

## "Red Siam" Manifesto by Giles Ji Ungpakorn

The enemies of the Thai people and Democracy may have their army, courts and prisons. They may have seized and rigged parliament and established the government through crimes like the blockading of the airports and other undemocratic actions by the PAD. Yet those that love democracy, the Redshirts, have strength in numbers and are waking up to political realities. Disorganised and scattered, this movement of ours will be weak, but a party that is organised and self-led can create a democratic fist to smash the dictatorship.

While world leaders such as Obama struggle to solve the serious economic crisis, the Democrat Government in Thailand is allowing thousands of workers to lose their jobs. The government sees its priority only in cracking down on opposition using *les majeste*, it has even created a web-site where citizens can inform on each other. Troops have been sent into communities and villages to stifle dissent.

The enemies of democracy have guns, an army and shadowy bosses in high places. But their weakness is that they are united around an absurd and un-scientific ideology: the ideology of the Monarchy. This ideology seeks to make Thais into grovelling serfs. They want us to believe that an ordinary human being, just because of an accident of birth, can be transformed into a God, when the true abilities of the king are no different from millions of ordinary engineers, artists, farmers or skilled workers.

The conservative elites want us to believe that the king loves and takes care of the people. But the Thai population are quite capable of looking after themselves. All that is beautiful and honourable about Thai society has been created by working people.

This king:

- grew in stature under the corrupt military dictators: Sarit, Tanom and Prapass.
- allowed innocent people to be executed after they were falsely accused of killing his older brother.
- supported the blood bath at Thammasart University on 6th October 1976 because he felt that Thailand had "too much democracy". He was also the patron of the violent gang that were called the "village scouts".
- allowed the army to stage a coup in September 2006. Furthermore he allowed his name to be used by the army, the PAD protestors and the Democrat Party, in the destruction of democracy.
- has been an advocate of economic views which reveal his opposition to state social welfare for the poor. But what is worse, as one of the richest men in the world, the king has the arrogance to lecture the poor to be sufficient in their poverty (through the notion of the Sufficiency Economy).

Finally, this king allows his supporters to proclaim that he is "the father of the nation," and yet his own son is not respected by anyone in Thai society!

The elites in Thailand, who claim legitimacy from the king, are exploiters and blood-suckers. They are not the real owners of society. They should remember that their wealth and status is as a result of the hard work of those ordinary citizens whom they despise.

For the millions of Thais who know all this to be true, it is only fear and intimidation that stops us all from speaking this truth out loud.

If we are alone, we will be frightened. If we are together we will have courage. It is time to bring into the open our anger, courage and reason in order to destroy the fear in Thai society and to bring light back to our country. We must all ask questions about the present regime, which after all is nothing other than a dictatorship which shrouds us in darkness. When we all stand up and ask questions, they cannot jail us all.

So long as we crawl before the ideology of the Monarchy, we shall remain no better than animals. We must stand up and be humans, citizens in a modern world.

The red, white and blue Thai flag, copied from the West in order to indoctrinate us to be loyal to "Nation Religion and King", the same slogan which was recently last used by the PAD protestors who blocked the airports. Yet during the French revolution, the red white and blue meant "Liberty Equality and Fraternity". This is the slogan we must use to free Thailand from the "New Order" which the PAD and the army have installed.

How can we organise?

Stop dreaming that ex-PM Thaksin will lead the struggle to free society. We cannot rely on the politicians of Pua Thai, either. They will only fight within the confines of present structures of society while thousands of citizens wish to go further. Fighting outside the confines of present day Thai society does not mean taking up arms. It means arming ourselves and the masses of pro-democracy people with ideas that can lead to freedom. We must set up political education groups and form ourselves into a party. This party must be led from below by people in all communities, workplaces and educational institutions. Yet we must be coordinated. We must be firm and confident that all of us can be empowered take a lead and determine our policies. This will be our strength. Our weapons will be mass demonstrations, strikes and spreading ideas to all sections of society, including the lower ranks of the army.

As a movement for genuine democracy, our party must act openly. But in the face of repression through violence and legal means such as *les majeste*, we shall also have to organise secretly. They must not be able to destroy our movement by arresting top leaders. This is another reason why we want self-leadership from below.

What should our common platform look like?

It is not for one person to determine the common platform, which must of necessity be a collective decision. But as a starting point I offer the following ideas, the ideas of one red-shirted citizen.

1. We must have freedom of expression and the freedom to choose our own government without repression and fear.
2. We must have equality. We have to abolish the mentality of "big people-little people". We must abolish the practice of crawling to the royal family. Politicians must be accountable to the electorate, not to shadowy conniving figures beyond popular control. We need to build a culture where citizens respect each other. We must have freedom and equality of the sexes and among different ethnicities. We must respect women, gays and lesbians. We must respect Burmese, Laotians, Cambodians and the Muslim Malay people in the south. Women must have the right to chose safe abortions. Refugees should be treated with friendship and dignity as any civilised society would do.
3. Our country must be a Welfare State. Taxes must be levied on the rich. The poor are not a burden, but are partners in developing the country. People should have dignity. The present exploitative society stifles individuals and destroys personal creativity.
4. In our country the king should honour his constitutional role and stop intervening in politics. But the ruling class in Thailand gain much from using the Monarchy and they will not easily stop doing this. Therefore the best way to solve this problem is to build a Republic where all public positions are elected and accountable.
5. For too long Thai society has been under the iron heels of the generals. We must cut the military budget and abolish the influence of the army in society ensuring that it can no long be an obstacle to democracy.
6. We must have justice. The judges should not claim power from the Crown in order to stop people criticising their decisions. We must change the way that "Contempt of Court" laws are used to prevent accountability. We need to reform the justice system root and branch. We need a jury system. The police must serve the population, not extract bribes from the poor.
7. Citizens in towns and communities must take part in the management of all public institutions such as state enterprises, the media, schools and hospitals.
8. Our country must modernise. We need to develop the education system, transport and housing. We should create energy from wind and solar power to protect the environment.
9. Our country must be peace-loving, not start disputes with neighbouring countries or support wars.

The dinosaurs of Thai society, the Yellow Shirted Royalists, will froth at the mouth in anger at this manifesto, but that is merely the symptoms of people who carry superstitious beliefs

from the past, seeking to cling to their privileges at all costs. Their time is finished. We, the pro-democracy Redshirts will move forward to build a new society.

The elites have no right to rob the people of their dignity in order to prop up their own statuses. This sacrifice of the poor for the benefit of the elites must stop.

Those that say that Thailand is "a special case because we have a king", are merely confirming that the special status of Thailand, which they want to protect, is barbarism and dictatorship. Statements about "National Security" are only about the security for those who exploit and oppress the rest of us. It is not about peace and security for citizens.

This manifesto is just a proposal for a joint platform among Redshirts. My own view is that our country should move even further to a Socialist society, democratic and without class exploitation. But that is a long term goal.

The ruling class only appears powerful because we are crawling on our knees. What we need to do is to stand up, think and act for ourselves. Then we will see how weak and pathetic they really are!

In the past, whether it was during the 1932 revolution or the 1970s struggles against dictatorship, people dreamt of freedom, democracy and social justice. It is time to turn this dream into reality.

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