

he had been arrested *in absentia* in Thailand. He spent the next few years lecturing at the University of Toronto, Cornell University in New York, and at the University of California at Berkeley.

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

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

### 'Buddhist socialism'

Sulak had been influenced by a Thai Buddhist sect headed by a monk named Buddhadasa, who was an advocate of "Buddhist socialism." Buddhadasa argued that a "dictatorial Buddhist socialism" was justified—in fact, necessary—provided only that the dictator was righteous. While this is a point of debate among Sulak's followers, it does not prevent him from denouncing the leaders of the current government as vile dictators, and even declaring that General Suchinda is not a Buddhist—despite the fact that the ruling council of the Thai Buddhist Sangha visited Suchinda with a pledge of support as the legitimate head of state. Sulak boasts that the rural monks he has helped organize "take no notice of the hierarchy."

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

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

## Sulak boasts, 'I have become a hero again'

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

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

In 1961, having returned from Wales with my Anglican background, I started an intellectual magazine. Before I returned, there was no intellectual publication whatsoever. Anybody who criticized the military government was considered a communist. I did not know that. I went home in 1961 from Wales with all my Anglicanism. I was supposed to be upper class. But I became a torch in the dark world. Then, of course, all the students looked up to our magazine and they all came to see me and I became a small hero among a small group of people. So I started a coffee club, and that was the place where all the student leaders came, for 10 years, from '63 to '73.

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

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

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

over the country, not just in Bangkok, because the NGOs are involved everywhere.

The NGOs have been respected very much. In '73, '76, they were labeled communists. Now, even this government, in the last elections, asked the NGOs to supervise the elections. These NGOs have now become the pro-democracy movement. Nobody trusts the government; they trust the NGOs, partly because they have no power, and partly because they are known for honesty, and that is why the NGOs now command respect. In fact, you see, before Suchinda resigned, the NGOs came out together and set up a commit-

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tee of seven to oversee all the demonstrations. All these seven were ordered to be arrested. And later on there was a declaration of 17 more dangerous persons, and they are not allowed to leave the country, and they are all my friends, you see.

The people who played a very important role in the demonstrations are not known. We like a well-known person to be known. These seven people are very well-known people; we want them to be known, but those who are really working—my young people—one is a Buddhist monk, you see, and they keep on moving from one office to another. They raid our office, but by that time, we have moved to another. At least our people are very well informed. We can get much more information than the foreign journalists. And we do thorough research. These are the young people we know. Some may say I trained them, but I didn’t train them. We work with them. It is good that I have been away for seven months—they do not need a guru or anybody.

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

from the Gulf of Siam and we pollute our Gulf of Siam. We fish in the Gulf of Burma and Vietnam.

The World Bank was meeting in Bangkok in October. Everywhere the people demonstrated against the building of the dam to show the bank that we don’t want that dam. Only the rich people want the dam. And again, the monks have come out for the people. We stopped many dams. We stopped cable cars. We stopped high-rise buildings. So that is a good sign.

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

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

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

Economic growth is a great danger to our people.

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

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

*Against Plato:* My lectures in Chicago and at Harvard made very clear that there are two lines of thought, fundamentally. One is the worship of power; it goes right back to Confucianism, that the emperor has the mandate of Heaven; and right back to Platonic thought, of the philosopher king,

in the West; it goes back to Hobbes and so on, that power is justified; and back to the Hindu concept, of the *deva raja*, the divine ruler. Whatever they have the "right" to do, they do it. That is not only Tiananmen Square, but also Ne Win, and of course the Thai also follow that line. The Thai have been influenced more by the Hindu concept, and, of course, later on, by the western colonial concept.

The Thai elites never understood the West properly. They only brought the prevailing norm, which is the worship of power, which is strongly advocated by Plato; the worship of money and greed, strongly advocated by Adam Smith; or the alternative, a few who joined the Marxists, which is another kind of power, full of hatred, destruction. But the beauty of the West; you have the real primitive Christianity, going right back to Christ, to Francis of Assisi, to the Menonites, the Quakers—you even have this in the Roman Church, like Thomas Merton.

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

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

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

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

*The Thai military is fascist:* In 1939 [when the Japanese occupied Thailand], the military backed the wrong horse.

Thailand imitated Hitler and Deutschland. The Deutsch were the Aryans, the superior race. And like the Deutsch, they said that the Chinese were the enemy of the Thais. We must hate the Chinese even though they were our fathers, and grandfathers. You see, as I said, they were with Hitler and Japan, and they were defeated in the Second World War. But all this is never acknowledged.

*On Suchinda:* The pact in 1957 was that the Army and the civilians would share the spoils, but that the Army would remain behind the scenes. But in the last three or four years, the politician end became out of control. The politicians felt that the time of the coup d'état was over, so they became more corrupted and did not share with the Army people. So they became very angry. They kicked the politicians out in 1991, and claimed that they wanted to put the house right, that they wanted a clean, honest government—this was Suchinda. So people did not mind that the coup came.

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

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

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