

## Club of Life deflates Thai 'Condom King'

by Gail G. Billington

Population control advocates beware. On July 4, the Club of Life humiliated Thailand's leading genocidalist, Mechai Viravaidhya, in a confrontation that was covered by press around the world. Rumor is that the international organization founded by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, will not be satisfied until Mechai's filthy business is shut down entirely, and his political ambitions—the Prime Minister's post—put to rest.

On July 4, Club of Life spokesmen in Bangkok intervened at a press conference which was to precede the vasectomy of Tek Kor, a well-known father of 22 children. Mechai had arranged the media event as the latest in a series of publicity stunts to win the Thai people over to his radical population control campaign. But, at the crucial moment, Tek Kor announced to reporters and fellow citizens, "There will be no operation."

According to Agence France Press (AFP), Tek Kor said he had been urged by several U.S. organizations not to go through with the operation because Mechai's sterilization program was "genocidal" and "treasonous." AFP reported, "Tek Kor displayed a letter signed by Linda Everett, Secretary of the Club of Life, warning that if he went through with his vasectomy he would be 'a tool for such genocidal programs that aim to destroy the very wealth of Thailand—her people."

"When Mechai calls for vasectomies on the Fourth of July," the Club of Life letter continued, "our National Day of Independence, on which our Forefathers won for us the freedom of life and progress, he knowingly spits in the face of this vision and the United States."

### Who owns Mechai?

Mechai Viravaidhya, head of Thailand's largest nonprofit development organization, the Population and Community Development Authority of Thailand, and friend of Henry Kissinger, is Thailand's most outspoken genocide lobbyist. His Madison Avenue PR campaign to sell sterilization to the

Thai population has won him the nickname, the "Condom King." His gimmickry is so outrageous that his buttons, T-shirts, and other paraphernalia have been banned from U.N. premises.

Mechai's objectives are identical to his closest supporters in Thailand and abroad, the World Wildlife Fund, the World Population Council, and the Club of Rome, who intend to wipe out what they call "too many black, brown, and yellow children in the world."

Mechai's vasectomy festivals are treated humorously by the Western press, but his campaign for radical population control has already taken its toll on the growth potential of the nation of Thailand. In a January 1985 *Enterprise* article, Jonathan Hayssen, a staff member at Mechai's PDA, revealed that in the decade since Mechai began his family-planning business, Thailand's population growth rate has dropped by 50%, to 1.6% per annum.

Mechai gives most of the credit to the Thai government which, initially reluctant to allow non-medical personnel to dispense contraceptives, now supports a vast network of rural health workers, and accepts donations from U.S. and European corporations to sponsor population control programs.

According to Hayssen, Mechai has also been able to turn a pretty penny peddling his wares. Beginning in 1974 as a one-man family planning agency, Mechai's PDA now employs 600 workers and has an annual turnover exceeding \$10 million. Its expanding array of "public services" includes primary health care, agricultural production and marketing, water resources development, family planning, and assistance to Kampuchean refugees.

Mechai began in the mid-1960s as a government economic planner, but "sensing the unmet demand—and desperate need—for family planning services, especially in rural areas," says Hayssen, he joined the Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand, becoming its general secretary. With a seed grant from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Mechai launched his Community Based Family Planning Services. Four years and several U.S. AID grants later, he was running a network covering one-third, or 16,000, of Thailand's rural villages. Today, Mechai's Bangkok headquarters oversees five branch offices, four clinics, and six rural development centers.

### Tek Kor tells all

When not encouraging (or, it is charged, running) illegal abortion clinics with U.S. foreign aid, Mechai is out drumming up publicity for his vasectomy "festivals," held on the Thai King's birthday and American holidays like Labor Day and Mother's Day. Mechai chose the July 4 vasectomy of Tek Kor as a "way of thanking the U.S. for its assistance in population control," now at \$150,000 a year. Typically, he distributes free beer, hot dogs, and cokes, or railway passes, to destitute peasants, in exchange for vasectomies.

One of Mechai's operations is called the "non-pregnancy agricultural credit" program. Rural farm families get 50% lower interest rates if the wife does not become pregnant during the term of the loan. If the wife is sterilized, the amount borrowed can be doubled; if the husband has a vasectomy, it is quadrupled.

Mechai's televised vasectomy of Tek Kor was to be the biggest thing yet. For five years, he had hounded Tek Kor, knowing that having Thailand's "family planning enemy number one" submit to sterilization would help dispel fears that vasectomy results in impotence.

The Club of Life met with Tek Kor twice to explain Mechai's scheme to use him and his vasectomy to insult the United States. In fact, in a fit of rage at a change in U.S. policy in funding population control, Mechai offered to vasectomize President Reagan! In days, the Club of Life mobilized letters and telegrams to Tek Kor from New Hampshire Voters For Life, Catholics Concerned For Life, a U.S. pro-life medical association, and other pro-life groups, including one in Portugal.

In a taped interview with the Club of Life, Tek Kor revealed that for several years he had refused Mechai's larger and larger bribes, and that then, an operation was launched to bring Tek Kor to financial ruin. After his family was interviewed and photographed by *Koo Sang Koo Som*, a Thai newspaper, its owner, Damrong Pudtan, "turned around and published an unthinkable article against me, plunging me into financial collapse," Tek Kor reported.

Mechai appeared, offering "to set up a fund for each of my 22 kids, a deposit that they could not access until they reached majority age, that would earn interest. The interest could be withdrawn, but not the principal. He also promised that each of the 22 kids would have a chance to study abroad anywhere in the world."

Continued Tak Kor: "That was just the beginning. I could not borrow from anyone, I was squeezed, old creditors demanded payments. . . . I almost went crazy. Then Mechai made this offer of 1 million baht [almost \$40,000]. . . .

... I am not in favor of vasectomies, and never have been, not even now. But I must go through with the vasectomy to save my family . . . so that my children can be happy. I had to accept the conditions in order to stay alive. . . . I am forced into it, really forced into it. . . . They came over here the other day. Mechai said that the key condition is that this financial arrangement must not become news. If it gets out to the press, he would be finished. He would lose face. . . ."

On July 4, the Club of Life, in a room overflowing with international press, asked Mechai if indeed he had promised one million baht to Tek Kor. Mechai took Tek Kor aside. After an hour, Tek Kor announced: "There will be no operation. They promised me a million baht if I agreed to have the operation. They broke their promise and I refused the operation."

Mechai later told reporters (a) he never made the offer; and (b) he made it, but "in jest."

The Tek Kor incident reveals that behind the hot dogs and beer, Mechai will go to any lengths to meet his genocidal objectives. At a June 5 event in Bangkok, sponsored by the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand, Mechai let down his defenses, making known that he not only endorses China's "one child only" and forced abortion program, but that he, personally, advised the Peking government. The FCCT event featured a Chinese propaganda film on the subject, showing in graphic detail the extensive, top-down, layered policing apparatus enforcing the policy. Key are the "granny police," old women in the communes who serve as an effective informant network among China's rural population.

Mechai told his audience, "We must look at this in the total perspective. Part of the film may have made you feel strange in the stomach. . . . But I'd like to suggest perhaps that what you have seen here, no matter how horrible you may have felt, just may appear very weak compared to what may happen 30 to 50 years from now! . . . They aren't happy to go about things this way, but if there's no other way of doing it. . . ."

During the discussion period, Luce Scholar and Club of Life supporter Andrew Delaney took up Mechai's challenge to propose alternatives to the China model. Delaney suggested: "Thailand could emphasize high-profile development, getting more scientists in production and industry," pointing to South Korea, where a greater number of scientists in agriculture had resulted in four times more per-hectare rice yield than Thailand.

In the reception that followed, Mechai said to Delaney: "So, come, let's talk. You are the biggest asshole I ever met in my life."

Delaney: "It's comforting to know that the feeling is mutual since I have never encountered a more supercilious clown than yourself. That doesn't speak to the substance of your policies, which I find to be even more objectionable than yourself."

Mechai: "The sooner you are out of Thailand the better it will be for this country."

Delaney: "I didn't know that one of your other talents was bullying foreign visitors. . . ."

Mechai: "I understand that you are a Luce Scholar. This is like the Rhodes Scholarship for Asia. . . . The committee must have been asleep when they picked you."

Delaney: "A typically arrogant comment since you are scarcely in a position to judge my qualifications. . . ."

Mechai: "I am going to write a letter to the Luce Foundation complaining about you and will run you out of this town."

The challenge has been issued. After the public humiliation of Mechai at the Tek Kor press conference, the question is only: Who will be packing his bags?