, another appears.

[71] I am currently working on a separate project about arbitrary detention, torture, and disappearance from the Sarit era to the present in Thailand. The CGRS documented a range of abuses which occurred during the 1976-1979 period. For example, in Surat Thani province in May 1977, a name named Sumrerng Thani-ruth, who was preparing to ordain as a Buddhist monk, was arrested without charge by army soldiers. Mr. Sumrerng was at Wat Baan Song at the time and his arrest was witnessed by monks at the temple. A few days later, his father found his dead body in a jute sack in a neighboring district. CGRS noted that, "the evidence implied that Mr. Sumrerng was stuffed in a sack and drowned to death by a military group" (1977b: 59). Given that Mr. Sumrerng had last been seen in the company of army soldiers, their conclusion is plausible. Yet there was and remains no confirmation of who was behind his death. In another case, two men, Mr. Prapunth Kaewkra-jang and Mr. Wek Surakumhaeng were arrested "without warrants and without certain charges" in Hat Yai in mid-January 1977. A day after their arrest, their families went to the police station to inquire after them. The police told their relatives that they had already been released. Yet, despite their supposed release, neither had returned home. Their relatives found this surprising, as Mr. Prapunth's wife was very sick and he was very concerned about her. A few days later, on 22 January, their bodies were found in a canal (CGRS 1977b: 64). Again, in this case there was no concrete evidence linking specific police officers to the deaths of the two men, but the fact that the last time they were seen after being arrested was as corpses raises a question of how the police could not be involved.

CONCLUSION
WHAT REMAINS UNSPEAKABLE

The initial question with which I began this dissertation was guided by a concern with silences around recent histories of progressive struggle and repression in Thailand. If, as Thongchai Winichakul has powerfully argued, the 6 October 1976 massacre of unarmed students at Thammasat University by state and para-state forces is surrounded by silence and ambiguity, what other moments of popular protest and repression remain undiscussed and uncirculated? In particular, how is this silence inflected and operative in relation to struggles undertaken *outside* the capital, and with actors other than students as the protagonists? With this in mind, I chose to site my research in the northern province of Chiang Mai, which has a partially-documented history of rural resistance against both local and Bangkok-based rulers.

I began with an empirical question: *what happened in Chiang Mai during the period between 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976*. Once I began my research, this question was soon joined by a series of questions about the meanings of politics and participation. By taking seriously the experiences and perspectives of marginalized people, in this dissertation I have demonstrated the need for radically reconfigured conceptions of both *politics* and *history*. *Politics* is the rule (or the appearance of rule) by a state and the myriad kinds of resistance to it. But here I argue that *politics* also includes the conversations and actions outside government meeting rooms and sites of protest which make both rule and resistance possible. *Politics* is also the dream of a different, more just future, and the courage to take the risks necessary to build it. Similarly, I call for a conception of *history* which has space for multiple, dissenting stories of the same events, told in different voices by a range of actors.

In order to understand the transformations of the 1973-1976 period, as well as the crushing of the possibility for a different, Thai future represented by the 6 October

1976 massacre and coup, it is necessary to conceive of a multiplicity of sites of political change in excess of the city streets that so readily come to mind. Political change was fomented in rice fields, university classrooms, difficult-to-reach ethnic minority villages, and in civil servant dormitories.[1] Analysis of these sites is not merely an added bonus to our understanding of recent Thai political history – but is essential to it.

With this in mind, I chose to explicate land tenancy struggles and farmer-student solidarity in northern Thailand. By the second half of the twentieth-century, the demand for arable rice-growing land and land rental rates were both increasing in northern Thailand. Tenancy was one of a range of issues taken up by farmers across Thailand following the 14 October 1973 movement. While indebtedness and landlessness were also significant issues, an entrenched landholding elite, very fertile rice-growing land in the Ping River valley, and a history of prior conflict over tenancy made it a particularly contentious issue in Chiang Mai province. The intimacy of tenancy relations, in which many landowners and farmers perceived their relationships as familial rather than simply commercial, intensified this contention.

I began my analysis of land tenancy struggles with the 1950s, in which tenant farmers attempted to secure the decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act for use in Chiang Mai province. Although tenant farmers were unsuccessful in securing relief, I showed how tenancy struggles brought farmers, landlords, and state officials into direct conflict with one another. Landlords fought to defend their share of the rice harvest, as well as their position and image in a disintegrating patron-client system. Tenancy struggles represent a unique confluence of materiality and politics. James

[1] In 1974, student activists from Bangkok and Chiang Mai built the first school in a Karen village in Mae Chaem district, Chiang Mai province. Thirty years later, at a CPT reunion held in the original school building in the same village, the villagers remembered the arrival of the students to build the school, and the work they did together to pressure the Ministry of Education to provide a teacher (Notes, 16 May 2005, Mae Chaem).

Scott (1972) has argued that in tenancy struggles, material survival becomes political. Giles Ji Unghakorn (2006) characterizes late twentieth-century Thai farmers' struggles as *not* revolutionary because they are the politicization of the material. In this dissertation I have argued for a third perspective on the intersection of the material and the political: tenancy struggles are political because they are material, but they are also transformative, and perhaps even revolutionary, because they are about challenging who has the right and ability to determine material relations.

Following the unsuccessful attempt by farmers to decree the 1950 Land Rent Control Act for use in Chiang Mai, in the remainder of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, Thai state officials were not compelled to address land rent issues in Chiang Mai, and succeeding periods of dictatorship meant that farmers did not launch broader protests. Following the thread of land rent struggles, I then moved to the 1970s, which contained the next significant moment of contention between landlords and farmers. In the aftermath of the 14 October 1973 movement, parallel to the establishment of the national Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT), farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun rekindled the struggle for land rent relief. During mounting protests throughout 1974, they called for the immediate decree of the 1950 Land Rent Control Act, and the drafting of an updated law. They were joined in their struggles by increasingly politicized students.

While students had been working in rural development projects for almost ten years, I argued that their organizing with farmers during the 1973-1976 period was a departure from their earlier work together. Students worked to build solidarity with farmers, and create a shared struggle. This process was a necessarily pedagogical one, as students learned the life-and-death consequences of both injustice and the struggle to combat it. I argued that the collaboration between farmers and students around land rent struggles between 1973 and 1976 was marked by multiple forms of

transgression – or the crossing of boundaries that at once exposed the lines crossed and made return impossible. First, I traced how students and farmers transgressed their origins of class and space in order to become politicized subjects and work together. Largely urban students began to feel at home in rice fields, and largely rural farmers poured into the streets of both Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Students who left university classrooms to work and live with farmers, as Benedict Anderson has noted, appeared as "bourgeois successes who seemed to spit on that success" (1977: 19). Farmers who came out into the Chiang Mai and Bangkok streets in order to protest were out of place, literally. By demanding the passage of the 1974 Land Rent Control Act, and then educating each other about their new rights under it, farmers refused to be silenced and marginalized either by state actors or landowners. By organizing into the progressive, autonomous FFT and bringing their protests from the countryside into the city, they refused isolation as well.

I argued that the possible sum total of farmer and student actions provoked anxiety and concern among landowners. Farmer-student solidarity triggered fears of material loss, as well as presented a more serious challenge to land owners' self-image as beneficent rural patrons. I contended that the combined organizing actions of farmers and students amounted to a transgression of existing rural relations of power that ordered interactions among farmers, landowners, and state officials. Paradoxically, by working within the terms of the system, farmers and students launched a challenge more destabilizing than an attempt to dismantle the system directly.

The three years of organizing and struggle by students and farmers between October 1973 and 1976 represented the imagination and the attempted implementation of a shared, far more just future. While landowners were able to use their influence to override farmers' demands in 1951, the opponents of farmer and student action

resorted to the far more violent strategies of harassment, intimidation and assassination in 1974-1975. I analyzed a string of public, brutal assassinations of farmer leaders in northern Thailand in 1975. I identify the forms of violence which greeted farmer-student organizing as another moment of transgression. The assassinations at once exposed the transformations which had taken place, while simultaneously making return to the status quo impossible. Return was impossible because landlords and farmers were no longer the same subjects.

The life and death of Intha Sribunruang, the northern president and national vice-president of the FFT, in particular, illustrated the public, brutal nature of the assassinations. My analysis also highlighted Intha's courage and insight as an activist and intellectual of the farmers' movement. At every turn in my analysis I have attempted to highlight not only the violence experienced by activists, but also their courage and commitment to making change and building a more just future. In so doing I have chosen to write with hope, and refused a seamless picture of a repressive past.

Thirty years later, the assassins of the farmers have not been identified or prosecuted, although speculation by surviving activists identifies a combination of state, para-state, and elite landowning forces as those behind the assassinations. By considering the varied Thai state responses of denial, inaction, and occasional solidarity following the assassinations of the farmers, I argued that states are necessarily heterogeneous. I traced this heterogeneity to its limit by examining a seemingly bizarre series of police protests following public outcry at state inaction at the height of the assassinations of farmer leaders. Although the police insisted that they only wanted the return of the rule of law, their protests resulted in the vandalism of the prime minister's residence by uniformed police officers. At this moment, the meaning of the *law* in Thailand was both a site and a source of conflict.

Over the next year, progressive activists faced increasing state and para-state repression and many went underground with the CPT or ceased their public activism. The 6 October 1976 massacre at Thammasat University in Bangkok was the culmination of the rising violence. The government of first the National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) and then PM Thanin Kraivichien ushered in by the 6 October 1976 coup attempted to eliminate the many forms of dissent which had blossomed between 1973 and 1976.

In the final chapter, I traced what happened to progressive teachers, students, and others in Chiang Mai who did not flee the city to join the CPT in the jungle following the 6 October 1976 massacre. Specifically, I examined four narratives of detention and re-education under Order 22 of the NARC. While the former Karunyathep Center detainees with whom I spoke with in Chiang Mai did not report torture or other physical mistreatment, each person reported hearing stories of violence which occurred elsewhere. Although the record of human rights violations committed by various Thai state entities following the 6 October 1976 massacre remains incomplete, reports by the CGRS, AI, and various other Thai and international human rights groups indicate that some of those detained under Order 22 and on charges of communism in the late 1970s and early 1980s were beaten or tortured, and in some cases, disappeared.

In one sense, this chapter was a departure from the rest of the dissertation – because many of the farmer and student activists who have been the subjects of this dissertation chose to leave for the jungle to fight with the CPT shortly after 6 October 1976. They were literally unavailable for arrest under Order 22. In another sense, however, the chapter continued the trajectory of questioning what counts as political, for activists and for Thai state actors, and how what is political becomes meaningful and consequential. Similarly, I concluded the chapter by noting the unexplored

questions of violence after 6 October 1976 which exist at the margins of my analysis. This intervention was in line with one of the broad projects guiding this dissertation, which is to trace the stories of struggle and repression which have been marginalized or silenced, politically, socially, or historiographically. I recognize that this project is an infinitely regressive one – there will be no end point whereby one can claim that the story of political and social transformation in the recent Thai past has been completed. There are only partial stories, which invite future analytic work, and prevent full closure. This lack of closure creates both ambivalence and hope.

There is ambivalence because the struggles for justice that I have traced remain incomplete. Yet the stories are also shot through with hope because of the palpable sense of possibility for a different future which former farmer and student activists conveyed to me, and that I hope I have conveyed here. There is also ambivalence because the stories I have traced remain marginal, as evidenced by their lack of public presentation and circulation outside this dissertation and my work. Yet hope is present precisely because I present the stories here, and trace the emergence of work by former activists who have decided to document their struggles as well.

*

By way of provisional conclusion, here I revisit the concerns with silence and what cannot be, or is not, spoken that have been central throughout this dissertation. In order to do this, I address three moments in which something has become unspeakable in present-day Thailand. In so doing, I am informed by Louis Althusser, who explains in the introduction to *For Marx* that his essays are "the documentation of a particular *history*" (1969: 21, emphasis is in original). Yet he also notes that despite their primary focus on interrogating particular forms of Marxian philosophy, "these philosophical essays do not derive from a merely erudite or speculative investigation. They are, *simultaneously*, interventions in a definite conjuncture" (1969: 9, emphasis

is in original). This dissertation is irrevocably marked by the events of the present, and yet my intention has not been to understand the past simply as a context for the present.[2] Instead, I aim to understand how the recent past and present bear on one another, and gather meaning in relation to one another.[3]

In my analysis of the first moment of unspeakability, I trace the establishment of a consciousness-raising "Study Group" for young farmer and environmental activists in northern Thailand in the present moment. As I will show, the Study Group is at once a space for community-building, as well as a space to imagine a more just Thai future. Yet even this special space has constraints. I examine a moment in which the present-day violence in southern Thailand was unrecordable, if not unspeakable, during a Study Group meeting. Then I re-consider the assassinations of FFT leaders by raising a resonant series of assassinations of progressive community activists during PM Thaksin Shinawatra's first term. I trace the life and death of Charoen Wat-aksorn, a leader in the struggle against coal-fired power in Prachuab Khiri Khan province, who was assassinated on 21 June 2004. By offering a logic as to why the two series of assassinations may productively be considered together, I ask how critical analysis might intervene in the violence of assassination, and consider the limits of this analytic intervention. Finally, I examine a reunion of former Communist Party of Thailand comrades in 2005. Remembering the past was only possible with

[2] Following Michael Taussig, I aim to "to stress context not as a secure epistemic nest in which our knowledge-eggs are to be safely hatched, but context as this other sort of connectedness incongruously spanning times and juxtaposing spaces so far apart and different to each other. I want to stress this because I believe that for a long time now the notion of contextualization has been mystified, turned into some sort of talisman such that by 'contextualizing' social relationships and history, as the common appeal would have it, significant mastery over society and history is guaranteed – as if our understandings of social relationships and history, understandings which constitute the fabric of such context, were not themselves fragile intellectual constructs posing as robust realities obvious to our contextualizing gaze" (1992: 44-45).

[3] In Walter Benjamin's terms, I write in the vein of the historical materialist, who "stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead he grasps the **constellation** which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one" (1968: 263, emphasis is added).

the elision of the present during the reunion. I unpack the effects of this elision and what it reveals about how former activists assess their struggles against injustice.

These are only three stories of *many* possible stories of unspeakability. Similarly, the story of farmer-student solidarity and the violent backlash with which it was met in the North in the mid-1970s is only one story among many which remain to be traced and told about the recent past in Thailand. Unspeakability is a form of silence. In her poem, "Cartographies of Silence," Adrienne Rich writes:

> The technology of silence
> The rituals, etiquette
>
> the blurring of terms
> silence not absence
>
> of words or music or even
> raw sounds
>
> Silence can be a plan
> rigorously executed
>
> the blueprint to a life
>
> It is a presence
> it has a history   a form
>
> Do not confuse it
> with any kind of absence (Rich 1978: 17).

Silence is not empty, it is full of meanings, events, and contention. By concluding with an analysis of the conditions and effects of moments of unspeakability, I aim to contribute to historicizing silence, and to showing its forms and actions. Wendy Brown writes that the goal of critique "is to set the times right again by discerning and repairing a tear in justice through practices that are themselves exemplary of the justice that has been rent" (2005: 6). While analytic work cannot hope to name the assassins of activists, stop the violence in southern Thailand, or create pervasive

justice and equality, perhaps what it can do is trace and name the conditions under which these things become unnameable and unspeakable.

"Is the recorder off?"

On a summer research trip to Thailand in 2002, a mutual friend introduced me to C., a nongovernmental organization (NGO) activist and intellectual. In terms of age, C. is situated between my generation and the generation of 1970s farmer and student activists who have been the subjects of this dissertation. When I returned to live in Chiang Mai between December 2003 and August 2005, C. and I met frequently. We spent long afternoons talking about Thai and U.S. politics in the garden of A., a retired professor who, like Ajarn Angun Malik thirty years earlier, leaves his gate and garden open to progressive activists. C. and I always sat in an open gazebo-like *sala* at a table strewn with daily newspapers, empty water bottles and snack papers, and overflowing ashtrays. We mulled over the transformation of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) struggle for land rent control in the 1970s to the present-day struggle of the Northern Farmers' Network (NFN) for land rights. C. and I argued about whether socialism remains a viable option for Thailand today, and if so, how it might come to fruition. In late 2004, members of the NFN joined a trip to Brazil organized by the global farmer network, Via Campesina, to meet members of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), or Landless Rural Workers' Movement. Prior to their departure, C. and I selected and translated parts of two recent English-language books on the MST (Branford and Rocha 2002; Wright and Wolford 2003) into Thai to share with the departing farmers.

C. and I bemoaned U.S. politics and the U.S.-led War on Iraq. In the months leading up to the November 2004 presidential elections, he asked me what I was doing, as a U.S. citizen, to make sure that George W. Bush was defeated. My

response to him was I was doing painfully little, other than making sure that my ballot reached the U.S. by the absentee voter deadline. C. wasn't the only person who urged me to work for the defeat of George W. Bush. Over and over again, Thai and other Southeast Asian activists told me that the most important activist work that I could do at this time was to vote Bush out of office and protest the U.S.-led war in Iraq. The effects of the Bush government's conservative policies are felt globally, and there is a widespread sense that the U.S.-led "War on Terror" has made Muslim people, and other actors who are on the wrong side of state power, more vulnerable worldwide.

When C. organized a series of consciousness-raising and knowledge-sharing weekends in 2004 for young (under thirty) farmer and environmental activists from across the North, he invited me to join. Dubbed the "Study Group" (กลุ่มศึกษา), we gathered quarterly in a building in A.'s compound. Typically, thirty or forty young activists came to Chiang Mai to join each Study Group. The participants came to see their friends and colleagues as much as to join the planned discussions. Most of participants in the Study Group were men; there were never more than five or six women, including me. In A.'s compound, we used an unfurnished, breezy hall and all of us sat on mats on the floor. Even on the hottest days, the high ceilings and well-placed windows kept the space relatively cool.

Each Study Group weekend was organized around a specific topic, and included informal seminars and discussions during the day on Friday and Saturday, coupled with meals and pertinent films on Friday night.[4] One weekend we debated Gramsci and Lenin and their relevance to the Thai context. During another, we listened to older activists talk about how gender and other forms of difference have historically played out in the farmer and Communist movements in Thailand. The

[4] One Friday night we watched the film *Fidel* (2001), about Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, which had recently been dubbed into Thai.

women present, including me, were asked to talk about our experiences, *as women*, in our work and in the Study Group. After the NFN members who went to Brazil with Via Campesina returned, they presented what they learned from the MST to the Study Group.

C. invited experienced activists, professors, and artists to facilitate the discussions. He made digital voice recordings of each discussion, so that those who missed a Study Group weekend could listen to what happened. At first, I was surprised that the facilitators and participants were willing to be recorded. Our discussions frequently turned to the histories of socialism and communism in Thailand. In the Study Group weekend focused on the MST, we talked about if it would be possible for landless farmers in Chiang Mai and Lamphun to launch peaceful land occupations like those successfully used by the MST. While these discussions were speculative, I was surprised that the direct challenge of state or corporate agricultural power could be broached so directly. Part of why everyone present felt free to speak, and have their words recorded, was because we met in a place where no one worried that the walls talked. Similarly, each person in the room had been personally vetted and invited by C. or his colleagues. There was no open call for participation. No one showed up by accident. Therefore, when a topic became unrecordable, if not unspeakable, I was taken by surprise.

On the afternoon of Friday, 30 April, we gathered for the second Study Group weekend of 2004. The April hot season meant that it was blindingly bright outside, and we all sprawled across the floor inside the well-ventilated hall. We quickly ate the bags of cut fruit we brought to share, before the April heat rendered it rancid. The afternoon began with a lecture by a CMU professor on the Narodniks and early Leninism in Russia. Emergent as feudalism was ending in Russia in the late nineteenth century, Narodism was an anti-monarchical movement that aimed to preserve Russian

peasant culture in order to prevent the onslaught of capitalism.[5] The Narodniks themselves were not peasants, but largely middle and upper-class citydwellers who idealized peasants and rural life. Although Narodism failed to receive mass support, Leninism was defined, at least partially, as a critique of the nostalgia of Narodism.

The facilitator then compared Narodism to the present-day local wisdom (ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น) movement in Thailand.[6] As it relates to the NFN, the preservation of local wisdom is often used as an argument to preserve forest communities under threat of displacement by the Thai state. If the communities are uprooted, their knowledge about local species and natural medicine will be destroyed. The facilitator's concern was that while the local wisdom movement may seem pragmatic, its nostalgic elements tying rural people to the land forever may ultimately render rural northern people further marginalized. Compounding the problem, he explained, in the current moment, the lack of a Marxian movement in Thailand means that there is no critique of local wisdom, and no serious alternative movement.

The presentation was provocative, and a spirited debate followed. The discussion brought out the histories of different Marxian movements in Thailand. We talked about the current Trotskyite movement in Thailand, Workers' Democracy, and the lack of space for rural people in it. As frequently happens, the question of possibility arose: could people in Thailand today organize themselves into a revolutionary force? How could revolution compete with the acquisition of the latest cell phone?[7]

---

[5] See Lenin (1972), pages 491-534, for more information on Narodism.

[6] An outgrowth of the community culture school of thought (Chatthip 1991), the local wisdom movement valorizes the specialized knowledge present in different communities about culture and tradition, broadly defined. See Lamphun Cultural Center (2548 [2005]) for information on local wisdom in Lamphun province, and Rangsan (2544 [2001]) for an analysis of local wisdom in relation to HIV/AIDS.

[7] Many people recounted stories of villagers using small-enterprise loans secured under the Thai Rak Thai government to buy the newest fancy Motorola and Nokia phones.

As the facilitator was beginning to collect his papers into a folder, there was one final question: what did he think about the situation in southern Thailand, and in particular, the recent massacre at the Krue Se mosque in Pattani province? Following years of increasing unrest, martial law was declared in the three southernmost Thai provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat on 5 January 2004. Rather than ending unrest between militants and state officials, the violence has escalated in the three years following the declaration of martial law.[8] In what has become known as the Krue Se mosque massacre, or simply "Krue Se," on 28 April 2004, only two days before the Study Group meeting, clashes between state forces and Muslim militant men left 106 Muslim men and five members of state forces dead. Despite in-depth reports by the International Crisis Group (2005) and the National Reconciliation Commission (2006), many details of the attacks remain unclear.[9] What is clear is that while the militants did launch initial attacks on state forces in some locations, there were out-numbered and out-armed. Many of the militants were armed only with machetes, while the army soldiers were well-equipped with automatic weapons, grenades, and other hardware. Although the largest number of people were killed at Krue Se mosque (thirty-two men), there was fighting between Muslim men and Thai army forces in various locations in the South, including Saba Yoi district in Songkhla province and Krong Pinang district in Yala province.

---

[8] According to the report of the National Reconciliation Commission, "Over the course of 11 years, from 1993 to 2003, a total of 748 violent incidents occurred in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (including Songkhla and Satun) at certain times), an average of 68 incidents per year. However, in 2004 and 2005 the frequency of such violent incidents escalated at an alarming rate: there were 1,843 and 1,703 violent incidents in 2004 and 2005 respectively, a total of 3,546 incidents in the two years combined. These occurrences resulted in 1,175 deaths and 1,765 injuries. On average, there were 1,773 violent incidents per year over the last two years, or 148 per month. It may be said that the frequency of incidents between 2004-2005 increased 26-fold compared to the number of violent incidents during the previous 11 years" (NRC 2006: 9).

[9] There is an excellent series of commentaries on the Krue Se mosque massacre, as well as details about many of those who died, in *Fa Dieu Kan* 2.3 (July – September 2547 [2004]).

One day after the massacre, PM Thaksin Shinawatra commented "There is nothing to be afraid of. These are drug addicts" (quoted in ICG 2005: 26). PM Thaksin's words reflected a chilling lack of respect for human life and signaled the deepening crisis within the central government with respect to violence in southern Thailand. By late 2006, no one within the Thai army had yet been held accountable for the deaths at Krue Se and other locations on 28 April 2004 (*Charged! Updates from Southern Thailand* December 2006: 3).

Upon hearing the question about what he thought about the massacre, the facilitator paused. A few moments the room had been animated with comparisons between Russia and Thailand and between the Narodniks and the local wisdom movement. Now everyone grew very quiet. Then the facilitator spoke, and said, "Is the recorder off? Can you turn the recorder off?" Over the next few minutes he offered his critique of the attacks. For two hours, he had spoken about the development of socialist thought and practice in Russia and Thailand, and its possible resurgent futures with no concern for the recorder. Yet he could not take the risk that someone might listen to his thoughts on the violence in southern Thailand.

Resurgent assassination

In the wake of the Asian economic crisis and supported by the provisions of the 1997 "Peoples'" Constitution, communities across Thailand began organizing to protect themselves from the environmental, health and other negative effects of development, privatization, and other capital-intensive projects. However, under the Thai Rak Thai government of PM Thaksin Shinawatra, individuals active in these struggles became the targets of violence. Under PM Thaksin's first government (January 2001 – January 2005), seventeen activists were assassinated and one was

disappeared (*Fa Dieu Kan* editorial collective 2547 [2004]; Haberkorn 2005).[10] The assassinations took place across the country and included women and men, village leaders, students, and lawyers. Some of their work included opposing rock quarries, fighting for community access to forests, and defending southern Thai Muslims accused of being "terrorists." In some cases, either state or private interests were targeted by their actions. However, in the majority of cases it was a combination of both. These assassinations have been attributed to an unspecified group of "influential figures" (ผู้มีอิทธิพล). For example, Chaweewan Pueksungnoen was a community activist in Nakhon Ratchasima who was shot and killed on 21 June 2001. Prior to her assassination, influential figures demanded that she cease her opposition to a local construction project (Fa Dieu Kan editorial collective 2547 [2004]: 53-54). Supol Sirijant, who defended a community forest in Lamphun against illegal logging, was shot and killed on 11 August 2004. Influential figures allegedly protected the poachers whom his activism exposed (Fa Dieu Kan editorial collective 2547 [2004]: 84-85).

Influence (อิทธิพล) is not a new phenomenon in Thai society.[11] In Chapter Five, I examined a series of assassinations of progressive, left-leaning farmer leaders. At the height of the assassinations, between March 1975 and August 1975, twenty-one FFT leaders were killed (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 226). In the northern province of Chiang Mai eight FFT leaders were assassinated in the two months between June

---

[10] Assassination of activists was not the only persistent human rights violation emergent under PM Thaksin. In addition, in 2003, over 2500 alleged drug offenders were extrajudicially killed in the so-called "War on Drugs" (see HRW 2004 for more information on the "War on Drugs"). In addition, the Krue Se mosque massacre, discussed above, also occurred during PM Thaksin's first term.

[11] Yoshifumi Tamada's (1991) study of authority and legitimacy in Thai politics offers a productive analysis of influence. Tamada identifies *power* as official authority derived from the letter of the law (1991: 455). Influence, on the other hand, is authority without an official and legal position, and often beyond it (Tamada 1991: 455). Writing in 1991, Tamada's critical intervention is to express concern about the possibilities of democratization in Thailand. In his view, the relationships between those with *power* inside the state bureaucracy and those with *influence* outside it, largely in the business community, were stable and mutually beneficial (Tamada 1991: 465).

and August 1975 alone (Bowie 1997: 155). I traced the struggles of Intha Sribunruang, the northern president and the national vice-president of the FFT, who was assassinated on 30 July 1975. The assassinations of farmers were committed openly and seemingly without fear of consequence. In line with this pattern, Intha was shot in broad daylight in front of his house in Saraphi district in Chiang Mai. Although many suspected that right-wing para-state elements may have been responsible for the assassinations, only in one case, that of Intha, was a suspect arrested, and he was later released. Thirty years have passed since the string of assassinations, and the assassins remain unnamed. In the case of the assassinations under PM Thaksin, while gunmen have been prosecuted in some cases, the families and colleagues of many of the assassinated believe that the forces behind the assassinations remain at large.

In 2004 and 2005, as I was conducting research on the assassinations of FFT in the 1970s, the assassinations of activists were mounting again. With Thai human rights colleagues, I became involved in documenting and disseminating information about the present-day assassinations. As I researched the 1970s by day, and was an activist against the assassinations in the present by night, I was struck by the similarities between the two series of assassinations. Here I suggest that the resonances between the two series of assassinations provoke, and perhaps demand, comparison. I undertake this comparison by examining the life and death of Charoen Wat-aksorn, an activist who fought against coal-fired power who was assassinated on 21 June 2004, twenty-nine years after Intha Sribunruang was assassinated.

*

In the early 1990s, a power consortium comprised of Gulf Electric, a Thai company, and the international arm of Edison Power, a California-based company, began working to build two coal-fired power plants in Prachuab Khiri Khan province.

Prachuab Khiri Khan is located approximately 280 kilometers south of Bangkok on the coast of the Gulf of Thailand. While the proponents of the proposed plants claimed that they would produce a large amount of electricity, critics argued that the electricity would come at the price of full-scale environmental and community degradation and destruction in Bo Nok and Ban Krut, the two sites of proposed plants.[12] In addition, the proposed plant in Bo Nok was slated to be built on public land, which was going to be leased under questionable circumstances.

In 1997, villagers in Bo Nok formalized their opposition and formed an organization, Love Bo Nok. After the first president was elected to a village leadership position, Charoen Wat-aksorn became the second president of Love Bo Nok. Charoen was born in Khao Lak in 1967 and moved to Bo Nok as a teenager. In 1997 he had recently returned to Bo Nok after living in Bangkok for a few years and trying to make a living by selling soy milk (Sixth October Thirtieth Anniversary Committee 2549 [2006]: 22).

The struggle reached a crescendo on 8 December 1998. Villagers opposing the power plant were waiting to present a petition to the prime minister, Chuan Leekpai. However, neither PM Chuan nor his office responded to their request for a meeting.

---

[12] According to *Edison Out: The Struggle to Stop Coal Fired Power Plants in Bo Nok and Ban Krut, Thailand*, an April 2002 report written by Greenpeace in collaboration with local groups in Bo Nok and Ban Krut, the proposed plant in Bo Nok would have an electricity-generating capacity of 734 megawatts. The plant would cover an area of 162 hectares of coastal land. The owner of the plant was an entity called Gulf Power Generation Company, comprised of Gulf Electric Company (60%) and Edison Mission Energy (40%) (Greenpeace 2002a). The area of the gulf near Bo Nok is home to whales, dolphins, and more than 190 species of fish. The marine ecosystem would be affected both by the turbines of the plant which could trap large numbers of small fish as well as the hot water the plant would pump into the ocean, altering the ecosystem. Fishermen would be affected by the dumping of ash and other waste into the ocean and nearby canal areas. Other potential impacts cited by Greenpeace included climate change, the destruction of wetlands located close to the power plant, and most importantly, threats to the community, livelihood and health of residents of Bo Nok. See the full text of *Edison Out* for detailed information about the activities and composition of Edison Mission Energy and their parent company, Edison International. Here I will note that in addition to building power plants, Edison Mission Energy has significant coal concerns in Indonesia and Australia. Both Thai and English versions of the report can be found online at http://www.cleanenergynow.org/cleanenergynow/edison_out.html.

In response, the villagers filled the highway linking southern Thailand, including Prachuab Khiri Khan, with Bangkok. They blocked the road as a protest against the proposed plants (Greenpeace 2002a: 4). The police attempted to force the villagers to disperse. Anan Pongpattanasakul, one of Charoen's colleagues from Love Bo Nok, recalled at Charoen's funeral that Charoen told the people that they did not have to run away from the police – it was their right to stay to fight against the coal plant. The villagers stayed and eventually the police retreated. Anan cited this as a turning point that encouraged the villagers to keep fighting. Referring to Charoen, Anan also noted that "He and I received threats on our lives from the beginning of the struggle. Every time we had an event we heard gunshots near our houses. When we went to tell the police, they never took action or looked into the matter" (*Khao Sod* 5 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 12).

In 1999, Charoen ceased his paid work of selling pineapples and began working full-time as the leader of the fight against the power plant with Krarok, his wife and partner in struggle (Sixth October Thirtieth Anniversary Committee 2549 [2006]: 22). As the struggle grew, Love Bo Nok built links with Greenpeace Southeast Asia, and many Thai NGOs and grassroots organizations, including the Midnight University, an alternative university of progressive academics in Thailand.[13] Although Edison Power and Gulf Electric acted to defend their interests, and supporters of the project in Prachuab Khiri Khan organized pro-power plant actions, the protests were gathering force.[14]

---

[13] One of the activities of the Midnight University was the awarding of honorary doctorates to Bo Nok activists in October 2001. See http://www.midnightuniv.org/midnight2545/newpage3.html for a collection of news articles about the graduation ceremony. Charoen Wat-aksorn was one of the activists awarded a doctorate, and he said: "The honorary doctorate made me proud of what we have been doing. Our fight to protect our natural resources and community is on the right track" (*The Nation* 23 October 2001: 3).

[14] The growing struggle and dissent about the power plants forced Edison to take out ads supporting itself and in September 1999 the first public hearings were held on the proposed plant (Greenpeace 2002a: 4). On 29 October 2001, 500 "pro-power plant" villagers rallied at Government House in support of the project with financial support from Gulf Power (*The Nation* 30 October 2001: 3).

Amid rising tensions, newly-elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra himself visited Bo Nok on 24 January 2002. He was met by thousands of protestors and promised a decision on the proposed plant by Songkhran, or Thai Buddhist New Year, in mid-April (Greenpeace 2002a: 4). In October 2002, the Thai government announced that construction on the plant was postponed until 2007 (Greenpeace 2002b: n.p.). By 2003, the decision was made to move the proposed project to another province, Saraburi (*Matichon* 11 July 2547 [2004]: 13).[15]

One of the groups who lost most significantly when the proposed power plant was moved to Saraburi were local business, state, and other actors in Prachuab Khiri Khan. As intermediaries between Gulf Power, Edison Power, and the communities in Bo Nok and Ban Krut, they stood to profit handsomely. Once the proposed power plant moved, their opportunities for profit disappeared. This set of interests, known as the local "influential figures," quickly adapted to the changed circumstances and began using the proposed site of the plant – which was on publicly-held land – for large-scale shrimp farming.

On 23 July 2003, the individuals behind the shrimp farming asked for the title to the public land. Almost a year later, on 9 April 2004, the Provincial Land Office in Prachuab Khiri Khan issued a title (*Matichon* 8 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 14). Concerned with the effects of shrimp factory farming on the ecology of the area, and of public land being appropriated for private commercial use, members of Love Bo Nok, led again by Charoen Wat-aksorn, began protesting (*Matichon* 2 July 2547 [2004]: 2). Clearly stating what was at stake, one description of Charoen's work notes that he "investigated and publicized how investors, civil servants, and influential figures

[15] Although the government perhaps hoped to outrun the activists by moving the proposed plant to Saraburi, they failed. The struggle now is continuing in Saraburi (Author interview with Saraburi anti-power plant activist, Bangkok, 5 October 2006).

cooperated in order to appropriate public, ocean-front land for their own interests" (Fa Dieu Kan editorial collective 2547 [2004]: 82).[16]

On Monday, 21 June 2004, Charoen went with Choi Tanworatham, the sub-district head of Bo Nok, to Bangkok to appear before the Senate panel on Social Development and Human Security. After testifying before the Senate regarding encroachment and the issuance of false land-title deeds on publicly-held land, Charoen returned to Bo Nok. As Charoen alighted the bus at 9:30 p.m., he was shot more than ten times. He was thirty-seven years old. His assassins did not cover their faces and were reported by witnesses to be calm after killing him (*Matichon* 11 July 2547 [2004]: 13).

Two days after Charoen was murdered, the land title deed was revoked. On 30 June 2004, nine senators came to talk to local land officials and to visit the plot of land in question. When the senators arrived at the plot, the shrimp farmers did not stop their work. One reporter quoted a Bo Nok villager as saying "'You can see how 'big' these people are,' …. 'They don't have to worry even though they know that many authorities have come'" (*Bangkok Post* 8 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 3). The senators concluded that those using the public land for shrimp faming were doing so illegally because the land was clearly public; likewise, the initial issuance of the land title was illegal (*Matichon* 3 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 14). In the weeks following Charoen's assassination, many commentators referred to the roles of so-called influential figures, but never named them directly.[17]

---

[16] "ด้วยการเปิดโปงการฉ้อฉลที่ร่วมมือกันระหว่างนายทุน ข้าราชการ และผู้มีอิทธิพลในการฮุบที่สาธารณะริมทะเล"

[17] One reporter suggested that Charoen's death resulted from his challenge to capitalists and influential figures, including local and national politicians, who backed the power plant and shrimp farming (*Matichon* 11 July 2547 [2004]: 13). This was echoed in another article, which cited a large group of influential figures as those behind Charoen's death (*Post Today* 30 June 2547 [2004]: 1).

In the aftermath of Charoen Wat-aksorn's death, PM Thaksin himself noted that there are influential figures operating across the country – even civil servants – even police (*Phuchadkan Raiwan* 2 July 2547 [2004]: 14, 15). Even the police admitted that in the seventh police region, which includes Bo Nok, there is an extraordinarily large number of assassins for hire, as well as influential figures behind them (*Phuchadkan Raiwan* 5 July 2547 [2004]: 14, 15). Krarok, Charoen's wife and colleague, commented that witnesses were afraid to go to local police because they feared that they would be treated unfairly or that there might be influential figures behind the police (*Phuchadkan Raiwan* 30 June 2547 [2004]: 1).

Even within this atmosphere, however, by 1 July 2004, the two assassins, Saneh Lekluan and Prachuab Hinkaew, were arrested and confessed to shooting Charoen (*Bangkok Post* 30 June 2004: 1; *Phuchadkan Raiwan* 2 July 2547 [2004]: 14, 15). On 4 July 2004, the people of Bo Nok issued a statement praising the arrests and confessions of the two gunmen. But they noted, the two hired guns "are only one small quarter of the 'real murderers' who still remain in the dark shadows. What we want is for the police to pull them in by their necks and punish the 'masterminds'" (*Khao Sod* 5 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 12).[18] A few days later, three more individuals: Jeu Hinkaew, Manoj Hinkaew, and Thanu Hinkaew were arrested, but were all released on bail. They were believed to be involved in planning the assassination (*Matichon* 9 July 2547 [2004]: 1, 16). Many people anxiously awaited the trial – thinking that perhaps this might be an opportunity to hold those with influence accountable.

---

[18] "เพียงส่วนเสี้ยวเล็กๆ ของกลุ่ม "ฆาตรกรตัวจริง" ที่ยังอยู่ในเงามืดเท่านั้น สิ่งที่ตองการมากกว่าคือ การที่ตำรวจสามารถลากขอ "ผู้บงการทั้งหมด" มาลงโทษ ซึ่งในเรื่องนี้ ทางตำรวจได้ให้คำมั่นสัญญาว่าจะสืบสาวเอาตัวผู้บงการทั้งขบวนมาลงโทษให้ได้ โดยขอให้ตำรวจตั้งใจทำงานต่างๆให้ประสบความสสำเร็จตามคำสัญญาที่ให้ไว้และขอให้พี่น้องติดตามการทำงานของเจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจอย่างใกล้ชิด"

However, the Thai judicial system moves at a snail's pace, and by early 2006, the testimonies of witnesses had yet to be heard in court. Then, the two key witnesses, the gunmen Saneh Lekluan and Prachuab Hinkaew, mysteriously died in jail. Prachuab died on 21 March 2006 due to a bacterial infection. Saneh died on 3 August 2006, reportedly from blood circulation complications due to malaria. Oddly, the director of the prison noted on 9 September that Saneh had not shown symptoms of malaria before his death due to complications of it. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), the families of the two men did not think that they would make it out of jail alive. Lawyers for the case are concerned that with the deaths of Saneh and Prachuab, it will be very difficult to implicate the three other suspects in the case, suspected to be the masterminds (AHRC 2006: n.p.).[19]

*

Although thirty years and a dramatically different political landscape separate the assassinations of FFT leaders and the assassinations of activists under PM Thaksin, there is a marked resonance between them. In both moments, the assassinations have been public, brutal, and remain largely unsolved. In both moments, the seeming intention is to silence dissenting voices that pose a direct threat to material interests, and also, by assuming the pose of critic, the ruling order. In both periods, there is a culture of impunity in which it is possible for those with power to kill their opponents without fear of censure or punishment.

Most troubling to me, in both cases, the assassinations are attributed to an unnamed, and perhaps unnameable, group of actors. In both cases, these unnameable entities are comprised of both state and non-state actors. While many believe that the

[19] The sister organization of the Asian Human Rights Commission, the Asian Legal Resource Center, has expressed grave concerns about the safety of witnesses in Thailand. See the special issue of *article 2* devoted to this topic: volume 5, number 3, published in June 2006 and available online at http://www.article2.org.

right-wing Nawaphon were behind the assassination of Intha in July 1975, there are still no signs that members of the Nawaphon, or other actors, will be held responsible for his death. In the case of the June 2004 assassination of Charoen Wat-aksorn, the concerted action of his fellow activists resulted in the arrest not only of the two gunmen, but also three other individuals believed to be the masterminds behind the assassination. The death of the two gunmen in prison under suspicious conditions in 2006, however, means that marshalling enough evidence to bring the suspected masterminds to justice will be difficult. In both periods of assassinations, many questions about the actions, and inactions, of various parts of the Thai state remain unanswered.

I argue that the persistent unnameability of the assassins effects a repetition of the original violence of assassination. The assassins remain at large. The failure to hold anyone accountable for the assassinations of the FFT leaders means that they remain unresolved. While analytic work cannot name the assassins, what it can do is trace and name the conditions under which they become unnameable. In this case, this means naming and making explicit the struggles undertaken by the assassinated activists, the specific details of their deaths, and what is known about the failure to bring their killers to justice.

By raising the assassination of Charoen Wat-aksorn in 2004 here, as I consider the lingering effects of the assassination of Intha Sribunruang in 1975, I have demonstrated a logic for considering the two series of assassinations together. Here, the often-repeated admonition to study history in order not to repeat it fails. What has happened to the lives of Intha, Charoen and many others will happen again – unless those powerful, influential interests, within states and outside them, can be stopped. Yet, throughout this dissertation, I have not only highlighted the repetition of violence, but also the continuity of struggles for justice. Shortly after Charoen's assassination,

Krarok said: "If you ask the villagers if they are discouraged and frightened, if they are sad – the answer is yes. If you ask the villagers if they will still fight – yes, we must fight" (quoted in Fa Dieu Kan editorial collective 2547 [2004]: 83).[20] What is at stake in remembering the lives and struggles of the assassinated activists is to fan the fires of a possibly just future in the spirit of Walter Benjamin (1968), by wresting the writing of history from those with power, influence, and violence in their hands.[21]

We are only Communists

Following the 6 October 1976 massacre, many FFT and Farmer Project activists in the North fled the cities to join the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Some, like M., as I described in Chapter Seven, left for the jungle directly from the protests at the Chiang Mai provincial building on the morning of 6 October. Many more farmer, student, and other activists from Chiang Mai and other northern provinces left over the next few weeks. The reasons which propelled people to leave the cities were complex and varied. Many fled because they feared that they would be arrested, or worse, in the days following the massacre.[22] Others fled because they were angry at the Thai state. Throughout 1975 and 1976, progressive activists watched as their friends and leaders were gunned down one-by-one. Although there was no concrete proof that Thai state actors had pulled the trigger in any specific

---

[20] "ถามว่าชาวบ้านเสียขวัญไหม เสียใจไหม มันก็เสีย ถามว่าจะยังสู้ต่อไหม มันก็ต้องสู้"

[21] The full text of the fourth thesis is as follows: "The class struggle, which is always present to a historian influenced by Marx, is a fight for the crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist. Nevertheless, it is not in the form of the spoils which fall to the victor that the latter make their presence felt in the class struggle. **They manifest themselves in this struggle as courage, humor, cunning, and fortitude. They have retroactive force and will constantly call into question every victory, past and present, of the rulers.** As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history. A historical materialist must be aware of the most inconspicuous of all transformations" (1968: 254-255, emphasis is added).

[22] The mass arrests in Bangkok on 6 and 7 October and the arrests across the country following the announcement of Order 22 on 13 October 1976 discussed in Chapter Seven indicates that their suspicions were astute.

instance, the failure of the police to bring the killers to justice was seen by many as glaring inaction. The CPT gave them an opportunity to take up arms and fight the state directly. This means that while not all of those who fought under the banner of the CPT agreed with the party's Maoist-Leninist ideological orientation. Some did, but others joined the CPT for more pragmatic reasons.

Over the next few years, students, workers, farmers, teachers and others worked to adapt to life in CPT strongholds in the North, Northeast, and South. Yet a confluence of events, both national and international, including the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December 1978 and the Thai government's increasingly friendly relationship with the Peoples' Republic of China, led to the fragmentation and decline of the CPT by the early 1980s. Many of those who fled to the jungle following 6 October 1976, and survived the years fighting in what amounted to a civil war, began to leave the CPT to return to their former lives.[23] The policies instituted under General Prem Tinsulanonda, who was Prime Minister from 12 March 1980 until 29 April 1988, especially Order 66/23, facilitated the process of return.[24] In the opinion of one U.S. counterinsurgency scholar, underlying Decree 66/23 as well as General Prem's philosophy generally was the idea that "insurgents would not be treated as prisoners, but as those returning to the fold" (Marks 2007: 48).

Following presentation of themselves to a branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the agency responsible for coordinating Thai counterinsurgency efforts, students were permitted to return to their studies.[25] Despite

---

[23] I use the word term "civil war" here because the struggle between the CPT and the Royal Thai Government forces was a war fought between two groups of Thai people who fought in the service of what they believed was a better nation. There were a great number of deaths on both sides. For those who survived, they were marked by years of experiencing and witnessing violence, illness, and the loss of their friends.
[24] Order 66 was issued by the Prime Minister's Office on 23 April 1980. The Order served as a general amnesty to allow those who had joined the CPT to leave the jungle without threat of criminal prosecution. An English translation of the order can be found in *Isis Bulletin* 2.1 (January 1983): 17-20.
[25] Self-presentation to ISOC allowed students' prior education files to be reactivated without penalty. This meant, for example, that a student who left CMU to go the jungle during the middle of his third-

Marks' claim, "returning to the fold," was not a seamless process. Many students were monitored by state officials after returning from the jungle. After M. returned to CMU to complete her degree, ISOC officials from the Karunyathep Center came to see her every few weeks to inquire about her activities. However, returning and completing university meant that many students were able to continue on the path to professionalization and a middle- or upper-class future that their original position within the university was designed to guarantee. When I spoke to L., a former FFT activist, he commented that re-entry to mainstream Thai society was much more difficult for farmers. In addition to facing harassment from ISOC and other officials, farmers had to find a new piece of land that their family could use to grow rice. The shrinking land frontier which contributed to making land rent a crisis in the mid-1970s had not widened in the intervening years. If anything, by the early 1980s, land was scarcer and land policy was less progressive than in the mid-1970s.

In the years since leaving the CPT, the lives of former comrades have followed many different trajectories. While I was conducting research in Chiang Mai I met people who fought under the CPT who are now doctors, dentists, lawyers, pharmacists, NGO workers, teachers, farmers, farmer activists, housewives, civil servants, small business owners, booksellers, organic farming and natural health movement people, political canvassers, writers, artists, musicians, noodle sellers and professors. Many former CPT members now living in Chiang Mai are people who lived or attended school in Chiang Mai before joining the CPT, although many people have left Chiang Mai for other parts of Thailand or the world. While many former comrades have remained actively in touch with one another for political, business, or

---

year of university could return to complete the remaining semesters. Otherwise, re-entering CMU would require that he re-sit for the entrance examinations and begin again. If students did not want to go to ISOC, then they could study at Ramkhamhaeng University, the open university.

personal reasons, 2005 was the first time former comrades in the North gathered collectively *as* CPT members since leaving the jungle over twenty years ago.

As part of the activist history recording project that I discussed in Chapter One, in 2005 former CPT comrades in Chiang Mai organized reunions in the areas where they had been active. The reunions were intended as commemorations to honor the lives of those who died, and as an opportunity to record the histories of struggle in the North. The reunions drew people who had remained in the North, relatively close by, as well as former comrades who now lived in the Northeast, South, and Bangkok. In May 2005, a month after the commemoration of Nisit Jirasophon's life, I went to the first two reunions in Chiang Mai province, which were held in villages which had been under the control of the CPT. Here I relay what happened during one of the reunions, to trace another story of what is unnameable in the present moment in Thailand.

At 6 a.m. on a Saturday morning I met M. and S., another former CMU student and Farmer Project activist at Suan Anya. After eating breakfast of sticky rice and *sai oua* (northern sausage), we piled into S.'s truck for the three-hour drive to the village near Fang hosting the reunion. The drive took longer than expected because it had been raining heavily and the roads had turned to mud. As S. parked her truck, other trucks and SUVs pulled in behind us. Without knowing, for the last few miles, we had been a caravan of former Communists. One group had driven all night from Bangkok. Many people had not seen each other for a long time, and immediately began laughing and hugging one another. A few hundred yards away, the villagers saw our arrival and walked over to greet us. Including the villagers and returning comrades who joined the reunion, there were between sixty and seventy people present at different points during the weekend.

As we walked to the cluster of wood, bamboo, and thatch houses which comprised the village, the rain became heavier. When we reached the house where the events were being held, we were quickly ushered inside. The first part of the reunion was a Buddhist merit-making ceremony for the CPT comrades who were killed or died from disease in this area. It was already a little after 10 a.m., and we began right away so that the monks leading the ceremony could eat lunch before beginning to fast at noon.

I sat at the edge of the room with my hands pushed together in a wai. I listened to the Pali chants to end the suffering and speed the rebirth of the dead that comprise the ceremony. Five monks led the chanting. The most senior monk was a former student activist who fought with the CPT as well. Enlarged, framed photographs of those who died were garlanded with flowers and placed at the front of the room. The framed images were those of teenagers and young adults. If they had survived, they would be in the late forties or fifties, like most of the people crowded into the main room of the house. After the chanting was completed, the senior monk explained that when he was young he worked for the "Communist corporation" (บริษัทคอมมิวนิสต์), but now he works for the "Buddhist corporation" (บริษัทพุทธศาสนา). The hours and ideology were more flexible, he said.

There wasn't enough space for everyone to eat lunch inside at the same time, so after the ceremony I joined the group of people who went outside. I had interviewed a lot of the former student and farmer activists present in the preceding year and a half, and I knew others from the Nisit Jirasophon event the prior month. D., a former student activist who fought with the CPT in the South but now lived in Chiang Mai, came over and offered me a lychee. It was the middle of lychee season, and when I looked around I realized that the trees around the house were dripping with ripe, pinkish-red fruits. D. and I stood outside, peeling and eating the fruits, and

tossing the skins into a giant pile of compost next to the house. F., who was a leader in the FFT in the 1970s before joining the CPT after an assassination attempt on his life, smiled and said, "Na, Comrade United States, you don't have lychee in your country, do you?"[26] I answered that yes, sometimes they could be bought in Ithaca, but only dried or canned. F. was the only person who called me "Comrade United States" (สหายสหรัฐ). He liked to remind me that for him, I came from the country that was synonymous with twentieth-century imperialism. That weekend I was given the name "Young Comrade Who Comes Later" (สหายน้องล้า), and most people called me "Comrade Malee" (สหายมาลี). "Malee" was the nickname given to me by a coworker at the CMU Women's Studies Center in 1999, and I have used it in Thailand ever since.

The first round of people to eat lunch were coming outside, so D. and I went inside to eat the rice and pork and curries made by the women in the village for the reunion participants. As we went inside, preparation for the retelling and recording part of the reunion began. A corrugated iron overhang extended for a few meters in front of the house, creating a dry space out of the still intermittent rain. One of the former CPT comrades present had a friend who owned an electronics shop, and he borrowed a truckload of audio and video equipment for the weekend. A group of male former comrades unloaded the equipment and arranged plastic chairs borrowed from the local temple under the overhang.

After eating, D. and I went back outside and sat down under the overhang. V., a former student, Farmer Project and CPT activist, was the moderator for the afternoon. He began by formally welcoming everyone and giving an introduction to the activist history recording project. This reunion was the first of many that would be held throughout 2005 and 2006, he explained. A group of former student activists in Chiang Mai decided to organize the project because they were concerned that the

---

[26] "น่ะ สหายสหรัฐ บ้านน้องก็ไม่มีลิ้นจี่ใช่ไหม"

stories of the struggles for justice and change that they participated in would be forgotten and lost. Before turning the microphone over to M., who was going to speak further about how the recordings would be preserved and how the information recorded would be disseminated, V. offered this statement to everyone: "Na, today we are not from Thai Rak Thai, Democrat, or Masses Party. Today, we are only Communists."[27]

More than anything else said during that reunion or the next, most of which I frantically wrote in my notebook, I have puzzled over the phrase "We are only Communists." V. repeated the phrase, "We are all only Communists," a few times throughout the afternoon, as people spoke about how they came to consciousness about injustice, about escaping assassination by sleeping in a different house every night before going underground, and about the theoretical training they received with the CPT. The phrase seemed to make an impossible demand. No one present had been a Communist, at least not in an active sense, for over twenty years. Yet perhaps the statement was meant not as a statement of fact, but as a performative statement. Perhaps the statement was meant to actively repress the divisions which had grown to separate those present in the years since they all left the CPT. V. himself was a canvasser for one of the three parties he listed, and canvassers for the other two parties were present as well.[28] Initially, I thought that his statement was intended to put aside any tensions remaining since the contentious February 2005 elections.[29] Electoral

---

[27] "น่ะ วันนี้เราไม่ใช่มาจากไทยรักไทย หรือ ประชาธิปัตย์ หรือ มวลชน วันนี้เราเป็นแต่คอมมิวนิสต์"

[28] M. explained to me that many former CPT comrades, mostly those who had been students, became involved in professional electoral politics. Their years fighting alongside the farmers meant that they had the special skills needed to reach the much sought after rural vote. For former students who needed jobs, it was a way that they could make a living and hang out with their former comrades.

[29] During the February 2005 elections, Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai party secured 375 of the total 500 parliament seats amid widespread questions about voting irregularities and election tampering. On 9 March 2005, Thaksin Shinawatra was officially voted into the office of prime minister by Parliament. The number of votes secured by Thai Rak Thai made Thailand a on-party government, raising concerns that the government was tantamount to a parliamentary dictatorship.

politics tend to be a profitable, violent business in Thailand – and the recent elections had been no exception.[30] Perhaps V. wanted to suggest that today everyone was only a Communist because everyone was in a different political party and the reunion shouldn't be a space for political disagreement.

Yet there is another possible reading of this statement that I want to suggest. You will have noticed that throughout this dissertation I identified people by what they were doing in the 1970s, rather than in the present. When I began writing this dissertation, I made the decision *not* to write about how various progressive activists active in the 1970s have chosen to live their lives. While some scholars have bemoaned the former student activists who have joined Thaksin Shinawatra and Thai Rak Thai (See Giles 2006, for example), I was not interested in doing so. I didn't think that it was my place to critique or laud people's life decisions.

As I reflected on the statement "We are all only Communists," I realized that I wasn't alone in my decision to sidestep a discussion of the differences which have arisen in the intervening thirty years between the 1970s and the present. Perhaps V.'s statement was also an attempt to elide or silence the very apparent material differences among the former CPT comrades at the reunion. If "We are all only Communists," then the foreign-made leather sandals worn by one comrade did not stand out in the pile of plastic flip-flops next to the door of the house. If "We are all only Communists," then the dentists present did not have to see that some of the people they fought beside have only a few teeth left at age fifty. The doctors did not have to notice the aging farmer activist whose brown eyes have turned a murky blue from cataracts. The lawyers did not have to ask about the land disputes in Chiang Mai and Lamphun, or offer to do pro bono work with the farmers.

---

[30] See Ockey (1994, 2000, 2003, 2004a, 2004b) for critical analysis of Thai electoral politics.

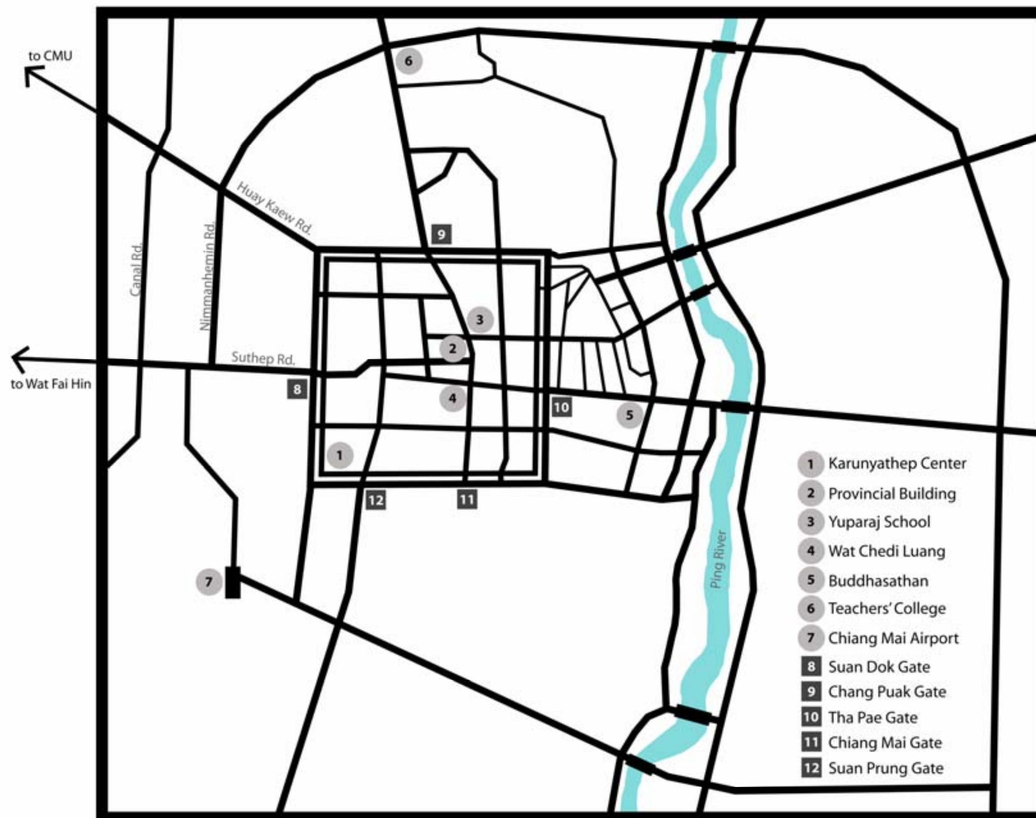
Although not exclusively, material difference is largely divided along former student activist/former farmer activist lines. This is not surprising. As I argued earlier in this dissertation, students who left the classrooms to organize with the farmers transgressed their possible class futures. Their transgression continued throughout their years in the CPT. Order 66/23, which permitted return ended their transgression. Students were permitted to return to their pre-CPT course of study, as long as they promised allegiance to the Thai nation.

By not speaking about the emergent, or perhaps resurgent, differences, the former farmer, student and CPT activists also avoided speaking about their failure to create a more just Thai society. The desire for this future society was behind their risky transgressive actions together. Throughout the reunion, the reasons why the CPT failed to capture state power were raised, critiqued, and even laughed about at times. But the gross material differences among former comrades could not be spoken. The sheer lack of access to basic healthcare for some could not be addressed. The different education and career opportunities available to former farmer and student activists could not be spoken. These differences reflected enduring injustice – injustice reminiscent of the injustice of the 1950s and 1970s which I have written about here. These material differences marked a failure at once more personal, and political, than the failure to capture state power. "We are all only Communists," but only until Monday dawns again.

APPENDIX A
MAP OF CHIANG MAI, THAILAND, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Source: Nij Tontisirin

APPENDIX B
CHIANG MAI CITY STREET MAP



Source: Nij Tontisirin

APPENDIX C
FARMERS' FEDERATION OF THAILAND (FFT) LEADERS VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENCE, 1974- 1979[1]

1. **Sanit Sridej** (นายสนิท ศรีเดช)
   Farmer representative
   Phitsanulok province
   Shot and killed on 31 March 1974

2. **Methha (Luan) Lao-udom** (นายเมตตา [ล้วน] เหล่าอุดม)
   Farmer representative
   Bang La Mung district, Chonburi province
   Shot and killed on 11 August 1974

3. **Bunthing Srirat** (นายบุญทิ้ง ศรีรัตน์)
   Farmer representative
   Shot and killed in October 1974

4. **Bunma Somprasit** (นายบุญมา สมประสิทธิ์)
   FFT committee member
   Ang Thong province
   Shot and killed in February 1975

5. **Hieng Limmak** (นายเฮียง ลิ้มมาก)
   Farmer representative
   Surin province
   Shot and killed on 5 April 1975

6. **Aaj Thongtho** (นายอาจ ธงโท)
   FFT committee member
   Baan Ton Thong district, Lamphun province
   Shot and killed on 10 April 1975

7. **Prasert Chomomret** (นายประเสริจ โแมอมฤต)
   FFT village president
   Hang Dong district, Chiang Mai province

[1] Although this list has been published multiple times in Thai since the 1970s, this Appendix is the first compilation of known information in English. The information in this appendix is drawn from Nitirat (2542 [1999]), pages 155-160, and Kanoksak (2530 [1987), pages 161-166. My suspicion is that the numbers of those killed, injured and disappeared may be higher, but that fear of negative consequences or further violence may have kept some family and community members connected to those targeted as reporting to the authorities their ties with the FFT or other dissenting entities. As is evident, the details known about leadership position and place of death are uneven across the assassinations and injuries.

Shot and killed on 19 April 1975

8. **Ngon Laowong** (นายโหง่น ลาววงษ์)
FFT village committee member
Nong Wua Saw district, Udonthani province
Strangled and beaten to death on 21 April 1975

9. **Charoen Dangnok** (นายเจริญ ดังนอก)
FFT committee member
Chomphuang district, Nakhon Ratchasima province
Shot and injured in April 1975

10. **Tawin (last name unknown)** (นายถวิล ไม่ทราบนามสกุล)
Farmer leader
Taphanhin district, Phichit province
Shot and killed in April 1975

11. **Mongkhol Suknum** (นายมงคล สุขหนุม)
Farmer leader
Nakhon Sawan province
Shot and killed in May 1975

12. **Bunsom Chandaeng** (นายบุญสม จันแดง)
FFT central committee member
Sanpatong district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and injured on 8 May 1975

13. **Phad Muangmalao** (นายผัด เมืองมาหล้า)
FFT district president
Hang Chat district, Lampang province
Shot on 11 May 1975

14. **Tawin Mungthanya** (นายถวิล มุ่งธัญญา)
Farmer representative
Nakhon Ratchasima province
Shot and killed on 26 May 1975

15. **Phut Ponglangka** (นายพุฒ ปงลังกา)
Farmer leader
Chiang Rai province
Shot and killed on 22 June 1975

16. Kaew Pongchadam (นายแก้ง ปงซาคำ)

Farmer leader
Chiang Rai province
Shot and killed on 22 June 1975

17. Cha Chakrawan (นายจา จักรวาล)

FFT village vice-president
Mae Rim district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and killed on 3 July 1975

18. Bunchuay Direkchai (นายบุญช่วย ดิเรกชัย)

FFT district president
Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and injured on 8 July 1975

19. Prasat Sirimuang (นายประสาท สิริม่วง)

Farmer representative
Surin province
Shot and killed on 8 July 1975

20. Buntha Yotha (นายบุญทา โยทา)

FFT committee member
Muang district, Lamphun province
Shot and killed on 18 July 1975

21. Klieng Mai-iam (นายเกลี้ยง ใหม่เอี่ยม)

FFT district vice-president
Hang Chat district, Lampang province
Shot and killed on 22 July 1975

22. Intha Sribunruang (นายอินถา ศรีบุญเรือง)

FFT national vice president, FFT northern president
Saraphi district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and killed on 30 July 1975

23. Sawat Thatawan (นายสวัสดิ์ ตาถาวรรณ)

FFT village vice-president
Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and killed on 3 August 1975

24. Mi Suanphlu (นายมี สวนพลู)

FFT committee member

Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Disappeared on 8 August 1975

25. Ta Kaewprasert (นายต๋ำ แก้วประเสริฐ)

FFT committee member
Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Disappeared on 8 August 1975

26. Ta Intadam (นายตา อินต๊ะคำ)

FFT committee member
Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Disappeared on 8 August 1975

27. Nuan Sittisri (นายนวล สิทธิศรี)

FFT member
Mae Rim district, Chiang Mai province
Shot on 11 August 1975

28. Phut Saikham (นายพุฒ ทรายคำ)

Farmer leader
Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and killed on 11 August 1975

29. Chuan Niemwira (นายช้วน เนียมวีระ)

FFT committee member
Uthong district, Suphanburi province
Shot and killed on 12 August 1975

30. Sawaeng Chanthaphun (นายแสวง จันทาพูน)

FFT village vice-president
Fang district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and injured on 27 August 1975

31. Nuan Kawilo (นายนวล กาวิโล)

Farmer leader
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Killed by a bomb on 12 October 1975

32. Mi Kawilo (นายมี กาวิโล)

Farmer leader
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Injured by a bomb on 12 October 1975

33. Bunrat Chaiyen (นายบุญรัตน์ ใจเย็น)
Farmer leader
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Shot and killed on 21 October 1975

34. Chanterm Kaewduangdee (นายจันเติม แก้วดวงดี)
FFT village president
Sanpatong district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and injured on 5 December 1975

35. La Suphachan (นายลา สุภาจันทร์)
FFT committee member
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Shot and killed on 12 December 1975

36. Pan Sunsai (นายปั๋น สูญใส)
FFT village vice-president
Chiang Dao district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and injured on 20 March 1976

37. Kham Thamun (นายคำ ต๊ะมูล)
Farmer leader
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Shot and killed on 31 March 1976

38. Wong Munai (นายวงศ์ มูลอ้าย)
Farmer representative
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Disappeared on 13 April 1976 and reported as dead by the Northern Student Center on 19 May 1976

39. Phut Buawong (นายพุฒ บัววงศ์)
Farmer representative
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province
Disappeared on 13 April 1976 and reported as dead by the Northern Student Center on 19 May 1976

40. Song Kawilo (นายทรง กาวิโล)
Farmer representative
Serm Ngam district, Lampang province

Disappeared on 13 April 1976 and reported as dead by the Northern Student Center on 19 May 1976

41. **Duangkham Pornhomdaeng** (นายดวงคำ พรหมแดง)

Farmer representative
Wieng Pa Pao district, Chiang Rai province
Shot and killed on 28 April 1976

42. **Nuan Daotad** (นายนวล ดาวตาด)

FFT village president
Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province
Shot and killed on 9 May 1976

43. **Sithon Yodkantha** (นายศรีธน ยอดกันทา)

FFT northern region president
Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province
Injured by a bomb on 17 July 1976

44. **Chit Khonphetch** (นายชิต คงเพชร)

Farmer Leader
Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province
Shot and killed on 18 August 1976

45. **Sod Thani** (นายทรอด ธานี)

FFT northeastern region president, FFT national vice-president
Nong Bua Daeng district, Chaiyaphum province
Shot and killed on 5 July 1978

46. **Chamrat Muangyam** (นายจำรัส ม่วงยาม)

FFT eastern region president, FFT national president
Baan Dan district, Rayong province
Shot and killed on 21 July 1979

WORKS CITED

I. English-language books and journal articles

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1990. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women." *American Ethnologist* 17.1 (February): 41-55.

Abrams, Philip. 1988. "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977)." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1.1 (March): 58-89.

Althusser, Louis. 1969. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. NY: Verso.

Althusser, Louis. 1971. *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. NY: Monthly Review Pres.

Amin, Shahid. 1995. *Event, Memory, Metaphor: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Anan Ganjanapan. 1984. *The Partial Commercialization of Rice Production in Northern Thailand (1900-1981)*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University.

Anat Thapinta and Paul F. Hudak. 2000. "Pesticide Use and Residual Occurrence in Thailand." *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 60.1 (January): 103-114.

Anderson, Benedict. 1977. "Withdrawal Symptoms: Social and Cultural Aspects of the October 6 Coup." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 9.3: 13-30.

Anderson, Benedict. 1990. "Murder and Progress in Modern Siam." *New Left Review* no. 181 (May-June).

Anzaldua, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). 2006. "Thailand: How did the killers of environmentalist Charoen Wat-aksorn die?" Update on Urgent Appeal, 15 September.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1968. *Rabelais and his world*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Banisar, David. 2004. *The Freedominfo.org Global Survey: Freedom of Information and Access to Government Record Laws Around the World*. NY: Open Society Institute.

Bataille, Georges. 1962. *Erotism: death and sensuality*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.

Batson, Benjamin. 1981. "Kulab Saipradit and the 'War of Life'" *Journal of the Siam Society* 69:1-2 (January-July). Pages 58-73.

Benjamin, Walter. 1968. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections.* Edited by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books. Pages 253-264.

Bowie, Katherine. 1988. *Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century: Implications for the Understanding of Peasant Political Expression*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago.

Bowie, Katherine, editor and translator. 1991. *Voices from the Thai Countryside: The Short Stories of Samruam Singh*. Monograph #6. Madison, Wisconsin: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin.

Bowie, Katherine. 1997. *Rituals of National Loyalty: An Anthropology of the State and the Village Scout Movement in Thailand*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bowie, Katherine and Brian Phelan. 1975. "Who's Killing the Farmers?" *Bangkok Post Sunday magazine* 17 August: 5-7.

Branford, Sue and Jan Rocha. 2002. *Cutting the Wire: The story of the landless movement in Brazil.* London: Latin American Bureau.

Brown, Wendy. 2005. *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex."* NY: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1997. *The psychic life of power: theories in subjection.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Butler, Judith. 2004. *Precarious Life: the powers of mourning and violence*. NY: Verso.

Chai-anan Samudavanija. 2002. *Thailand: state-building, democracy, and globalization*. Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies.

Chamberlain, James R., ed. 1991. *Ram Khamhaeng controversy: collected papers*. Bangkok: The Siam Society.

Chang, Tze-Tzu. 2000. "Rice." In *The Cambridge World History of Food*. Edited by Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneé Ornelas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 132-147.

Chappel, David W. 2003. *Socially engaged spirituality: essays in honor of Sulak Sivaraksa on his 70th birthday*. Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation.

Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and Its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chatthip Nartsupha. 1984. "The Ideology of 'Holy Men' Revolts in North East Thailand." *History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia*. Edited by Shigeharu Tanabe and Andrew Turton. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology. Pages 111-134.

Cleaver, Harry M. 1972. "The Contradictions of the Green Revolution." *The American Economic Review* 62.1/2: 177-186.

Connors, Michael Kelly. 2003. *Democracy and national identity in Thailand*. NY: Routledge Curzon.

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS). 1977a. *Human Rights in Thailand Report April 1977*. Bangkok: CGRS.

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS). 1977b. *Human Rights in Thailand May-June 1977.* Bangkok: CGRS.

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS). 1977c. *Human Rights in Thailand July-August 1977.* Bangkok: CGRS.

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS). 1978. *Human Rights in Thailand Report July-August 1978*. Bangkok: CGRS.

Corrigan, Philip and Derek Sayer. 1985. *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Das, Veena. 1995. *Critical Events: an anthropological perspective on contemporary India.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Das, Veena. 2007. *Life and words: violence and the descent into the ordinary.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dennis, John Value. 1982. *The Role of the Thai Student Movement in Rural Conflict, 1973-1976*. Unpublished M.S. thesis, Cornell University.

Diller, Anthony. 1991. "What Makes Central Thai a National Language?" In *National Identity and Its Defenders, 1939-1989*. Edited by Craig J. Reynolds. Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University. Pages 87-132.

Enloe, Cynthia. 1990. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: making feminist sense of international politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, Cynthia. 1993. *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the end of the Cold War.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, Cynthia. 2000. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, Cynthia. 2004. *The Curious Feminist: Looking for women in a new age of empire.* Berkeley: University of California Pres.

Fishel, Thamora. 2001. *Reciprocity and Democracy: Power, Gender, and the Provincial Middle Class in Thai Political Culture*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University.

Foster, Don. 1987. *Detention & torture in South Africa: psychological, legal & historical studies*. NY: St. Martin's Press.

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1996. *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it): a feminist critique of political economy*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

Gibson-Graham, J.K., Stephen A. Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff. 2000. "Introduction: Class in a Poststructuralist Frame." In *Class and Its Others*. Edited by J.K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pages 1-22.

Gibson-Graham, J.K., Stephen A. Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff. 2001. "Toward a Poststructuralist Political Economy." In *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism*. Edited by J.K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick,

and Richard D. Wolff. Durham: Duke University Press. Pages 1-22.

Giles Ji Ungpakorn. 2006. "The Impact of the Thai 'Sixties' on the Peoples Movement today." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7.4 (December): 570-588.

Gill, Lesley. 2000. *Teetering on the rim: global restructuring, daily life, and the armed retreat of the Bolivian state.* NY: Columbia University Press.

Gordimer, Nadine. 1994. *None to Accompany Me*. NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.

Greenpeace. 2002a. *Edison Out: The Struggle to Stop Coal-Fired Power Plants in Bo Nok and Ban Krut, Thailand*. San Francisco: Greenpeace.

Greenpeace. 2002b. "Coal Plant Delays: Government Needs to be Decisive" (Press release). 11 October 2002. < http://www.greenpeace.org/seasia/en/press/releases/coal-plant-delays-government>. Accessed 25 June 2004.

Guha, Ranajit. 1988a. "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India." In *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 37-44.

Guha, Ranajit. 1988b. "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency." In *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 45-86.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1997. "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." In *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* Edited by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Durham: Duke University Press. Pages 33-51.

Haberkorn, Tyrell. 2005. "Appendix 1: Collusion and influence behind the assassinations of human rights defenders in Thailand." *article 2* 4.2 (April): 58-63.

Haseman, John B. 1989. "Chapter 5: National Security," in LePoer, Barbara Leitch, ed. *Thailand: A Country Study.* Washington, DC: Federal Research Division. Pages 225-286.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. *Not Enough Graves: The War on Drugs, HIV/AIDS, and Violations of Human Rights*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 2007. *"It Was Like Suddenly My Son No Longer Existed": Enforced Disappearances in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

International Crisis Group (ICG). 2005. *Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad.* Brussels: ICG.

Jessop, Bob. 1990. *State theory: putting the Capitalist state in its place*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 1984. *Les transformations struturelles et les conflits de classes dans la société rurale thaïandaise d'après l'étude d'un cas: la Fédération de la Paysannerie Thaïlandaise*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris 7.

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 1985. "The Political Economy of the Modern Thai Peasant Movement: The Case of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT), 1973-1976." *In Transnationalization, the State and the People: The Case of Thailand.* Quezon City: Southeast Asian Perspectives Project, United Nations University. Pages 141-185.

Karunan, Victor. 1984. *If the Land Could Speak, It Would Speak for Us*. Hong Kong: Plough Publications.

Kasian Tejapira. 2001. *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1929-1958*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.

Keyes, Charles. 1978. "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism in Contemporary Thailand." In *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma*. Edited by Bardwell L. Smith. Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books. Pages 147-164.

Kleinman, Arthur. 2000. The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence." In *Violence and Subjectivity*. Edited by Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 226-241.

Klima, Alan. 2002. *The Funeral Casino: Meditation, Massacre, and Exchange with the Dead in Thailand*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kraiyudht Dhiratayakinant, ed. 1975. *Thailand – Profile 1975*. Bangkok: The Voice of the Nation.

Kullada Kesboonchu Mead. 2004. *The rise and decline of Thai absolutism*. NY: Routledge Curzon.

Laclau, Ernesto. 1990. *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. New York: Verso.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. NY: Verso.

Larsson, Tomas. 2007. "Capital to the tiller? A prehistory of the commodification of land in Thailand." Cornell Southeast Asia Program Brown Bag lecture, February 8.

Lee, Doreen. 2005. "Styling the Revolution: Masculinities, Youth and Street Politics." Paper presented at conference on "States of Trangression," held at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, May 24-26.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. 1972. *Collected Works, Volume 2.* Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Li, Tania Murray. 2005. "Beyond 'the State' and Failed Schemes." *American Anthropologist* 107.3 (September): 383-394.

Lin, Nancy. 1980. *Reverberations: a new translation of complete poems of Mao Tse-tung*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Company.

Luther, Hans. 1978. *Peasants and State in Contemporary Thailand: from regional revolt to national revolution?* Hamburg: Institute fur Asienkunde.

Marks, Thomas. 2007. "Thailand: Anatomy of a Counterinsurgency Victory." *Military Review* January-February: 35-51.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1965. *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers.

McLaren, Peter, with Henry A. Giroux. 1995. "Radical pedagogy as cultural politics: Beyond the discourse of critique and anti-utopianism." In *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era.* By Peter McLaren. NY: Routledge. Pages 29-57.

Merrett, Christopher and Roger Gravil. 1991. "Comparing Human Rights: South Africa and Argentina, 1976-1989." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33.2: 255-287.

Merry, Sally. 2000. *Colonizing Hawai'i: the cultural power of law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Michell, Edward Blair. 1892. *A Siamese-English dictionary for the use of students in*

both languages. Bangkok.

Mills, Mary Beth. 1999. *Thai Women in the Global Labor Force: Consuming Desires, Contested Selves.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Moore, Sally Falk. 1987. "Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography." *American Ethnologist* 14.4: 727-736.

Morell, David and Chai-anan Samudavanija. 1981. *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain.

Morris, Rosalind. 1998. "Surviving Pleasure at the Periphery: Chiang Mai and the Photographies of Political Trauma in Thailand, 1976-1992." *Public Culture* 10.2:341-370.

Nafisi, Azar. 2003. *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*. NY: Random House.

National FAO Committee. 1950. *Thailand and Her Agricultural Problems*. Bangkok: Ministry of Agriculture.

National Reconciliation Commission (NRC). 2006. *Report of the National Reconciliation Commission: Overcoming Violence Through the Power of Reconciliation.* Bangkok: NRC.

National Statistical Office. 1981. *Statistical Yearbook of Thailand, 1976-1980*. Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister.

Ockey, James. 1994. "Political Parties, Factions, and Corruption in Thailand." *Modern Asian Studies* 28.2 (May): 251-277.

Ockey, James. 2000. "The Rise of Local Power in Thailand: Provincial Crime, Elections, and the Bureaucracy." In *Money and Power in Provincial Thailand*. Edited by Ruth McVey. Singapore: ISEAS. Pages 74-96.

Ockey, James. 2003. "Change and Continuity in the Thai Political Party System." *Asian Survey* 43 (July/August): 663-680.

Ockey, James. 2004a. *Making Democracy: leadership, class, gender, and political participation in Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Ockey, James. 2004b. "State, Bureaucracy and Polity in Modern Thai Politics." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 34.2: 143-162.

Osamu Akagi. 1978. "Research Note and Data on 'Pocketbook' Publication in Thailand, 1973-1976." *South East Asian Studies* 16.3 (December): 473-523.

Palleqoix, Jean-Baptiste. 1896. *Siamese French English dictionary*. Bangkok: Imprimerie de la Mission Cathlique.

Pandey, Gyanendra. 2001. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parsons, Kenneth H., Raymond J. Penn, and Philip M. Raup, eds. 1956. *Land tenure: Proceedings of the International Conference on Land Tenure and Related Problems in World Agriculture, held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1951*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Pipob Thongchai. 2001. "The First Bricks and the Steps Forward." In *Retracing the Path of an Idealistic Individual: From the Heart of Grandfather to All Idealistic Persons Working for the Commonpeople.* By Sem Pringpuangkaew. Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation. Pages 46-50.

Pitch Pongsawat. 2001. "Political Economy of Agrarian Transformation and Peasant Movements in Contemporary Thailand: A Critical Observation." *Warasan Sangkhomsat* (Journal of Sociology, Chulalongkorn University). 32.3: 1-73.

Puey Ungpakorn. 1977. "Violence and the Military Coup in Thailand." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 9.3: 4-12.

Race, Jeffrey. 1974. "The War in Northern Thailand." *Modern Asian Studies* 8.1: 85 -112.

Ramsay, Ansil. 1982. "Tenancy and Landlessness in Thailand: How Severe a Problem?" *Asian Survey* 22.11 (November): 1074-1092.

Reynolds, Craig, et al. 1991. *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand, 1939 -1989*. Australia: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, No. 25.

Rich, Adrienne. 1978. *The Dream of a Common Language: poems, 1974-1977.* NY: Norton.

Riggs, Fred W. *Thailand: the modernization of a bureaucratic polity*. Honolulu: East -West Center Press.

Sanford, Victoria. 2003. *Buried Secrets: truth and human rights in Guatemala.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sayer, Derek. 1994. "Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks

on “Hegemony.”” In *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent. Durham: Duke University Press. Pages 367-377.

Scott, James. 1972. **“**Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia.” *The American Political Science Review*. March: 91-113.

Scott, James. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shaw, Mark. 2002. *Crime and policing in post-apartheid South Africa: transforming under fire.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Siffin, William J. 1966. *The Thai bureaucracy: institutional change and development*. Honolulu: East-West Center Press.

Smyth, David. 1991. “Siburapha: the making of a literary reputation.” In *Thai Constructions of Knowledge*. Edited by Manas Chitkasem and Andrew Turton. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Pages 63-83.

Somsak Jeamteerasakul. 1991. *The Communist Movement in Thailand*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Monash University.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1998. “Cultural Talks in the Hot Peace: Revisiting the ‘Global Village.’” In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins. Pages 329-348.

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White. 1986. *The politics and poetics of transgression*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 1995. “[P]Refacing *Capitalism and Confrontation* in 1995.” In *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra’s Plantation Belt, 1870-1979, Second Edition, with a New Preface*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. “Developing Historical Negatives: Race and the (Modernist) Visions of a Colonial State.” In *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*. Edited by Brian Keith Axel. Durham: Duke University Press. Pages 156-188.

Streckfuss, David E. 1998. *The Poetics of Subversion: Civil Liberty and Lese-Majeste in the Modern Thai State.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sulak Sivaraksa. 1988. *A socially engaged Buddhism*. Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development.

Sulak Sivaraksa. 1990. *Siam in Crisis.* Bangkok: Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute.

Sulak Sivaraksa. 1998. *Loyalty demands dissent: autobiography of an engaged Buddhist*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Sulak Sivaraksa. 2005. *Conflict, culture, change: engaged Buddhism in a globalizing world*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Tanabe, Shigeharu. 1984. "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions: Siam at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." *History and Peasant Consciousness in Southeast Asia*. Edited by Shigeharu Tanabe and Andrew Turton. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology. Pages 75-110.

Taussig, Michael. 1992. *The Nervous System*. NY: Routledge.

Tej Bunnag and Michael Smithies, eds. 1970. *In Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhon: Contributions in Memory of the Late President of the Siam Society.* Bangkok: The Siam Society.

Thak Chaloemtiarana. 1979. *Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism.* Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand.

Thak Chaloemtiarana. 1980. "Professionalism in the Modern Thai Army." Paper presented at "Conference on Political Systems and Development," sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and the Centre for Policy Research, February.

Thak Chaloemtiarana, ed. *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents, 1932-1957*. Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand.

Thomas, M. Ladd. 1975. *Political Violence in the Muslim Provinces of Southern Thailand*. Singapore: ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 28 (April).

Thongchai Winichakul. 1994. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Thongchai Winichakul. 1995. "The Changing Landscape of the Past: New Histories in Thailand Since 1973." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26.1: 99-120.

Thongchai Winichakul. 2002. "Remembering/Silencing the Traumatic Past: The Ambivalent Memories of the October 1976 Massacre in Bangkok." In *Cultural Crisis and Social Memory: Modernity and Identity in Thailand and Laos*.

Edited by Shigeharu Tanabe and Charles Keyes. Honolulu: UH Press. Pages 243-286.

Tierney-Tello, Mary Beth. 1996. *Allegories of transgression and transformation: experimental fiction by women writing under dictatorship.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Translation and Secretarial Office. 1951. *Act Controlling the Hire of Paddy Land, B.E. 2493*. Thonburi: Translation and Secretarial Office.

Trebuil, Guy. 1995. "Pioneer Agriculture, Green Revolution and Environmental Degradation in Thailand." In *Counting the Costs: Economic Growth and Environmental Change in Thailand*. Edited by Jonathan Rigg. Singapore: ISEAS. Pages 67-89.

Trocki, Carl A. 1977. "Bunsanong Punyodyana: Thai Socialist and Scholar, 1936-1976." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 9.3 (July-September): 48-51.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Turton, Andrew. 1978. "The Current Situation in the Thai Countryside." In *Thailand: Roots of Conflict*. Edited by Andrew Turton, Jonathan Fast and Malcolm Caldwell. Nottingham: Spokesman Press. 104-142.

Turton, Andrew. 1982. "Poverty, Reform and Class Struggle in Rural Thailand." In *Rural Poverty and Agrarian Reform*. Edited by Steve Jones, P.C. Joshi, and Miguel Murmis. New Delhi: Allied Publishers (on behalf on Enda; Dakar, Senegal). Pages 20-45.

Turton, Andrew. 1984. "Limits of Ideological Domination and the Formation of Social Consciousness." In *History and Peasant Consciousness in Southeast Asia*. Edited by Andrew Turton and Shigeharu Tanabe. Osaka: Senri Ethnological Studies, no. 13. Pages 17-74.

Turton, Andrew, et al. 1987. *Production, Power, and Participation in Rural Thailand: Experiences of Poor Farmers Groups.* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Verdery, Katherine. 1991. *National ideology under socialism: identity and cultural politics in Ceauşescu's Romania.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Waldmeir, Patti. 1998. *Anatomy of a miracle: the end of apartheid and the birth of the new South Africa.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Weschler, Lawrence. 1990. *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers.* New York: Pantheon.

Williams, Raymond. 1976. *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, David A. 1967. *Politics in Thailand*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Wilson, Richard A. 2001. *The politics of truth and reconciliation in South Africa: legitimizing the post-apartheid state.* NY: Cambridge University Press.

Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. n.d. "Fact Sheet #26 of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention." < http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs26.htm>. Accessed 27 March 2007.

Wright, Angus and Wendy Wolford. 2003. *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil.* Oakland, CA: Food First Books.

Wyatt, David. 1984. *Thailand: A Short History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tamada Yoshifumi. 1991. "Ittiphon and amnat: An informal aspect of Thai politics." *Southeast Asian Studies 28.4 (March).*

Yotopoulos, Pan. 1975. *The Green Revolution in Thailand: With a Bang or With a Whimper?* Stanford University: Food Research Institute.

Zimmerman, Robert F. 1976. "Thailand 1975: Transition to Constitutional Democracy Continues." *Asian Survey* 16.2 (February): 159-172.

Zimmerman, Robert F. 1978. *Reflections on the Collapse of Democracy in Thailand.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

II. Thai-language books and journal articles

Aet Pirom. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 23-25.
(เอ๊ด ภิรมย์. ๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๒๓-๒๕.)

Aet Pirom. 2543 [2000]. " A few things we can realize from teacher's life." In *A*

Beautiful Life: Teacher Angun Malik. Edited by SinsawatYodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 70-73.
(เอ๊ด ภิรมย์. ๒๕๔๓. “บางมุมบางสัมผัสจากชีวิตอาจารย์.” ใน *ชีวิตงาม ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๗๐-๗๓.)

Amnat Yuthiwiwat. 2519 [1976]. *Education Revolution: following the path of socialism*. Bangkok: Prachatham Press.
(อำนาจ ยุทธวิวัฒน์. ๒๕๑๙. *ปฏิวัติการศึกษา: ตามแนวทางสังคมนิยม*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ประชาธรรม.)

Ana Malik. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 43-44.
(อานา มาลิก. ๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๒๓-๒๕.)

Angun Malik. 2519 [1976]. “Report of the behavior of Mrs. Angun Malik in relation to the university students.” In *A Beautiful Life: Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 7-8.
(องุ่น มาลิก. ๒๕๑๙. “รายงานพฤติกรรมของนางองุ่น มาลิก ที่สัมพันธ์กับนักศึกษา.” ใน *ชีวิตงาม ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๗-๘.)

Apichet Naklekha. 2519 [1976]. *Mor Muang Phrao* [Doctor of Muang Phrao]. Bangkok: Samnakphim Khon Num.
(อภิเชษฐ์ นาคเลขา. ๒๕๑๙. *หมอเมืองพร้าว*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์คนหนุ่ม.)

Apichet Naklekha. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 31-32.
(อภิเชษฐ์ นาคเลขา.๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๓๑-๓๒.)

Attachak Sattayanurak. 2549 [2006]. *The “Third Hand” in Thai Political History*. Bangkok: Kobfai Publishing Project.
(อรรถจักร์ สัตยานุรักษ์. ๒๕๔๙. *“มือที่สาม” ในประวัติศาสตร์การเมืองไทย*. กรุงเทพฯ: โครงการจัดพิมพ์คบไฟ.)

Chaisiri Samutwanit. 2524 [1981]. *Thai Political Literature: 14 October 1973-6 October 1976*. Bangkok: Saithan.
(ชัยสิริ สมุทวณิช. ๑๕๒๔. *วรรณกรรมการเมืองไทย: ๑๔ ตุลา ๒๕๑๖ – ๖ ตุลา ๒๕๑๙*. กรุงเทพฯ: สายธาร.)

Chaiwat Suriwichai, ed. 2517 [1974]. *The events in Baan Na Sai*. Bangkok: Chakaranukun.

(ชัยวัฒน์ สุรวิชัย, บ. ๒๕๑๗. *เหตุเกิดที่ บ้าน นาทราย*. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์ จักรานุกุล.)

Chanchai Songwonwong et al. eds. 2537 [1994]. *Courageous Lawyer of the People*. Bangkok: 179 Kanphim.
(ชาญชัย สงวนวงศ์ ฯลฯ, บ. ๒๕๔๗. *ทนายกล้าของประชาชน*. กรุงเทพฯ: ๑๗๙ การพิมพ์.)

Chanthana Fongthalay. 2536 [1993]. *From Doi Yao To Phu Phachi*. Bangkok: Samnakphim Chapkraw.
(จันทนา ฟองทะเล. ๒๕๓๖. *จากดอยยาวถึงภูผาจี*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ ฉับแกระ.)

Charnvit Kasetsiri, ed. 2541 [1998]. *From 14 To 6 October*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
(ชาญวิทย์ เกษตศิริ, บ. ๒๕๔๑. *จาก ๑๔ ถึง ๖ ตุลา*. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์.)

Charnvit Kasetsiri. 2544 [2001]. *14 October*. Bangkok: Saithan Press.
(ชาญวิทย์ เกษตศิริ. ๒๕๔๔. ๑๔ ตุลา. กรุงเทพฯ: สายธาร.)

Chatri Hutanuwat. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 26-27.
(ชาตรี หุตานุวัตร. ๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๒๖-๒๗-๒๕.)

Chayanit. 2549 [2006]. *We Come from Every Direction to Phachi*. Chiang Mai: Mingmuang.
(ชญาณิฐ. ๒๕๔๙. *เราต่างมาจากทั่วทุกสารทิศ ผาจี*. เชียงใหม่: มิ่งเมือง.)

Chiang Mai University (CMU). 2532 [1989]. *20 year anniversary of Chiang Mai University*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.
(มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่. ๒๕๓๒. *ครบรอบ ๒๐ ปี มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่*. เชียงใหม่: มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.)

Cho Khiewphumphuang. 2517 [1974]. “Note to Readers.” In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* By Paulo Freire. Translated by Cho Khiewphumphuang. Bangkok: Federation of Independent Students of Thailand.
(ช. เขียวพุ่มพวง. ๒๕๑๗. “ถึงผู้อ่าน.” ใน *การศึกษาสำหรับผู้ถูกกดขี่*. โดย เปาโล แฟรร์. แปลโดย ช. เขียวพุ่มพวง. กรุงเทพฯ: สหพันธ์นักศึกษาเสรีฯ.)

Cholthira Satayawattana. 2544 [2001]. *Women’s Painful Experiences During the 6 October Incident*. Bangkok: 6 October Factfinding Committee.
(ชลธิรา สัตยาวัฒนา. ๒๕๔๔. *กรีดแผล กลัดหนอง กรองความจริง โดยผู้หญิง ๖ ตุลาฯ*. กรุงเทพฯ: คณะกรรมการรับข้อมูลและสืบพยานเหตุการณ์ ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙.)

CSOC (Communist Suppression Operations Command). n.d. “Karunyathep Project” Mimeograph.
(กองอำนวยการป้องกันและปราบปรามคอมมิวนิสต์. ไร้ข้อมูลปีพิมพ์. “โครงการการุณยเทพ.” โรเนียว.)

Democracy Propagation Center. 2517 [1974]. *Return to the Rural Areas Program.* Bangkok: Bureau of Universities.
(ศูนย์ส่งเสริมการเผยแพร่ประชาธิปไตย. ๒๕๑๗. *โครงการกลับสู่ชนบท.* กรุงเทพฯ: ทบวงมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐ.)

Fa Dieu Kan Editorial Collective. 2547 [2004]. “Adorning the Earth.” *Fa Dieu Kan* 2.4: 42-87.
(กองบรรณาธิการฟ้าเดียวกัน. “ประดับไว้ในโลกา.” *ฟ้าเดียวกัน* ๒.๔: ๔๒-๘๗.)

Fanon, Frantz. 2517 [1974]. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Cho Khiewphumphuang. Bangkok: Charoenwit Kanphim.
(เฟนอน, ฟรานทซ์. ๒๕๑๗. *โลกร้าว*. แปลโดย ช. เขียวพุ่มพวง. กรุงเทพฯ: เจริญวิทย์การพิมพ์.)

Freire, Paulo. 2517a [1974]. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Jiraporn Sirisupan. Bangkok: National Student Center of Thailand.
(แฟร์, เปาว์โล. ๒๕๑๗. *คัมภีร์ของผู้ถูกกดขี่.* แปลโดย จิราภรณ์ ศิริสุพรรณ. กรุงเทพฯ: ศูนย์กลางนิสิตนักศึกษาแห่งประเทศไทย.)

Freire, Paulo. 2517b [1974]. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Translated by Cho Khiewphumphuang. Bangkok: Federation of Independent Students of Thailand.
(แฟรร์, เปาโล. ๒๕๑๗. *การศึกษาสำหรับผู้ถูกกดขี่.* แปลโดย ช. เขียวพุ่มพวง. กรุงเทพฯ: สหพันธ์นักศึกษาเสรีฯ.)

Gorky, Maksim. 2518 [1975]. *Song of the Falcon*. Bangkok: Putuchon.
(แมกซิม กอร์กี้. ๒๕๑๘. *เพลงพญาเหยี่ยว*. กรุงเทพฯ: ปุถุชน.)

Inson Buakiew. 2517 [1974]. “Protesting is the best strategy for farmers and workers.” *Athipat* 2-8 October: 7.
(อินสอน บัวเขียว. ๒๕๑๗. “เดินขบวน วิธีการที่ดีที่สุดสำหรับชาวนาและกรรมกร.” *อธิปัตย์* ๒-๘ ตุลาคม: ๗.)

Intha Sribunruang. 2518 [1975]. “Interview with *Chaturat* magazine.” *Chaturat* 1.6 (19 August). Pages 29-32.
(อินถา ศรีบุญเรือง. ๒๕๑๘. “บทสัมภาษณ์ด้วย ‘จตุรัส.’ *จตุรัส* ๑.๖ (๑๙ สิงหาคม). น. ๒๙-๓๒.)

Ji Ungpakorn and Suthachai Yimprasert. 2544 [2001]. *The Crime of the State in the Crisis of Changes*. Bangkok: 6 October Factfinding Committee.
(ใจ อึ๊งภากรณ์ และ สุธาชัย ยิ้มประเสริฐ. ๒๕๔๔. *อาชญกรรมรัฐในวิกฤตการเปลี่ยนแปลง.* กรุงเทพฯ:

คณะกรรมการรับข้อมูลและสืบพยานเหตุการณ์ ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙.)

Jit Phumisak. 2519 [1976]. *With Blood and Life: Vietnamese Short Stories.* Bangkok: Chomrom Nangsu Saeng Thawan.
(จิตร ภูมิศักดิ์. ๒๕๑๙. *ด้วยเลือดและชีวิต: รวมเรื่องสั้นเวียดนาม*. กรุงเทพฯ: ชมรมหนังสือแสงตะวัน.)

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 2530 [1987]. Analysis of the Farmers' Federation of Thailand: A Political Economy of the Modern Farmer. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute.
(กนกศักดิ์ แก้วเทพ. ๒๕๓๐. *บทวิเคราะห์ สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย: เศรษฐศาสตร์การเมืองว่าด้วยชาวนายุคใหม่*. กรุงเทพฯ: สถาบันวิจัยสังคม จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย.)

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 2539 [1997]. "Farmers Federation of Thailand (2517-2522) Until the Assembly of the Poor (1995 -): Continuity and Discontinuity." *Warasan SetthasatKarnmuang (Phua Chumchon)* 3: 91-109.
(กนกศักดิ์ แก้วเทพ. ๒๕๓๙. "สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย (๒๕๑๗-๒๕๒๒) ถึง สมัชชาคนจน (๒๕๓๘-): ความต่อเนื่องและความขัดต้น."*วารสาร เศรษฐศาสตร์การเมือง (เพื่อชุมชน)* ๓ : ๙๑-๑๐๙.)

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 2543 [1999]. "Thai Farmers' Struggles: Farmers' Federation of Thailand." In *The Path of Thai Farmers*. Edited by Nitirat Sappayasomboon. Bangkok: Mooniti Dek. Pages 39-62.
(กนกศักดิ์ แก้วเทพ. ๒๕๔๓. "การต่อสู้ของชาวนาไทย: สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย." ใน*เส้นทาง` ชาวนาไทย*. นิติรัตน์ ทรัพย์สมบูรณ์, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิเด็ก. น. ๓๙-๖๒.)

Kanoksak Kaewthep. 2548 [2004]. "Botrian 30 pii khong kabuankarn karn kluanwai thang sangkhom khong chao na chao rai thai [Lessons from 30 years of the farmers movement and protest in Thailand]." *Fa Dieu Kan* 2.4 (October – December): 88-111.
(กนกศักดิ์ แก้วเทพ. ๒๕๔๘. "บทเรียน ๓๐ ปี ของขบวนการเคลื่อนไหวทางสังคมของชาวนาชาวไร่ไทย." *ฟ้าเดียวกัน* ๒.๔: ๘๘-๑๑๑.)

Klum Naksuksa Kotmai. 2521 [1978]. *We are Innocent*. Bangkok: Klum Naksuksa Kotmai.
(กลุ่มนักศึกษากฎหมาย. ๒๕๒๑. *เราคือผู้บริสุทธิ์*. กรุงเทพฯ: กลุ่มนักศึกษากฎหมาย.)

Klum Bandit Phattana. 2518 [1975]. *The Sickle*. Bangkok: Thai Karnphim
(กลุ่มบัณฑิตพัฒนา. ๒๕๑๘. *แอก*. กรุงเทพฯ:ไทยการพิมพ์.)

Komol Keemthong. 2525 [1982]. *Writings of Komol Keemthong*. Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation.

(โกมล คีมทอง. ๒๕๒๕. *ข้อเขียนของโกมล คีมทอง*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโกมล คีมทอง.)

Komol Keemthong Foundation. 2515 [1972]. *Reading Komol Keemthong*. Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation.

(มูลนิธิโกมล คีมทอง. ๒๕๑๕. *อ่านโกมล คีมทอง*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโกมล คีมทอง.)

Kongsak Liewmanont, ed. 2520 [1977]. *Collected Orders and Procedures of the National Administrative Reform Council for Dealing with the Dangers to Society*. Bangkok: Ministry of the Interior.

(คงศักดิ์ ลิ่วมโนมนต์, บ. ๒๕๒๐. *รวมคำสั่งของคณะปฏิรูปการปกครองแผ่นดินและระเบียบข้อบังคับเกี่ยวกับการปฏิบัติต่อบุคคลที่เป็นภัยต่อสังคม*. กรุงเทพฯ: กระทรวงมหาดไทย.)

Kroekkiat Phiphitseritham. 2521 [1978]. *Farmers and the Land: Reform or Revolution.* Bangkok: Duang Kamol.

(เกริกเกียรติ พิพัฒน์เสรีธรรม. ๒๕๒๑. *ชาวนากับที่ดิน: ปฏิวัติหรือปฏิรูป*. กรุงเทพฯ: ดวงกมล.)

Lamphun Cultural Center. 2548 [2005]. *Local Wisdom of Lamphun Province.* Lamphun: Lamphun Cultural Center.

(ศูนย์วัฒนธรรมจังหวัดลำพูน. ๒๕๔๘. *ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น จังหวัดลำพูน*. ลำพูน: ศูนย์วัฒนธรรมจังหวัดลำพูน.)

M. n.d. "Life is like a dream, if it is the truth." Mimeograph.

(ม. ไร้ข้อมูลปีพิมพ์. "ชีวิตดั่งฝัน หากมันคือความจริง." โรเนียว.

Matichon. 2543 [2000]. *Dictionary Outside the Royal Institute.* Bangkok: Matichon Press.

(มติชน. ๒๕๔๓. *พจนานุกรมนอกราชบัณฑิตยฯ*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์มติชน.)

Matichon. 2547 [2004]. *Matichon Dictionary.* Bangkok: Matichon Press.

(มติชน. ๒๕๔๗. *พจนานุกรมฉบับมติชน*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์มติชน.)

Munnithi Narathip Praphanphong-Worawan, ed. 2544 [2001]. *Prince Wan Studies: 110th anniversary of his birth, 25 August 2001*. Bangkok: Munnithi Narathip Praphanphong-Worawan.

(มูลนิธินราธิปประพันธ์พงศ์-วรวรรณ, บ. ๒๕๔๔. *วิทยทัศน์พระองค์วรรณฯ: ครบ ๑๑๐ ปี วันประสูติ ๒๕ สิงหาคม ๒๕๔๔*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธินราธิปประทันธ์พงศ์-วรวรรณ.)

National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT). 2517 [1974]. *Khabuankarn Prachachon Tulakom 2516* [Movement of the People October 1973]. Bangkok: NSCT.

(ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาแห่งประเทศไทย. ๒๕๑๗. *ขบวนการประชาชนตุลาคม ๒๕๑๖*. กรุงเทพฯ: ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาแห่งประเทศไทย.)

Nidhi Eoseewong. 2513 [1970]. “Introduction.” In *His Name is Tongkwao: Writings of Young Men in the Flats at the Edge of the Mountain.* Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.
(นิธิ เอียวศรีวงศ์. ๒๕๑๓. “บทนำ.” ใน *เจ้าชื่อทองกวาว: รวมผลงานของชาวหนุ่มที่ราบริมดอย.* เชียงใหม่: มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.)

Nidhi Eoseewong. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Pages 19-22.
(นิธิ เอียวศรีวงศ์. ๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๑๙-๒๒.)

Nitirat Sapsomboon. 2542 [1999]. “ Beginnings and Life Histories of the Leaders of the Farmers’ Federation of Thailand Movement.” In *The Path of Thai Farmers*. Edited by Nitirat Sapsomboon. Bangkok: Mooniti Dek. Pages 136-160.
(นิติรัตน์ ทรัพย์สมบูรณ์. ๒๕๔๒. “ความเป็นมาและประวัติผู้นำ สหพันธ์ชาวนาชาวไร่แห่งประเทศไทย.” ใน *เส้นทางชาวนาไทย*. นิติรัตน์ ทรัพย์สมบูรณ์, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิเด็ก. น. ๑๓๖-๑๖๐.)

Niwet Tongkhwao. 2519 [1976]. “The United States in Developing Countries: Strategy for Creating Followers.” In *Smash Imperialism!!* Edited by Publications Section of the Northern Students Center. Chiang Mai: Northern Students Center. Pages 1-7.
(นิเวศน์ ทองกวาว. ๒๕๑๙. “สหรัฐในประเทศด้อยพัฒนา – ยุทธศาสตร์การสร้างบริวาร.” ใน *จักรพรรดินิยมจงพินาศ!!* ฝ่ายเอกสารศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาภาคเหนือ. เชียงใหม่: ศูนย์กลางนักศึกษาภาคเหนือ.)

Northern Farmers’ Federation (NFF). 2543 [2001]. *Voice of the Farmers.* Chiang Mai: Northern Farmers’ Federation.
(สหพันธ์เกษตรกรภาคเหนือ. ๒๕๔๓. *เสียงเกษตรกร*. เชียงใหม่: สหพันธ์เกษตรกรภาคเหนือ.)

Pa Nan Na Doi Yao. 2549 [2006]. *Siew Flowers Bloom …at Doi Yao Pha Mon*. Bangkok: Lotus Press.
(ปาหนัน ณ ดอยยาว. ๒๕๔๙. *ดอกเสี้ยวบาน ... ที่ดอยยาว ผาหม่น*. กรุงเทพฯ: ใบบัว.)

Panrat Manurasada. 2537. “The father that I know.” In *Courageous Lawyer of the People.* Edited by Chanchai Songwonwong et al. Bangkok: 179 Kanphim. Pages 126-127.
(ปาลรัฐ มนูรัษฎา. ๒๕๓๗. “คุณพ่อที่ลูกรู้จัก.” ใน *ทนายกล้าของประชาชน*. ชาญชัย สงวนวงศ์ ฯลฯ, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: ๑๗๙ การพิมพ์. น. ๑๒๖-๑๒๗.)

Phadungsak Phunsaen. 2549 [2006]. “Kraiwut Sirinuphong and the Struggle of

Northern Students and People." In *Cremation Volume for Mr. Kraiwut Sirinuphong*. Bangkok. Pages 127-181.
(ผดุงศักดิ์ พื้นแสน. ๒๕๔๘. "ไกรวุฒ ศิรินุพงศ์ กับการต่อสู้ของขบวนการนักศึกษาประชาชนภาคเหนือ." ใน *อนุสรณ์ในงานฌาปนกิจศพ นายไกรวุฒ ศิรินุพงศ์พช*. กรุงเทพฯ. น. ๑๒๗-๑๘๑.)

Phot Kritkraiwan, ed. 2540 [1997]. *Komol Keemthong: Philosopy and Resolution of Life.* Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation.
(พจน์ กริชไกรวรรณ, บ. *โกมล คีมทอง: ปรัชญาและปณิธานแห่งชีวิต*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโกมล คีมทอง.)

Phra Santisuk Santhisukho, editor. 2522 [1979]. *Remembering Komol.* Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation.
(พระสันติสุข สนฺติสุโข. ๒๕๒๒. *คิดถึงโกมล*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโกมล คีมทอง.)

Plai-Auw Chananont. 2529 [1986]. *The Roles of Merchant Capitalists in the Expansion of Capitalism in Northern Thailand, 1921 –1980*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
(ปลายอ้อ ชนะนนท์. ๒๕๒๙. *บทบาทนายทุ่นพ่อค้าที่มีต่อการก่อและขยายตัวของทุนนิยม ภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย, พ.ศ. ๒๔๖๔-๒๕๒๓*.วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญาโท ภาควิชาเศรษฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย.)

Prachachaat Daily. 2518 [1975]. *Prachachaat Presents the '75 Elections.* Bangkok: Samnakphim Prapansat.
(ประชาชาติรายวัน. ๒๕๑๘. *ประชาชาติเสนอเลือกตั้ง '๑๘*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ประพันธ์สาส์น.)

Pradap Manurasada. 2542 [1999]. <No title>. In *Remembering the Flower Blooming in OurHearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Page 17.
(ประดับ มนูรัษฎา. ๒๕๔๒. <ไร้ชื่อเรื่อง>. ใน *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา. น. ๑๗.)

Prajak Kongkirati. 2545 [2002]. *Towards Oct 14th Uprising: The Cultural Politics of Student and Intellectual Movements under Military Dictatorship in Thailand (B.E. 2506-2516).* Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of History, Faculty of Political Arts, Thammasat University.
(ประจักษ์ ก้องกีรติ. ๒๕๔๕. *ก่อนจะถึง ๑๔ ตุลาฯ:ความเคลื่อนไหวทางการเมืองวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาและปัญญาชนภายใต้ ระบอบเผด็จการทหาร (พ.ศ. ๒๕๐๖-๒๕๑๖)*. วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาประวัติศาสตร์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์.)

Prajak Kongkirati. 2548 [2005]. *And Now the Movement Emerges …Cultural Politics*

of Students and Intellectuals Prior to 14 October. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
(ประจักษ์ ก้องกีรติ. ๒๕๔๘. *และแล้วความเคลื่อนไหวก็ปรากฏ ...การเมืองวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาและปัญญาชนก่อน ๑๔ ตุลา*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์.)

Preecha Phiamphonsan and Chamrat Muangyam. 2522 [1979]. *The Path of Thai Farmers*. Bangkok: Samnakphim Chao Baan.
(ปรีชา เปี่ยมพงศ์สานต์ และ จำรัส ม่วงยาม. ๒๕๒๒. *ทางเดินของชาวนา*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ ชาวบ้าน.)

Rangsan Chanta. 2544 [2001]. *Local Wisdom: Cultural Perspectives in HIV/AIDS Case in Northern Thailand.* Chiang Mai: Faculty of Agricultural Business, Mae Jo University.
(รังสรรค์ จันต๊ะ. ๒๕๔๔. *ภูมิปัญญาพื้นบ้าน: มิติทางวัฒนธรรมในการดูแลรักษาผู้ติดเชื้อและผู้ป่วยเอดส์ในภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย*. เชียงใหม่: คณะธุรกิจการเกษตร มหาวิทยาลัยแม่โจ้.)

Reimer, Edward. 2517 [1974]. *School is Dead*. Translated by Cho Khiewphumphuang. Bangkok: San Siam.
(รีมเมอร์, เอเวอเรท. ๒๕๑๗. *โรงเรียนตายแล้ว*. แปลโดย ช. เขียวพุ่มพวง. กรุงเทพฯ: สารสยาม.)

Royal Institute. 2493 [1950]. *Royal Institute Dictionary*. Bangkok: Royal Institute.
(ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน. ๒๔๙๓. *พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน*. กรุงเทพฯ: ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน.)

Royal Institute. 2525 [1982]. *Royal Institute Dictionary.* Bangkok: Royal Institute.
(ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน. ๒๕๒๕. *พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน*. กรุงเทพฯ: ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน.)

Royal Institute. 2542 [1999]. *Royal Institute Dictionary*. Bangkok: Royal Institute.
(ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน. ๒๕๔๒. *พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน*. กรุงเทพฯ: ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน.)

Rungwit Suwannaphichon. 2532 [1989]. *Sriburapha, a great of Thai literature.* Bangkok: Saengdao Press.
(รุ่งวิทย์ สุวรรณอภิชน. ๒๕๓๒. *ศรีบูรพา ศรีแห่งวรรณกรรมไทย*. กรุงเทพฯ: สานักพิมพ์แสงดาว.)

Saechol Sattayanurak. 2545 [2002]. *The Changes in the Construction of "The Thai Nation" and "Thainess" by Luang Wichitwathakan.* Bangkok: Matichon.
(สายชล สัตยานุรักษ์. ๒๕๔๕. *ความเปลี่ยนแปลงในการสร้าง "ชาติไทย" และ "ความเป็นไทย" โดยหลวงวิจิตรวาทการ*.กรุงเทพฯ: มติชน.)

Sanguan Nittayaramphong, ed. 2546 [2003]. *Annals of the History of Mahidol for Democracy, Part 1: Building the Movement.* Bangkok: Alpha Millenium Company.
(สงวน นิตยารัมภ์พงศ์, บ. ๒๕๔๖. *ปูมประวัติศาสตร์ มหิดลเพื่อประชาธิปไตย, ภาคที่ ๑: ก่อเกิดขบวนการ*.

กรุงเทพฯ: บริษัทอัลฟ่า มิเล็นเนียม.)

Sanguan Nittayaramphong, ed. 2547 [2004]. *Annals of the History of Mahidol for Democracy, Part 2: Organizing the People, Dedicating Oneself to Ideals (14 October 1973-6 October 1976).* Bangkok: Alpha Millenium Company.
(สงวน นิตยารัมภ์พงศ์, บ. ๒๕๔๗. *ปูมประวัติศาสตร์ มหิดลเพื่อประชาธิปไตย, ภาคที่ ๒: ประสานประชาชน, อุทิศตนเพื่ออุดมการณ์ (๑๔ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๖ – ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙).* กรุงเทพฯ: บริษัท อัลฟ่า มิเล็นเนียม.)

Sanguan Nittayaramphong, ed. 2548 [2005]. *Annals of the History of Mahidol for Democracy, Part 3: Reviving Hope, Building Stregnth, Looking to Serve Society (After 6 October 1976-1982).* Bangkok: Ngandee Company.
(สงวน นิตยารัมภ์พงศ์, บ. ๒๕๔๘. *ปูมประวัติศาสตร์ มหิดลเพื่อประชาธิปไตย, ภาคที่ ๓:ฟื้นความหวัง, สร้างกำลังใจ, มุ่งรับใช้สังคม (หลัง ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙-๒๕๒๕).* กรุงเทพฯ: บริษัท งานดี.)

Sansern Sri-unruan. 2537 [1994]. “Pradap Manurasada, courageous lawyer, truthful lawyer, one quarter of my experience.” In *Courageous Lawyer of the People*. Edited by Chanchai Songwonwong. Bangkok: 179 Kanphim.
(สรรเสรญ ศรีอุ่นเรือน. ๒๕๓๗. “ประดับ มนูรัษฎา ทนายกล้า ทนายจริง เสี้ยวหนึ่งของชีวิตที่ขัพเจ้าสัมผัส.” ใน *ทนายกล้าของประชาชน*. ชาญชัย สงวนวงศ์ ฯลฯ, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: ๑๗๙ การพิมพ์. น. ๖๑-๖๒.)

Sapha Ajarn. 2517 [1974]. *Report of the Chiang Mai University Faculty Assembly*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.
(สภาอาจารย์. ๒๕๑๗. *รายงาน สภาอาจารย์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่*. เชียงใหม่: มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.)

Sinsawat Yodbangtoey, ed. 2536 [1993]. In *One Hundred Beautiful Verses*. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation and Former Students of Ajarn Angun.
(สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. ๒๕๓๖. *ร้อยบท รจนา*.กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา และคณะศิษย์ อาจารย์องุ่น มาลิก.)

Sinsawat Yodbangtoey, ed. 2542 [1999]. *Remembering the Flower Blooming in Our Hearts Teacher Angun Malik*. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation. Page 17.
(สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. ๒๕๔๒. *รำลึกถึงดอกไม้กลางใจชน ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา.)

Sinsawat Yodbangtoey, ed. 2543 [2000]. *A Beautiful Life: Teacher Angun Malik.* Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation.
(สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. ๒๕๔๓. *ชีวิตงาม ครูองุ่น มาลิก*. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา.)

Sixth October Thirtieth Anniversary Committee. 2549 [2006]. *Protecting Peoples' Democracy*. Bangkok: Sixth October Thirtieth Anniversary Committee.
(คณะกรรมการจัดงาน ๓๐ ปี ๖ ตุลา. *ปกป้องประชาธิปไตยประชาชน*. กรุงเทพฯ: คณะกรรมการจัดงาน ๓๐ ปี ๖ ตุลา.)

Somporn Chanthachai, ed. 2544 [2001]. *The People Must Be the Masters of the Land*. Bangkok: Rongphim Duan Tula.
(สมพร จันทรชัย, บ. ๒๕๔๔. *ประชาชนต้องเป็นใหญ่ในแผ่นดิน*. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์เดือนตุลา.)

Sucheela Tanchainan. 2546 [2003]. *Opening the Memories of the Imprisoned Women of 6 October*. Bangkok: 6 October Factfinding Committee.
(สุชีลา ตันชัยนันท์. ๒๕๔๖. *เปิดบันทึก นักโทษหญิง ๖ ตุลา*. กรุงเทพฯ: คณะกรรมการรับข้อมูลและสืบพยานเหตุการณ์ ๖ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๙.)

Surachai Wankaew. 2549 [2006]. *Two Years Tak Bai: Lives that Demand an Answer*. Bangkok: Social Development Center, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.
(สุริชัย หวันแก้ว, บ. ๒๕๔๙. *2 ปี ตากใบ: ชีวิตที่ต้องการคำตอบ*. กรุงเทพฯ: ศูนย์ศึกษาการพัฒนาสังคม คณะรัฐศาสตร์จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย.)

Tej Bunnag. 2524 [1981]. *Ro. So. 121 Rebellion.* Bangkok: Thai Watthana Phanit.
(เตช บุนนาค. *ขบถ ร.ศ. ๑๒๑*. กรุงเทพฯ: ไทยวัฒนาพานิช.)

Thak Chaloemtiarana. 2518 [1975]. "University Life." In *People of the New Generation*. Edited by Thammasat Student Union. Bangkok: Thammasat University.
(ทักษ์ เฉลิมเตียรณ. ๒๕๑๘. "ชีวิตในมหาวิทยาลัย." ใน *คนรุ่นใหม่*. องค์การนักศึกษาธรรมศาสตร์, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์.)

Thak Chaloemtiarana. 2524 [1981]. "ISOC: Lullaby for the Communist Specter." *Thammasat Journal* 10.2: 107-112.
(ทักษ์ เฉลิมเตียรณ. ๒๕๒๔. "กอ.รมน.: บทความเพื่อกล่อมผีคอมมิวนิสต์ให้ลับ." *วารสารธรรมศาสตร์* ๑๐.๒: ๑๐๗-๑๑๒.)

Thammasat University Volunteer Development Center. 2516 [1973]. *Drops of Sweat and the Trace of a Smile*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Volunteer Development Center.
(ศูนย์นักศึกษาอาษาพัฒนา มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์. ๒๕๑๖. *หยาดเหงื่อกับรอยยิ้ม*. กรุงเทพฯ: ศูนย์นักศึกษาอาษาพัฒนามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์.)

Thanet Aphornsuvan. 2521 [1978]. *Thai Society and Politics.* Bangkok: P.P. Press.
(ธเนศ อาภรณ์สุวรรณ. ๒๕๒๑. *สังคมและการเมืองไทย*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ พี.พี.)

Thanet Aphornsuvan. 2539 [1996]. *Literature in Life, Life in Literature*. Bangkok: Samnakphim Mingmit.

(ธเนศ อาภรณ์สุวรรณ. ๒๕๓๙. *วรรณกรรมในชีวิต:ชีวิตในวรรณกรรม.* กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์มิ่งมิตร.)

Thanet Aphornsuvan. 2546 [2003]. "The first generation of Thai students' movement." In *Thai Student Movements from June 1932-14 October 1973*. Edited by Witayakorn Chiengkul. Bangkok: Saithan.
(ธเนศ อาภรณ์สุวรรณ. ๒๕๔๖. "ความเคลื่อนไหวของนักศึกษาไทยในยุคแรก." ใน *ขบวนการนักศึกษาไทย จาก ๒๔๗๕-๑๔ ตุลาคม ๒๕๑๖*. วิทยากร เชียงกูล, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: สายธาร.)

Thaweelak Phonrachom. 2549 [2006]. "Diaries, petitions, declarations, etc: finding knowledge in the documents of Pornphetch Muansri, a female farmer from Nakorn Sawan." *Warasan Chotmaihet Thammasat* 10: 68-89.
(ทวีลักษณ์ พลราชม. ๒๕๔๙. "ไดอารี่ จดหมายร้องเรียน แถลงการณ์ ฯลฯ: แกะรอย 'ความรู้' จากเอกสารของ พรเพชร เหมือนศรี หญิงชาวนจังหวัดนครสวรรค์." *วารสารหอจดหมายเหตุธรรมศาสตร์* ๑๐: ๖๘-๘๙.)

Volunteer Development Assembly (VDA). 2514 [1971]. *Volunteer Development Assembly*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University Student Association.
(ชุมนุมอาสาพัฒนา. ๒๕๑๔. *ชุมนุมอาสาพัฒนา.* เชียงใหม่: สโมสรนักศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่.)

Watcharaphan Chantornkhachorn. 2536 [1993]. "The beautiful and complete life of Ajarn Angun Malik"]. In *One Hundred Beautiful Verses*. Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation and Former Students of Ajarn Angun. Pages 11-15.
(วัชระพันธุ์ จันทรขจร. ๒๕๓๖. "ช่วงชีวิตที่งดงามและจบสิ้นแล้วของ อาจารย์องุ่น มาลิก." ใน *ร้อยบท รจนา.* สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา และคณะศิษย์ อาจารย์องุ่น มาลิก. น. ๑๑-๑๕.)

Wiriya Chunchoptham. 2536 [1993]. "My teacher, teacher of the people." In *One HundredBeautiful Verses.* Edited by Sinsawat Yodbangtoey. Bangkok: Chaiwana Foundation and Former Students of Ajarn Angun. Pages 76-80.
(วิริยา ชื่นชอบธรรม. ๒๕๓๖. "ครูครูของฉัน ครูของประชาชน." ใน *ร้อยบท รจนา.* สินธุ์สวัสดิ์ ยอดบางเตย, บ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิไชยวนา และคณะศิษย์ อาจารย์องุ่น มาลิก. น. ๗๖-๘๐.)

Witayakorn Chiengkul. 2516 [1973]. "Returning to read the novels of 'Sriburapha.'" *Sangkhomsat Parithat*. 11.7: 69-72.
(วิทยากร เชียงกูล. ๒๔๑๖. "กลับไปอ่านนิยายของ 'ศรีบูรพา.'" *สังคมศาสตร์ ปริทัศน์.* ฉบับที่ ๗ ปีที่ ๑๑. น. ๖๙ – ๗๒.)

Worawut Kosonyutthasorn. 1975. "Khrai khaa" ["Who Kills"]. *Yutthakot* 84.1 (September): 39 – 44.
(วราวุธ โกศลยุทธศาร. "ใครฆ่า." *ยุทธโกษ* ๘๔.๑: ๓๙-๔๔.)

Wutthichai Munsin and Thammanit Worakorn, eds. 2525 [1982]. *Peasant Rebellions*. Bangkok: Social Science Assocation of Thailand.
(วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์ และ ธรรมนิตย์ วราภรณ์, บ. ๒๕๒๕. *กบฏชาวนา*. กรุงเทพฯ: สมาคมสังคมศาสตร์แห่งประเทศไทย.)

III. Bilingual books

Department of Corrections. 2520 [1977]. *Annual Report 1976*. Bangkok: Ministry of the Interior.
กรมราชทัณฑ์. ๒๕๒๐. *รายงานประจำปี ๒๕๑๙*. กรุงเทพฯ: กระทรวงมหาดไทย.

Department of Corrections. 2521 [1978]. *Annual Report 1977*. Bangkok: Ministry of the Interior.
กรมราชทัณฑ์. ๒๕๒๑. *รายงานประจำปี ๒๕๒๐*. กรุงเทพฯ: กระทรวงมหาดไทย.

Department of Corrections. 2522 [1979]. *Annual Report 1978*. Bangkok: Ministry of the Interior.
กรมราชทัณฑ์. ๒๕๒๒. *รายงานประจำปี ๒๕๒๑*. กรุงเทพฯ: กระทรวงมหาดไทย.

Department of Corrections. 2523 [1980]. *Annual Report 1979*. Bangkok: Ministry of the Interior.
กรมราชทัณฑ์. ๒๕๒๓. *รายงานประจำปี ๒๕๒๒*. กรุงเทพฯ: กระทรวงมหาดไทย.

Office of the Juridical Council's Welfare Fund. 2515 [1972]. *Constitution of the Kingdom, B.E. 2515*. Bangkok: Office of the Juridical Council's Welfare Fund.
สวัสดิการข้าราชการสำนักงานคณะกรรมการกฤษฎีกา. ๒๕๑๒. *ธรรมนูญการปกครองราชอาณาจักรพุทธศักราช*. กรุงเทพฯ: สวัสดิการข้าราชการสำนักงานคณะกรรมการกฤษฎีกา.

IV. English-language periodicals

Bangkok Post
Charged! Updates from Southern Thailand
Investor
Isis Bulletin
Nation
New York Times
Straits Times
Voice of the Nation
Washington Post

V. Thai-language periodicals

Athipat (อธิปัตย์)
Fa Dieu Kan (ฟ้าเดียวกัน)
Khao Sod (ข่าวสด)
Kittisak (เกียรติศักดิ์)
Matichon (มติชน)
Phuchadkan Raiwan (ผู้จัดการรายวัน)
Post Today (โพสต์ทูเดย์)
Prachachaat (ประชาชาติ)
Prachachaat Weekly (ประชาชาติรายสัปดาห์)
Prachathipatai (ประชาธิปไตย)
Ratchakitchanubeksa (ราชกิจจานุเบกษา)
Sajja (สัจจา)
Siam Rat (สยามรัฐ)
Siam Rat Weekly (สยามรัฐรายสัปดาห์)
Sieng Chonabot (เสียงชนบท)
Su Sarn Muanchon (สื่อสารมวลชน)
Thai Niu (ไทนนิวส์)
Thai Rat (ไทยรัฐ)
Thin Thai (ถิ่นไทย)
Walanchathat (วลัญชทัศน์)
Yuthakot (ยุทธโกษ)

VI. Thai-language archival sources

C.M. 1.2.2/3. Chiang Mai Provincial Government Documents. Provincial Administration Office. Laws and Orders. “Decree of 2493 B.E. Land Rent Control Act.”
(ช.ม. ๑.๒.๒/๓. เอกสารจังหวัดเชียงใหม่. สำนักงานปกครองจังหวัด. ประกาศ, พระราชบัญญัติ. “การประกาศใช้พระราชบัญญาติ ควบคุมการเช่านา พ.ศ. ๒๔๙๓.”)

C.M. 1.2.2/20. Chiang Mai Provincial Government Documents. Provincial Administration Office. Laws and Orders. “2517 Land Rent Control Act.”

(ช.ม. ๑.๒.๒/๒๐. เอกสารจังหวัดเชียงใหม่. สำนักงานปกครองจังหวัด. ประกาศ, พระราชบัญญัติ.
"พระราชบัญญาติ ควบคุมการเช่านา ปี ๒๕๑๗.")

C.M. 1.2.2/22. Chiang Mai Provincial Government Documents. Provincial Administration Office. Laws and Orders. "1974 B.E. Land Rent Control Act."
(ช.ม. ๑.๒.๒/๒๒. เอกสารจังหวัดเชียงใหม่. สำนักงานปกครองจังหวัด. ประกาศ, พระราชบัญญัติ.
"พระราชบัญญาติ ควบคุมการเช่านา พ.ศ. ๒๕๑๗.")

Chiang Mai Provincial Order xxx/2520 [1977]. 4 April 2520 [1977]. "On the subject of allowing a civil servant to return to work."
(คำสั่งจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ xxx/๒๕๒๐. ๔ เมษายน ๒๕๒๐. "เรื่องให้ข้าราชการกลับเข้ารับราชการ.")