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Citizen King

Embodying Thainess

There are many things I might have become, including a communist, were it not for his majesty the King.

(An alleged remark of Kukrit Pramoj)¹

FROM THE LOWLIEST OFFICE TO MEGA-MINISTRIES, IMAGES OF the King and royal family appear on bulletins, walls and calendars. The King's aphorisms circulate in memos reminding *kharachakan* (the king's servants) of their duties. His statements lay the basis for thousands of royal projects. This king's apparent omnipresence has intensified since 1976, whereafter all state agencies have complied in propagating the ideology of 'democracy with the king as head of state'. This idea had, in principle, informed previous constitutions; after 1976 it became part of public pronouncements to delineate the specificity of Thai democracy. The deployment of the term pointed to prestigious gains made by the monarchy after its rehabilitation under the Sarit dictatorship and its subsequent mediating and crisis-management roles in the events of 1973 and 1976. For those in the know, the term also resonated with Bhumiphol Adulyadej's newly acquired political power as king. This power has grown as a result of his relatively unscrutinized and shrewd political interventions. If, in the mid-1970s, the fate of the monarchy seemed uncertain, within less than a decade even progressive intellectuals could not conceive of the Thai nation without its wise king. The divine-like status of Bhumiphol is not part of the family treasure, but something that hundreds of officials in the palace and other agencies have contrived to create. Key to this has been the promotion of 'democracy with the king as head of state'.

The ideology of 'democracy with the king as head of state' is a curious mixture of traditionalist conceptions of kingship and democracy. In the traditionalist aspect the king is seen as inviolable and infallible, and remains free of any accusation. His Buddhist-prescribed duties [*rachatham*] to the people include using Buddhism to rule the country in line with the ten virtues. He is also to provide morale to the people, ensure the production of food, recognize the people's achievements and alleviate their suffering. Furthermore, the king must be healthy and have a strong entourage supporting him. He must also be 'born to be king' – this relates to his own karmic merit as well as the high family circle from which he emerges.²

Traditional concepts of kingship clearly remain significant in the politics of legitimacy surrounding King Bhumiphol. This traditionalism is bolstered by royal

language, which deliberately separates the monarchy from the people. Dictionaries of royal vocabulary list thousands of correct usages for speaking of royals. This royal language elevates royalty above humanity. As Sombat notes, the individuals who address themselves to royal personages begins with the statement, ‘May the power of the dust and the dust under the soles of your royal feet protect my head and the top of my head.’³ For Sombat, court language functions to safeguard and naturalize the sacerdotal/common divide by enforcing and policing a linguistic divide which makes humble and earthly the addressee to royalty. No wonder, then, that the 1932 post-revolutionary regime attacked royal language and attempted to reduce its usage. However, during the Sarit era the court was able to rehabilitate its position and advance its usage.⁴

Given these traditional premises, it would seem paradoxical that Thai kingship, in the contemporary period, is also melded with democratic ideology. Given the threats to stability emerging from social transformation, it was the king who could – as a symbol of order, place and identity – act as a focal point of loyalty. As a central institution from which the state’s ideological practices could be referenced and embodied, the monarchy in effect functioned as a central institution in political development. There is a logic to this paradox: the role of the king might be seen as just one form of transitional adaptation by an elite of a traditional institution, and a conscious application of culture and tradition for the purposes of development and order. If democracy is understood as a form of discipline, the role of the monarchy becomes clear: it acts as a strategic site for the production of modern citizens and political order in a modernizing society.

This chapter considers the reconstruction of national ideology after the events of 1976. The focus is on providing a critical exposition of the construction of a national ideology around Thai identity and the king, such that one might speak of an intimate form of democrasubjection. In constructing and deploying a renewed national ideology in the post-1976 period, state actors addressed the people as specifically ‘Thai’, the attributes of which were exemplified by the king. The task of defining the Thai self was given to the National Identity Board, and it is in that organization that democrasubjection as a hegemonic project (the national imaginary) most clearly met democrasubjection as an embryonic project of directed self government (Foucault’s ‘conduct of conduct’). The meeting ground was in proposed regimes of self-discipline and self-identification around significant metaphors of Thai selfhood/nationhood. Building a disciplined self/nation was the aim of national ideology. Much of this chapter attempts to map the ideological and organizational planning that went into defining regimes of Thainess. Thainess here is understood as bridging the hegemonic and governmental aspects of democrasubjection, because it gestures both upwards to the nation, and downwards to the Thai self. The material is mundane, but by providing an exposition a clear picture emerges of just how consciously ‘Thainess’, the nation–religion–monarchy triad and democracy were mobilized for hegemonic and governmental aims.

Renewing the nation/renewing the monarchy

After the tumultuous events of 1973–76, the monarchy became the focus of a new round of ultra-nationalist drum-beating and identity-seeking. The right wing had monopolized the official ideology of nation, religion and monarchy during the polarized political struggles of the 1970s. Many thus associated the triad with the appalling violence of the ultra-right.⁵ To counteract this, an aggressive restoration of the monarchy involved integrating the progressive themes of democracy and social development and remoralization of the state around the figure of the monarch. The position of the monarchy was promoted by extensive media manipulation, effectively creating a cult of personality around Bhumiphol.

The restoration of the monarchy, however, should not simply be read as ideological cynicism. Firstly, the Buddhist conception of the monarch required his public exposure as a righteous ruler; his father-like portrayal was functionally required for the maintenance of state-sanctioned Buddhism itself. Secondly, filtered through both conservative and liberal readings of Thai history, there emerged a widespread belief of the king's positive role in democratic evolution. This was bolstered by the citation of critical interventions by the king, including his role in offering political advice to students before 1973, his reputed role in ordering Generals Praphat and Thanom out of the country in 1973, and his rejection of the insertion of certain royal prerogatives in the 1974 draft constitution. Most cited is his intervention in the May 1992 events. On prime time television Bhumiphol lectured protagonists of the May events, Prime Minister Suchinda and Chamlong Srimuang, who lay semi-prostrate before him. However, a critical reading of that event shows Bhumiphol publicly sympathizing with Suchinda. Bhumiphol expressed frustration that his advice to 'promulgate now, amend later' (regarding the military backed 1991 Constitution) had been ignored by those pushing for immediate amendments:

The draft Constitution had been amended all along; it had been changed even more than originally expected . . . let me say that when I met General Suchinda [in late 1991], General Suchinda concurred that the Constitution should first be promulgated and it could be amended later . . . And even lately General Suchinda has affirmed that it can be amended. It can be gradually amended so that it will be eventually improved in a 'democratic way'. Thus, I have already mentioned the way to solve the problem many months ago.⁶

There is, too, the most recent intervention, in which it is rumoured the king sought Anand's involvement in the drafting of the new constitution in 1997, and also instructed the armed forces to support the draft.⁷

It is notable that the word 'rumoured' occurs in the preceding paragraph. This is significant, reflecting the blockage of discussion on a central political institution in Thailand. This has afforded Thai social science little opportunity to offer genuinely critical analyses of the Thai social formation. While negative comments are almost impossible to make in the Thai language, favourable comments abound, both in

written and oral form. Genuine attempts at analysing social change, the conditions of hegemony and the position of the monarch, are highly restricted when reference cannot be made to a central economic, political and ideological force. While radical critique suffers, liberal and conservative renderings are sustained by the use of an informal and highly skewed body of knowledge about the king within academic and elite circles. Essentially, a number of royalist liberals are in a position to informally and formally highlight their interpretations of the king through anecdote and official versions of history. This provides the interpretation with some authority. Such interpretations emerge from what may be called the 'insider knowledge complex'. Interviewees are often at the receiving end of this informal production of royal mythology. Many will be asked to turn off tape recorders during interviews so as to hear of the king's positive interventions in politics and the like. Note, here, that even positive insider knowledge cannot be entrusted to the impersonal record of a tape recorder; rather it is dispatched for public consumption in a cautious and controlled way. When the insider puts it on public record, moving it from the level of privileged knowledge to public knowledge, it then becomes part of the staple of democratic justifications about the present monarch. The insider knowledge complex basically valorizes those close to the monarchy as being able to interpret the role of the king, while outsiders, Thai and foreign, are seen as incapable of presenting authentic accounts of the role of the monarch. However, the tenability of insider knowledge is highly dubious. It is produced in relations of domination that allow some things to be said and others not. Insiders are not so much privileged observers of the real, but ideological proponents of skewed interpretations of the informal political role of the royals. It is, one might say, the hearsay of the 'nudge and wink' school. While proffered as individual insight, it is no less vulgar than the exhortatory propaganda of leadership cults.

The king's interventions, his apparent restoration of 'order' and calm, have led to an interpretation of the monarchy as an indispensable para-political institution in Thailand's democracy. Certainly, skilful propaganda and the wilful hopes of royalist liberals aid this image (see Chapter 8). The sum effect of this historical image-making is that the present king is seen as a mediating power between hostile social forces, despite his family's position as leading capitalists and landowners with a personal stake in the wellbeing of Thai capitalism.⁸ The palace's unique position as a public exemplar of conservative traditions and its existence as a network of capital have proved an invaluable resource for Thailand's elite democratic development. With the aura of traditional authority, built up since the 1950s, the monarchy is able to strategically intervene in favour of order.

A key ideological resource and active agent of power bloc, the palace has succeeded in partly mobilizing resources for its own ends, but it has also been mobilized by social forces to assume a position at the helm of national ideology. The reciprocity of this relationship remains relatively unexamined.

For many progressive intellectuals, the 1980s brought a reconciliation with the monarchy. As they moved away from projects of radical change and embraced forms

of liberal and participatory democracy they came to appreciate the monarchy's role in negotiating a path towards the political institutionalization of democracy. In effect they accepted Thanin's idea that it functioned as a checkpoint in a society where political development faced a number of obstacles including a political culture characterized by patronage, and a political system dominated by military and bureaucratic elements. The elite project of liberalization and institutionalization of democratic institutions could be aided by pragmatic use of royal symbolism. Additionally, some writers see the king's symbolic role of embodying Thainess as a guarantee against the monopolization of power by any one sector. For example, Thirayut Bunmi, the one-time student radical and anti-royalist, claims the term 'democracy with the king as head of state' was popularized *after* the late 1970s precisely as an antidote to military notions of democracy. Thirayut argues that the term 'democracy with the king as head of state' implied that all people had to be part of any democratic settlement. The term is said to encompass all relevant social groups, since the king is the embodiment of all Thais.⁹ With this explication of the term, Thirayut can claim that notions of 'democracy led by the military' (a doctrine associated with an influential clique in the military) are effectively an assault on the equality of all parts embodied in the king. This is an ingenious reading, but influential no less, for it informs a progressive strategy that has moved from the mass struggles of the 1970s to the more moderate and symbolic struggles for graduated democratic development under the 'classless' political imaginary of civil society.

The historical processes of the construction of the royal myth cannot be ignored in any attempt to 'progressively' appropriate this institution; it has never been a neutral national symbol. It has, rather, been an active political force working towards what Kevin Hewison, referring to the ideological level, calls a 'conservative capitalist state.' This is a state in which the monarchy ideologically disciplines the rural population through the discourse of thrift, self-reliance, national security and moral selfhood. Pointing to the recurrent themes in the king's speeches that stress discipline and law and order, unity, and the duties of people, Hewison aptly describes the king's thinking as conservative.¹⁰

The king's thinking on good citizenship certainly conveys a conservative regard for order and discipline. Kanok Wongtrangan's study of Bhumiphol's speeches, spread over thirty years, suggests that the king's thought on good citizens revolves around four central issues.

First, the people must be educated, have quality and ability: this is related to the theme of self-reliance and economic progress.¹¹ Educated people would help society progress in an orderly fashion and be prosperous.¹² Second, the people must be good and have religion, for religion helps people behave appropriately and 'be a good person, to behave beneficially and not to cause trouble for oneself or others.' Furthermore, knowing one's status and duties 'will lead to happiness and the wellbeing . . . for human society.'¹³ Third, the people must have unity so that the country can progress and prosper, as well as remain secure. Unity leads to the survival of the nation, pride and dignity.¹⁴ Unity 'is the strongest force in the land

and when it is achieved it will inspire the people in the nation to be unanimous in attempting to . . . create progress and security.¹⁵ Finally, the people must have strength. On this principle, the king discourses on the importance of self-reliant people who are able to learn and develop both their minds and bodies. Only on this basis will a society prosper. Importantly, here the thematic of the common good is located in the wellbeing of the excellent individual whose path towards self-development has positive consequences for the wellbeing of society as a whole. Thus the moral basis of society, while exemplified in the actions and words of the king and the Buddhist *sangha*, must also be rooted in the self-contained and self-interested activities of strong and capable individuals.¹⁶

As an exponent of conservative forms of capitalism, the palace has vested interests in the propagation of ideology. As Chairat Charoensin-O-Larn notes, with the fragmentation and competition in and between the state and the bourgeoisie, the monarchy remained a key force for integration.¹⁷ Thus the constancy of the monarchy's political position, its abiding regard for security and productive labour, reflects the concerns of a reflexive capitalist agent empowered by the prestige of royalty, and which has subsequently succeeded in positioning itself at the head of an ensemble of bureaucratic and capitalist forces.

Given the glaring disparity between the rich and the poor, the monarchy's dual position (as an agent of particular political and economic interests and as a symbol of the nation) requires an iron regime of controlled imagery. In the conditions of ideological restoration, post-1976, a new eagerness to police *lèse-majesté* emerged, reflecting the further consolidation of the monarchy and the bureaucratic and capitalist reverence to it.¹⁸ According to Streckfuss, *lèse-majesté* moved from being an offence against the monarchy to being an offence against national security in 1957. Furthermore, in 1976 the Thanin regime increased the length of imprisonment for *lèse-majesté* to fifteen years.¹⁹

While used as a political instrument by some, overall the policing of *lèse-majesté* has been in the interests of the palace power bloc. Apart from favoured sons, few are spared this ruthless policing. Let me give some examples. A month after Thanin came to power a man was arrested by police on charges of *lèse-majesté* for using a royal village scout scarf to wipe a table.²⁰ In 1983, more threateningly, a democracy activist was jailed for eight years for the publication of a book, *Nine Kings of the Chakri Dynasty*, which was highly critical of the monarchy and also offered historical argument about the monarchy's less-than-honourable intentions.²¹ In 1988 a politician, and one time coup-maker, was sentenced to four years' jail for suggesting that life would have been easier had he been born in the palace.²² There are many other instances of this kind of arrest, censorship and image-building. Most famously, of course, is the enigmatic case of Sulak Sivalak, the radical conservative who has openly criticized the monarchy for partisanship and failing to fulfil its traditional role.²³ More generally, censorship and self censorship ensures that even historical points are to be policed.²⁴ Touching on the sensitive point of King Taksin, *King Taksin's Soldiers*, a television drama, was cancelled even though the

authorities had already censored it.²⁵ Furthermore, palace news on every television channel each evening reaffirms appropriate representation of the monarchy.

The existence of *lèse-majesté* should not be seen as a minor blotch on an otherwise clean slate of political opening-up. In the 1980s liberalization was a limited affair, opening a political space for elite conflict and expression, bounded by the triad of nation, religion and monarchy.²⁶ In villages, newspapers and in relations with the bureaucracy and capitalists, ordinary Thais faced the brute rule of superior power and the strictures of national identity and culture propagated by state ideologues and the palace. The stage-managed role of the monarch, the compulsory respect shown to the institution, and the pressure of social conformity left many people with a taste of bitterness which few felt confident to express.²⁷ Such was democracy with the king as head of state.

Expectations of reduced policing of *lèse-majesté* in the near future are sanguine to say the least. Thai elites are well aware of how the free press has led to public mockery of the British monarchy, and they are fearful of what would happen were the Thai royal family open to scrutiny. The existence of the law does not suggest that royalty is despised and needs protection, although there are elements of this – but who dares speak with universal sanction and prison waiting? The laws have a more general application in that they point to the monarchy as central to the entire modern ideological complex; around the figure of a righteous king, democracy may be defined in a traditionalistic and disciplinary manner. The king also stands as a model of the citizen; his practices are seen as virtue-in-making. Through him the identity of Thainess can find expression as a moral self/nation beyond the marketplace, providing the people-body with a quasi-religious solidarity.²⁸

In 1992 the National Identity Board (NIB) published the king's 1991 birthday speech, which touched on the question of democracy. One component of this speech was to chastise those who continued to protest the draft constitution being debated in parliament at the time (see Chapter 5). The National Identity Board believed the speech to give

invaluable guidance . . . not only to economic and social progress of Thailand, but also to the development of democracy, especially the concept of 'Know How to Treasure Unity'. The Royal Speech is, without doubt, of great significance to the lives of all Thai people.²⁹

In this rambling speech the king touches on the need for theories appropriate to Thai conditions.³⁰ He argues that the basis of the nation's survival has been that people know how to cherish unity:

It is very difficult for all the people to be united because it is a near impossibility for a great number of them to really know each other. But 'to know how to treasure unity' is a possibility because it means that everybody knows that he is Thai; if anything happens everyone considers that he is a Thai; if anything happens, everyone knows that there must be unity.³¹

No disciple of Benedict Anderson, Bhumiphol nonetheless concurs on the importance of imagining nationhood. 'Knowing how to treasure Unity', as imagined nationhood, according to the king, also means compromise even if the outcome for oneself is not 'a hundred percent'. Furthermore, 'in the affairs of state it is important that there is a clear directive power, over the people'. Speaking of the need for representative government, he says:

Everyone wants to express his opinion on how to do this and that thing . . . Even when only ten persons speak at the same time, nobody can understand anything at all. And with 55 million persons, who perhaps don't even know what they are talking about, it is worse.³²

Unity, Thainess, compromise and the gesturing towards a unifying authority, all these discursive markers make the king an exponent of the general drift of developmental democracy, one whose underlying thematic is the people-problem – of organizing the people towards productive ends.

Towards national ideology once more

Besides the military and the Local Administration Department, other elements in the universities, security apparatuses and government ministries were part of an attempt to re-ideologize Thai society after the trauma of 1973–6. Statists aimed to formulate elements of past national ideology into a coherent democratic ideology that could effectively respond to both the challenge of the popular movement and the rise of money-politics and parliamentary democracy in the centre. As they cautioned against communism and corruption, state agents deployed the motif of developing a genuine liberal democracy, appropriate to Thailand, and positioned themselves as guardians of the process. Unlike LAD, whose democratic ideology was limited to disciplining its rural constituency while being increasingly truculent towards the urban political classes, the intellectual forces gathered in committees located in the Prime Minister's Office moved to elaborate a comprehensive and historical ideology of 'democracy with the king as head of state', buffered by religious undertones and moral selfhood. Out of this collaboration between civilian and military ideologues came the ideology of 'democracy with the king as head of state' in its fullest sense.³³

As with Order 66/1980, this development had its roots in the conflict with communism and the desperate need to re-hegemonize the social field, as well as restore state influence in the cultural field. As Craig Reynolds notes, attempts to promote culture and identity were rooted in the loss of prestige the state had suffered in the preceding years, thus 'the concept of Thai identity, with its disarming ring of transcendence and permanence, has a specific history and conditions of existence.'³⁴

Indeed, the history of Thainess was continuous and consistent in the sense that Thai nationalism had begun as a modern enterprise well before the 1932

revolution. After the 1932 revolution, it was a constant theme of militaristic state propaganda, mixed with themes of Thai culture and race. Within these discourses, implicit notions of identity (*ekkalak*) lurked, and sometimes were overtly expressed.³⁵ Increasingly, since the 1930s, national ideology has been put to work as a beguiling force aiming to moralize the social field, and dehistoricize the social conditions of life. The hope was that a hegemonic effect of moral unity and a perceived community of fate could be created. It was to the production of this effect that state ideologues aspired in the 1970s. Responding to this task, the National Security Council (NSC), an inter-agency body within the Prime Minister's Office, composed of senior military figures, high-ranking public servants and university officials, met to consider options. Their aim was ideological planning and to find an appropriate institutional embodiment of this. A study of documents circulating within the NSC confirms that the National Identity Board (NIB), established in 1980, was the outcome of these deliberations on the need for ideological rearticulation after the experience of rising communist insurgency and political polarization.³⁶

In 1976 an initial step was taken by setting up the Project to Promote Identity.³⁷ As one university text in cultural studies puts it, the Thanin regime knew that defeating communism was not simply a military matter, but involved ideological measures to 'create unity between the people in the nation . . . so that the people are of one heart.'³⁸ Towards this end a new magazine was published from within the Prime Minister's Office, called *Thai Identity*.³⁹ The editorial of the first issue, attacked the contaminating foreign influence in Thai culture. A call to arms was issued: '[W]e must help each other to promote the strength of Thai identity to be greater and secure.' The magazine declared its fear that Thai culture was being eroded, and compared its own work to that of a dam: '[D]eveloping the mind or culture is like building a dam, because our culture is being washed away.'⁴⁰ The dam metaphor is a fitting one; it provided the magazine with its brief of control and containment of those foreign stormwaters deemed inappropriate.

Concerns such as these were not the property of minor official magazines. In 1976 the NSC was circulating a document on the development of national ideology. That document defines national ideology as 'a system of thought that all people in the nation uphold in order to preserve and build the nation, and which each person aims to act towards together.'⁴¹ The discussion paper notes that ideology is something that can be created, changed and inculcated. Furthermore, it creates morale to fight against obstacles and enemies in pursuit of its realization.⁴² National ideology, the argument develops, should be broadened to encompass the dimensions of politics, economics and social psychology. The rationale for this was that existing ideology (nation, religion, king) is too distant from people (*hangklai tua koen pai*) and no longer 'stimulates' (*raojai*) the people.⁴³ Fearing the consequences of rapid social change and the subsequent instability, the NSC foresaw continuing threats to national security as long as the people were 'confused, anxious, and without a common standpoint.'⁴⁴ In this state, the people

were seen as vulnerable targets to an 'opposition that has a rigid and stimulating ideology, which will hegemonize [*krongnam lae nam khwamkhithen*] the thinking of the people, before our side.'⁴⁵

In order to develop national ideology, the NSC argues that negative Thai values need to be eradicated and positive Thai values nurtured. These values included: love of freedom; loyalty towards the monarchy; respect of religion; dislike of violence; assimilation; coordination of interests; elevation of money, power and knowledge, seniority, generosity, forgiving, fun and risk-taking; belief in the supernatural; doing whatever one pleases; upholding of tradition and custom; a Buddhist contentedness; and an attitude supportive of non-interference in other people's affairs.⁴⁶

Furthermore, any ideology to be effective should address people's needs. Arguing that 'Thai society does not have clear class divisions'⁴⁷ the NSC states that such needs are to be based on occupational differentiation. The groups discussed are farmers, merchants, entrepreneurs and bankers, workers, civil servants including the police and the military, and finally students.

What follows is a calculating picture of the conditions and aspirations of major socio-groupings in Thailand, and how these conditions are to be tied to the construction of an ideology enunciated by the watchful security state. Let this be clear: ideology was to be constructed as a response to protests and dissent that had been monitored by the security state. Consider how the NSC sought to make 'ideology' responsive to the needs of various occupational groups. Having studied protests, the NSC groups the grievances and needs of farmers, who are said to make up 80% per cent of the population, into three categories: land and wellbeing, fair prices, and exploitation by capitalists.⁴⁸

Farmers are said to have the following needs and interests:

Economic dimension

- a reasonable income
- a fair price for produce
- to possess their own land
- adjust methods of production to be more efficient
- cheaper basic consumer goods
- do not want exploitative capitalists, merchants or intermediaries

Social dimension

- safety in life and property
- better and equal social welfare from the state such as public health, public infrastructure and education
- uphold religion and the monarchy
- dislike violent and rapid social change

Political dimension

- do not wish to be involved in politics
- they need officials to appropriately give justice and care
- they need a political system which protects their economic and social interests and which preserves religious and monarchical institutions.⁴⁹

Similar mappings are made of the remaining social groups. As with farmers, the demands of workers, gleaned from over 973 protests, are categorized. The NSC notes that workers, 6 per cent of the population, have developed into groups and are conscious of their own interests. Workers' needs and interests are listed as: fair wages and a reduction in wealth disparities between workers and employees; socially, welfare from employers, good working conditions, good relations with management and an ability to express their opinion, equal access to social welfare opportunity and equality, and the need to be accepted as an important class. Politically, workers are seen as wanting to play a role in protecting their own interests, and, more generally, as wanting a political voice.⁵⁰

As for capitalists (merchants/bankers/businesspeople), 9 per cent of the population, it is noted that they pursue their economic interests, and require security and a stable political system to safeguard their interests. The civil service, comprising 5 per cent of the population, is treated as having its own specific interests:

This interest group . . . has power and an important role in leading and building society because the civil service is important in doing the work of the state and it is well educated. Its needs and interests are summarized as follows: an income appropriate to status, it seeks honor and support from society, and prefers gradual change.⁵¹

Politically, civil servants are said to need a government that follows 'the democratic line'.⁵² Finally, students are described as wanting to be the leaders in the struggle for economic and social equality. Furthermore they seek rapid change.

Although unstated, these readings of occupational groupings are informed not just by spying on demonstrations and recording grievances, but also by a typology of political culture. From descriptions of farmers purportedly with little interest in politics who seek comfort under the wings of a benevolent state, to politically conscious students, the research of political scientists on political culture was producing a comprehensive picture of the people-body so that it could be managed. This NSC document served as the basis for discussions on the formation of a national ideology that could creatively respond to social group needs, but which could also unite these groups around a common national interest by expanding the existing contours of national ideology expressed in the triad. The conundrum was how to do this; with remarkable self-consciousness, state ideologists went to work on the problem.

By 1979 the NSC and Cabinet had accepted as a basic statement of national ideology a document submitted by the screening committee of the NSC, written

by Professors Kramol Thongthammachart and Sippamon Ketutat. This document follows closely the argument made in 1976 on the need to develop relevant national ideology which could be a reference point for action and common unity. The authors acknowledge that ideology can emerge 'naturally' by letting social institutions and forces influence members of society. However, they argue a case for setting down supervised measures for socio-political institutions to convey effectively, and in unity, ideology.⁵³ The experience of modern political ideologies such as fascism and communism are cited as demonstrating the need to have unity, comprehensiveness and organizational capacity in order to successfully convey ideology.⁵⁴

The authors note that the NSC, in coordination with government agencies, had elaborated national ideology as follows:

Preserve the nation, defend independence and democracy, protect religion, treasure and preserve the monarchy, eliminate socio-economic disparities, eliminate suffering and nourish wellbeing, assimilate interests, maintain rights and freedoms, create unity and integrity, uphold the identity of and promote the decent culture of the Thai people.⁵⁵

The authors then note that the above ideology can be divided into two levels: national political ideology, and a practical approach to its realization. Political ideology is described as an approach to the political aspirations of the Thai people, which has the compelling power to defeat ideological currents that 'do not correspond with the identity and disposition of the Thai people.'⁵⁶ Such a political ideology is described as:

Protection and preservation of the nation, symbolized by the monarchy, religion and Thai culture . . . a political, economic and social democracy that affirms the important principle that the interests of the community comes before any other, and the cooperation of all groups.⁵⁷

Addressing how this ideology might be realized meant using the methods of democracy, 'consisting of rights and freedoms under the law which protects the interests of the majority', to address social inequalities on the basis of 'the cooperation of all classes that make up society'.⁵⁸

The authors go on to argue the need to address the concrete grievances of the people and for national ideology to reflect such concerns.⁵⁹ In closing, recommendations are presented for the successful propagation of national ideology. These include setting up an organization of language and psychological experts who could simplify ideology into slogans, controlling the media to ensure it does not go against the principles of neutrality and service to the people, nurturing ideologues to convey national ideology in all occupations, and the setting-up of a consultative committee to propose measures on the promotion of national ideology.⁶⁰ Many of these recommendations were acted upon. Of particular note were follow-up workshops for radio broadcasters so that they could be effective communicators of ideology. In one such workshop the importance of national ideology was explained:

Ideology is an instrument of the national leaders, or a doctrine, to use with the masses in order to produce change in the required direction. National ideology should come from the national leaders so that it can be accepted in general.⁶¹

These vigorous recommendations gestured to the past, when more strenuous effort was given to cultural and ideological propagation. Since the Sarit era, Yukthi Mukdawijit observes, such efforts had become lax and lacked organizational backup.⁶² The NSC was effectively recommending a return to more conscious and creative cultural propagation. It was time, some apparently thought, to move beyond the monotonous replaying of nationalist and royalist songs on the radio. Indeed, there was a feeling that the people remained untouched by official ideology, with one NIB notable suggesting that the real ideological triad in Thailand was the 'ideology of three Ss', *saduak*, *sabai* and *sanuk* (convenience, comfort and fun).⁶³ The two documents discussed so far are fairly directive, and the intellectual framework behind them, while apparent, is not expounded.

Important in the formation of post-1976 national ideology is the political thought of Kramol Thongthammachart. Reputedly associated with the Praphat and Thanom regime in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Kramol is a leading intellectual of modern statist democracy. His influence was consolidated in the 1980s when he became Minister attached to the Prime Minister's Office under Prem. In this position he was able to influence the ideological work of the regime through the National Identity Board, sitting as an executive member. In an article that sets out the major themes for the 1980s, Kramol reveals his modernist development outlook and reveals the underlying frame to statist democratic thought. Kramol, an ideologue, saw his task in terms of conscious ideological production directed towards people having ideology on the 'tip of the tongue'.

Working with a notion of ideology as the basis for a normative integration of national society,⁶⁴ Kramol argues for a governing party to support 'national ideology' and to harness social and political institutions towards ideological ends. Citing as examples Indonesia, Burma and Malaysia, Kramol argues that in conflicted societies it is necessary to meld different ideological strands into a national ideology.⁶⁵ However, it is to the experience of China that Kramol looks: 'China was able to use communism as an instrument in leading and mobilizing the people to work for society.'⁶⁶ The conditions for this success lay in the fact that the Chinese Communist Party was a mass party with members who persuaded the people to learn and act in accordance with the ideology. More generally, Kramol lays down six conditions for the effective functioning of a national ideology:

- 1 It must be a system of thought supported by the main social institutions, or which can be moulded into social philosophy.
- 2 It must be a system of thought that can explain the good things that society should preserve and the bad things that should be eliminated for the purpose of social justice and the common good.
- 3 It must be based on reason and science that is empirically provable.

- 4 It must be a system of thought that can point to the methods which people should uphold in order to lead society to an excellent condition.
- 5 It must be a system of thought which the leader practises continuously and which has good results for society, including being able to resist other ideologies.
- 6 It must be a system of thought which corresponds with the consciousness and needs of the majority.⁶⁷

Kramol goes on to argue that should a national ideology be successfully established the people would be united. This would help the people perceive their relationship to each other, a necessary process in the creation of common objectives. Such a state of normative integration would inspire action towards a more just society, as well as help members of society to see through the existing societal decadence.⁶⁸ An ideologically motivated people could help a sluggish society develop, lead to rationally justified behaviour, and would assist the process of peaceful change.⁶⁹ While Kramol follows the general argument that the triad has had a role in uniting the people, he expresses some disquiet because 'the weak point of this ideology is its emphasis on only three institutions of Thai society'. He thus seeks to expand the ideological compass. For him, the problem was not simply that existing ideological propagation was unclear, it also failed to specify how solidarity with the three pillars could be expressed.⁷⁰ Also, Kramol argues that the triad provides no incentive in terms of guaranteeing a better life, thus it is necessary

to expand the three pillars to have wide scope and to encompass approaches and methods to solve various problems of Thai society, even so far that the way of life can be thought of as expressing loyalty to the Nation, Religion and the Monarchy.

This is an important statement, for it provides a link between the three pillars and the ordinariness of everyday life and problems.

Rejecting currents in academia for a form of liberal socialism (seen as being unacceptable to Thai conservatives), Kramol sought to develop an ideology 'that fits with the consciousness of the majority of Thais'.⁷¹ Extrapolating from the findings of an ISOC security-related research project, Kramol reports the people's needs as fivefold:

- Treasure and preserve the nation, religion, the monarchy and the identity of Thainess.
- Develop and build political institutions for a secure democracy.
- Adjust the economic system towards a mixed economy which is just, efficient, and lets the people have a good life, and security of property and life.
- Elevate society and culture of the country so that the people have a simple life, are thrifty, diligent and have a high level of responsibility to society.
- Adjust the administration of the country so that it is a democracy that is clean, pure, just and truly serves the people.⁷²

In an attempt to simplify this fivefold schema, Kramol argues for the first point to be known as the 'ideology of the tri-allegiance' (*udomkan trai pak*) and the remaining four points to be named 'the ideology of the four paths' (*udomkan jatunrak*). The four paths were ways of ensuring the maintenance of the three pillars.⁷³

What is significant about Kramol's article is the manner in which ideology is seen to be a matter of eloquently composing a formula that connects the lives and wellbeing of the people to the three pillars – such that the conduct of those lives is seen as contributing to the security of the triad, and the security of the triad contributes to the wellbeing of the people. This ideological reformation of people's needs into state ideology would be a constant and aggrandizing practice of the state that took shape in a number of organizations including the NIB.⁷⁴

In 1978 General Kriengsak Chomanand, then Prime Minister, established a secret Committee to Promote National Security to respond to attacks on the 'highest institutions' of the land. This committee later took public shape as the Committee to Promote National Identity before being established as a formal office in 1980 when the many currents of thought among statist intellectuals had coalesced into a practical outcome, the establishment of the National Identity Board. The NIB was charged with considering policy, planning and the promotion of national identity, and the promotion of 'knowledge and correct understanding of national institutions.'⁷⁵

Following its establishment, discussion continued on the question of what constituted national identity and ideology. Following Kramol, others argued the case for social justice, income distribution, economic reform and the need to address the shortfalls of the free market.⁷⁶

Towards national identity: to be a democratic Thai

In 1983, recognizing that the notion of Thai identity had not yet commanded public attention, the NIB hosted a conference, bringing together a broad cross-section of society. The aim was straightforward: to have the NIB definition of national identity accepted and propagated.

In its preparatory documents the NIB defines national identity as 'land, people, independence and sovereignty, government and administration, religion, monarchy, culture and dignity (pride)'.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the issue of national identity was to be linked to the development of the country.⁷⁸ Clearly these characteristics refer to the people-body within the geo-body, rather than any individual person. Identity, here, is a projection of the nation as a subject. There is a constant slippage between identity of the nation (as a list of characteristics) and identity of the people (as a list of subjective orientations to the nation). This slippage was a mechanism by which interior/exterior identity could be melded together as national identity: a linking of subjective orientations to the objective and moral existence of the nation, an interiorization of the exterior. Nation as self. Here we are speaking of a process

of democrasubjection in which governmental technology works on the subjective orientations of citizens such that they sustain the political imaginary of Thainess, hegemonically present as democracy with the king as head of state.

An underlying theme of the conference was an affirmation, but also a recognition, of the need to go beyond the association of Thai identity with Prince Damrong's formula of 'love of national independence, toleration and power of assimilation'.⁷⁹

The outcome of the conference was ultimately the adoption by the Prem government of both a policy statement and plans for ideological and identity development.⁸⁰

In this policy document, the meaning of national identity is finally sealed as the unique characteristics of the nation: 'the people, territory, sovereignty and independence, government and administration, religion, monarchy, culture and pride'. It is also made clear that the most important institutions for national security and development were religion and the monarchy.⁸¹ National identity, and its promotion, was without any doubt, then, about the security of the highest institutions in the land, 'the Nation, Religion, Monarchy and democracy with the king as head of state'.⁸² In its policy statement the NIB proposed four operational objectives:

- 1 Promote the understanding of the people, both in and out of the country, towards the Thai monarchy, especially an understanding of royal graciousness and sacrifice, which are good role models.
- 2 Promote religion and unity to raise the integrity and virtue of society and develop the minds of the people.
- 3 Promote the nation by promoting and inculcating virtuous characteristics, promoting graceful characteristics and eliminating ones that obstruct national development.
- 4 Propagate the value of the democratic system with the king as head of state as well as promote ideology and values that support this system of government.⁸³

The various activities that would emerge from the adoption of this policy included propagation of Thainess through the mass media, publications exhorting the beauty of Thainess and exploring the minutiae of Thainess (from the preparation of food to agricultural cultivation, architecture and beliefs). Through these efforts the diversity of people's lives were encompassed in the definition of Thainess.

In 1984 two major publications appeared which set out to strengthen and consolidate the meaning of 'democracy with the king as head of state'. The first was directly attributed to the NIB, *Knowledge about Democracy for the People*.⁸⁴ In this book the NIB offers an extended discussion of democracy aimed at the people in general. This publication presents an authoritative view of democracy in the Thai context and may be considered, in some respects, the outcome of the long ideological journey from 1976. It is, in short, an attempt to define democracy in terms integral to Thainess. Significantly, too, it works towards limiting the rhetorical excesses of

previous official statements of democracy which stressed the 'people's will'. Instead, it presents an extended definition of representative democracy clearly aimed at justifying the limitation of people's participation and their impact on government. In effect, it seeks to temper the civic idealism (delayed) of LAD with more limited notions of people's participation.

The central component of the Thai character, espoused in the book, is derived from the Damrong formula, including compromise, tolerance and love of freedom. Indeed, 'such things are in the hearts of every Thai.'⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it is reported that the subcommittee on national ideology in the NIB notes that there are still aspects of the Thai character that need moulding in a democratic direction, thus the book aims at educating the public about democracy with the king as head of state.⁸⁶ A standard liberal definition of democracy is offered in line with those discussed above. Also appearing is the myth that Prachatiptok graciously bestowed democracy in 1932. Indeed, an evolution of the rights of the people from the reign of Chulalongkorn is presented. Since 1932 it is stated that all constitutions have been democratic as they have defined people's rights and duties.⁸⁷ The book is quite similar to the pre-1960s manuals, and thus hints at the recovery of legalistic liberal democracy with a royal tint. People's duties include extensive loyalties to the state: '[I]f there is a hint of communist activities, people have the duty to inform officials so they [communists] can be caught.'⁸⁸ Most of the book is taken up with an explanation of the duties of the people's representatives and officials.⁸⁹

The most interesting section of this book is the discussion relating to the 'will of the people'. The book attempts to present a more realistic and elitist position:

The people are not the government; taking the opinion of the people as an instrument to define policy is just the same as letting the people be the government, which is likely to lead to a political crisis.⁹⁰

There is, then, a need to separate people from government, and this is done by providing mechanisms for the people's interests to be heard. Although elections are seen as a major mechanism for people's involvement, it is pointed out they are not about defining policy but about electing representatives. Besides, it is noted, that since not all people vote, elections cannot define the true will of the people.⁹¹

The second text, issued by the Prime Minister's Office, reproduced transcripts from the nationally aired programme *Let's Think Together . . . Whose Duty is Building Democracy?*⁹² In radio broadcasts aired between February and June 1984, a series of discussions on democratic responsibility, discipline and citizen virtues was presented by the secretariat of the Prime Minister's Office. The tone of the discussion left no doubt that the announcers were addressing the rural population, some of whom had migrated to the city. For instance, in one discussion it is noted that Thais lack discipline, and while this was fine in a rural setting, in urban settings it led to the running of red lights and lane-hopping.⁹³ In effect, the programmes were not so much about defining democracy, although there was plenty of that, but a defining of the projects required for moral improvement of the people. Democracy

was therefore related more to self-discipline than political structures. Regarding the need to follow the law, which is issued by the people's representatives, it is noted that 'democracy is an issue of controlling oneself, of governing oneself, for sometimes we can be negligent.'⁹⁴ Such self-government extended not simply to following the law but to interiorizing feelings of guilt if one does wrong.⁹⁵ That this psychological state had not yet been attained, evidenced by vote-buying and selling, was implicit in the whole discourse of development democracy. It was also, on occasion, explicitly expressed: 'We are probably not yet ready for full democracy . . . which means that the people know completely what their interests are and are able to select representatives to be their voice in the government.'⁹⁶

With the rise of money-democracy from the 1980s onwards, the position of the NIB towards democratic thought and development remained the same. Several publications after the crisis of 1991–2, however, intimate a certain disquiet towards democratic development. Rather than present a common stand, the NIB authorized several seminars at which a variety of opinions on democratic development were expressed. Great concern over the state of democracy was expressed, involving detailed critiques of the rise of vote-buying and selling and the failure of state officials to remain neutral. Other issues included the need for a political development plan, the need for a neutral body to watch over elections, and the need for new values. Clearly, a rethinking of democracy was under way, pointing in the direction that would later be taken up by the political reform movement (see next chapter).⁹⁷

The hegemonic work of the NIB

In 1987 the king celebrated his sixtieth birthday. A documentary illustrating the king's practice of the ten virtues was broadcast. The text of this documentary was widely published in 1990 by the NIB, with a preface by the Democracy Subcommittee of the NIB. The book effectively presents a picture of the king as a semi-god, one who has earned enough merit to reach nirvana, but who stays on earth to rule justly over the people. The ten virtues are dealt with chapter by chapter, furnishing concrete examples of the king's conformity to them. Accompanying each chapter is a picture of the actual king as well as an illustration of a semi-god.

Of interest is the telling way in which the king's virtue of non-anger is illustrated. The chapter dealing with this virtue explains that on several occasions when the king went overseas he faced protests. Regarding his Australian trip in 1962, when he faced a number of protests, the book recounts his calm composure 'as if nothing was happening.' A description is given of 'unruly' students at the University of Melbourne opposing his being granted an honorary degree. They are described as impolite in manner and dress, and insistent in their catcalling. The king finally addresses them thus: 'Thank you all very much for giving such a warm and polite welcome to a guest to your city.'⁹⁸ The accompanying illustration to this virtue of

non-anger is a semi-god calming hostile earthly creatures, animals and humans, with the aura of his sheer goodness. It is made clear that the protests were the work of those who had bad intentions towards Thailand, as if to deflect the idea that the king himself was the target of beastly protest. By using foreign protesters to illustrate the virtue of non-anger, the postulated unity of the king and the Thai nation was not threatened metaphorically. Since Bhumiphol symbolizes the Thais, he may not be transgressed, for that would be a transgression against all Thais. The hegemonic message here was 'we are all one', all tied to the destiny of the 'geo-body' of Thailand. To suggest that a Thai might oppose the king was to suggest someone would slit their own throat.

This intimate relationship between self-identity and the king, as embodiment of the nation, has been central to the attempt to procure forms of behaviour in accordance with order. The constructed moral source of authority resident in the king has been used on countless occasions to restore order. Ideological propagation linked to the construction of Thai identity was the defining characteristic of the NIB throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It sought not only to procure among people an identification of their own interests with the three pillars, but also to define what it was to be Thai. The cultural propagation of this aspect of NIB in its programmes and magazines on Thai culture, art and literature were components of this project. However, as a strategy of democrasubjection it aimed at a total encompassment of Thainess, as self-recognition, within the confines of a legalistic democratic regime, buttressed by what we might call a 'three pillars' civic culture. In this strategy of producing the Thai citizen, democracy was to play a key role, forming a link between identity and ideology: democracy was the political form under which identity would be enhanced, preserved and advanced by the self-governance of rational citizens in the frame of the three pillars. The attempted democrasubjection by NIB consisted in the deployment of the reified technology of tradition (the three pillars) as a means to interpellate 'citizens'. Identity, as construct, was to produce an orientation of loyalty and unity towards what were external manifestations of the Thai self. This deployment also worked conversely, for the identity was to be interiorized and thus it was necessary to make the three pillars hold a lively relevance that could answer to the needs of the citizens it sought to construct.

It was under the 'specific history and conditions of existence' of the post-1976 period that state actors collaborated to revive national ideology by a melding of Thai identity, the triad of nation, religion and monarchy, and adding democracy. While what resulted might appear as a cacophony of identity claims and reckless conflation of ideology/identity, state actors succeeded in constructing an elastic complex of Thai ideology/identity. This complex was attentive to both the strains inherent in developmental needs relating to change, and to the hegemonic needs for stabilizing the social field around Thainess.

National ideology and the part played by democracy were strategic responses to immediate crisis of hegemony as well as the ongoing challenge to elites of the 'people-problem', the human resources contained within the geo-body of Thailand.

In propagating identity as historically, culturally and morally Thai, the strategic aim was to cover over the dangers of non-identification at a subjective level with the symbolic institutions of elite control, the three pillars. Substantiated by extending that identity to encompass ideological objectives of development with social justice and democracy, overcoming the 'people-problem' could be envisioned as a cooperative enterprise of elite subjects and subaltern objects towards a common destiny: the essential objective of Thai ideology being to unite people in a sentiment of common fate, or, in Gramscian terms, a national imaginary. Democrasubjection as a project, in this respect, worked to interiorize the people-problem as a problem of self-morality and development, as Thainess to be something cultivated and aimed towards. This was the meeting ground of hegemony and governance, fully expressed.

In many ways the constructors of national ideology took an ironic stance on the people-problem. The people were the source of sovereignty, but they were not yet able to divest it to legitimate representatives. The people were sovereign and yet this was an imagined state, needing state development and cajolement. The people were sovereign and yet rule should be according to enlightened elites. The people were Thai, but expressions of Thainess was to be cultivated, policed and socialized. The contradiction of requiring ideology to realize identity, when ideology was supposedly an expression of that identity, reflects more generally the contradiction at the heart of the doctrine of political development, a contradiction relating to the baseless claims of popular sovereignty in the absence of a sovereign people (see Chapter 2).

The whole schema of national ideology makes sense not simply as an attempt at normative integration, but as an instance of what might be called meta-ideological insincerity, that is, the giving and propagandizing as essential and ideal that which is to be hegemonically produced. This ironizing stance towards the objects of statist discourse was effectively an addressing of the question of nation building as identity building. If one thinks back to the taxonomy of the people's protests produced by statist apparatuses in the late 1970s, it is possible to see this stance in operation; in attending demonstrations, noting demands, spying and doing the work of security, state actors sought to construct national ideology on the backs of people's protests.

The experience of the NIB and its colleagues in the NSC demonstrates dramatically the self-reflexive manner in which the hegemonic project was mapped by the state. Aggrandizing to itself the capacity of constructing Thai citizenship, it did so through a political development perspective aiming at interpellating the Thai subject by giving it form, objective and ideology, or, in short, Thainess. A key resource for the achievement of this project was the monarchy.

Notes

1 *The Nation*, 5/12/76, p. 9.

2 Somphop Chanthonprapha, 'Phramahakasat thai songtham', in Krom prachasamphan lae samnakngan soemsang ekkalak khong chat [Public relations department and national identity board], *Naeothang prachathipatai* (The democratic line), 1981, pp. 31–3.

3 Sombat Chantornvong, 'To Address the Dust of the Dust Under the Soles of the Royal Feet: A Reflection on the Political Dimension of Thai Court Language', in *Asian Review*, 6, 1992, pp. 144–63, p. 146.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 154–5.

5 Several informants have mentioned this perception to me. One only needs to note that after 1976 the CPT attacks on the monarchy grew – confident that there was a popular resentment of the monarchy that could be mobilized.

6 See King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 'Royal Advice Given by His Majesty the King At the Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, Wednesday, May 20, 1992, at 21.20', in *Royal Remarks on Various Occasions*, 1992, p. 9.

7 Such 'facts' come from various informants.

8 The royal family is one of Thailand's largest land-owning families, and through the Crown Property Bureau as well as private activities, pursues various capitalist industrial and banking enterprises.

9 Thirayut Bunmi, 'Thangsong phrae khong prachathipatai nai thatsana sangkhom withaya kanmeuang (Thai Democracy at the Crossroads: A Politico-sociological Perspective)', *Warasan sangkhomsat (Journal of Social Science)*, 24, 1, 1987, pp. 6–24, pp. 16–17.

10 See Kevin Hewison, 'The Monarchy and Democratization', in K.Hewison (ed.) *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 63–73, pp. 58–74.

11 Cited in Kanok Wongtrankan, *Naeo phrarachadamri dan kanmeuang khong prabatsomdet phra jao yu hua* (Royal edicts on politics and government of the king), Bangkok: Sathaban thai suksa, julalonkon mahawithayalai, 1988, cited pp. 190–1 (the statement is from 1972).

12 *Ibid.*, p. 191 (1973).

13 *Ibid.*, p. 192(1981).

14 *Ibid.*, p. 194 (1979).

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 194–5 (1979).

17 Chairat Charoensin-O-Larn, *Understanding Post War Reformism in Thailand*, Bangkok: Editions Duangkamol, 1988, p. 155.

18 David Streckfuss, 'Kings in the Age of Nations: The Paradox of Lese-Majeste as Political Crime in Thailand', in D. Streckfuss (ed.) *The Modern Thai Monarchy and Cultural Politics: The Acquittal of Sulak Sivaraksa on the Charge of Lese Majeste in Siam 1995 and its Consequences*, Bangkok: Santi-Pracha Dhamma Institute, 1996, pp. 54–80.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

20 *The Nation*, 13/11/76, p. 1.

21 *The Nation*, 30/12/83, p. 6.

22 *Bangkok Post*, 23/6/88, p. 1. This was a reduced sentence, on appeal, from the six-year sentence given in October 1987. In any case, several months later he was pardoned by the king. A good discussion of this case may be found in D. Streckfuss (ed.) *The Modern Thai Monarchy and Cultural Politics*, pp. 56–8.

23 D. Streckfuss (ed.) *The Modern Thai Monarchy and Cultural Politics*, 1996.

24 See Annette Hamilton, 'Rumours, Foul Calumnies and the Safety of the State: Mass Media and National Identity in Thailand', in C. Reynolds (ed.) *National Identity and Its Defenders*, pp. 341–78, pp. 355–62.

25 *The Nation*, 4/8/84, pp. 1, 2. Taksin, a hero credited with a restoration of the kingdom after an episode of Burmese sacking, became king, but was overthrown by the first king of the Chakri dynasty.

26 On struggles for liberalization of the religious sphere and the state-managed suppression of this see Jim Taylor, 'Buddhist Revitalization, Modernization and Social Change in Contemporary Thailand', *Sojourn*, 8, 1, 1993, pp. 62–91.

27 It is only through off-the-record information that I can make this statement.

28 As Chai-Anan argues, in the face of rapid industrialization and capitalist consumerism, it is the monarchy and religion which hold out hope, for him, as centres of morality and public good. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, 'State-Identity Creation, State-Building and Civil Society 1939–1989', in C. Reynolds (ed.) *National Identity and Its Defenders*, pp. 59–85, p. 80.

29 King Bhumiphol Adulyadej, 'Royal Speech Given to the Audience of Well-Wishers on the Occasion of the Royal Birthday Anniversary, Wed, 4 December 1991', in *Royal Addresses on Various Occasions*, 1991, Bangkok: n.p., p. 52.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

33 For an account of how this ideology is presented at schools one may usefully consult the analysis presented in Niels Mulder, *Inside Thai Society: Interpretations of Everyday Life*, Amsterdam: Pepin Press, 1996, pp. 151–64.

34 Craig Reynolds, 'Introduction: National Identity and Its Defenders', in C. Reynolds (ed.) *National Identity and Its Defenders*, pp. 1–39, p. 14. While the term 'identity' had been coined decades earlier, it gained wider currency after an academic seminar in 1971, even making it into the National Education Plan in 1977. On this see Ekkawit na Thalang, 'Ekkalak thai thi mi phon to khwam mankhong haeng chat' [Thai identity and its impact on national security], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat nai khanakammakan ekkalak khong chat lae samnangkan soemsang ekkalak khong chat samnangkan naiyokratthamontri, *Raignan kansamamana reuang ekkalak khong chat kap kanphathana chat thai* [Seminar report on national identity and Thai national development], 1985, pp. 120–32, p. 120.

35 See B.J. Terwiel, 'Thai Nationalism and Identity: Popular Themes of the 1930s', in C. Reynolds (ed.) *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand, 1939–1989*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1993, pp. 135–55. Interestingly Praphat Trinarong notes the use of the word 'identity', in an announcement on 3 November 1939 by Phibun regarding patriotism. See Praphat Trinarong, 'Ekkalak thai' [Thai Identity], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat *Raignan kansamamana reuang ekkalak khong chat kap kanphathana chat thai*, 1985, pp. 135–40, p. 136.

36 The National Security Council, established in 1959, is a high-level advisory body to Cabinet comprised of the Prime Minister acting as President, and with various ministers and high-ranking ministry officials sitting as Council members. See *Phrarachabanyat supha khwammankhong* [National security act], 1959, rev. 1964. A speech by the NSC Secretary General in 1968 provides a good overview of its function. Phan Ek Phraya Sriwisanwacha,

'Kham banyai reuang supha khwammankhong haengchat pheu hai khaojai thung amnat nathi lae khwam raphitchop, 2511' [An address on the national security council: towards an understanding of its power, duties and responsibilities, 1968], in Son Bangyikha, *Pratya waduay khwammankhong* [The philosophy of national security], Bangkok: Mahawithayalai ramkhamhaeng, 1981, pp. 264–71, p. 267.

37 Mahawithayalai Sukhothaihammathirat University, *Prasopkan Watthanatham suksa* [Cultural studies experience], 1990, p. 365.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

39 Craig Reynolds, 'Introduction: National Identity and Its Defenders,' p. 13.

40 Cited in Praphat Trinarong, 'Ekkalak thai' [Thai identity], p. 136.

41 Supha khwam mankhong haeng chat, 'Patjai kamnot udomkam khong chat' [Determining factors of national ideology], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat nai khanakammakan soemsang ekkalak khong chat, samnagnan naiyokrathamontri, *Udomkan khong chat* [National ideology], 1983, pp. 17–26, p. 19.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 21–2.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 23–4.

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–6.

52 *Ibid.*

53 Kramol Thongthammachart and Sippanon Ketutat, 'Udomkan khong chat naeokhwamkhit lae naeothang kandamnoengnan [National ideology, concepts and operationalization]', in *ibid.*, pp. 11–16, p. 11.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

55 Cited in *ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

61 'Udomkan khong thai' [Thai ideology], Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat samnagnan lekhatthikan naiyokratthamontri [Subcommittee on national ideology, national identity board], *Raignan sammana nakjatkanwithayu reuang phoe phrae udomkan khong chat* [Seminar report on radio broadcasters and the propagation of national ideology], 1981, pp. 105–9, p. 105.

62 See Yukthi Mukdawijit, 'Kanmeuang reuang wathanatham nai sangkhom thai' [Cultural politics in Thai society], *Warasan thammasat* [Thammasat journal], 20, 3, 1994, pp. 20–41, p. 29.

63 Yenjai Laohawanit, 'Naeothang sangsan udomkan khong chat' [Ways to construct national ideology], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat *Udomkan khong chat*, pp. 57–65, p. 61.

64 In this respect, Kramol explicitly follows Parsonian functionalism. See Kramol Thongthammachart, 'Udomkan khong chat lae kanpathana chat thai' [National ideology and Thai development], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat *Udomkan khong chat*, pp. 21–42.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

66 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*, pp. 33–4.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

74 It was towards this end that Kramol supported the 'Land of Justice and Land of Gold Project', in the 1980s and 1990s. This project attempted to take ideology to the villages in the form of Buddhist virtue, self-reliance, thrift and a commitment to community and nation. On this, see Samnakngan lekhathikan naiyokratthatmontri khanakammakan songsoem lae prasanngan kanpoei phrae udomkan phaendin tham phaendin thong [The prime minister's office, committee to promote and coordinate the propagation of the ideology of the land of justice and land of gold project], *Khamtop yu thi muban* [The answer is in the villages], 1987.

75 Mahawithiyalai Sukhothathamthirat, *Prasopkan wathanatham suksa* [Cultural Studies Experience], 1990, p. 365 (University, 1990).

76 See for example Nao Wa Akat Prasong Sunsiri, 'Naeo khwamkhit nai kan poeiphrae udomkan khong chat' [translation?], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat *Udomkan khong chat* [National ideology], pp. 43–55, pp. 46–7, 54.

77 'Kantriam kansammana' [Seminar Preparation] in *ibid.*, pp. 1–5, pp. 1–2.

78 'Samphat piset ratthamontri prajam samnakngan naiyokratthamontri, nai kramol thongthamachat, prathan khana anukammakan chaprokit triamkan samamana lae no. to. prasong sunsiri lekhathikan supha khwammankhong haeng chat' [Special interview with Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, Mr Thongthammachart, President of the seminar organizing committee, and Prasong Sunsiri, Secretary General of the national security council], in Khanaanukammakan udomkan khong chat samnakngan lekhathikan naiyokratthamontri [Subcommittee on national ideology, National identity board], *Raignan sammanna nakjatkanwithayu reuang phoe phrae udomkan khong chat* [Seminar report on radio broadcasters and the propagation of national ideology], 1981, pp. 16–23, p. 19.

79 'Phradamrat somdet phrajao phi nang theu jao fa kanlayaniwatthana phrachathan kae ph kao ruam sammamna reuang ekkalak khong chat kap kanphathana chat thai' [Royal edict of Princess Kanlayaniwatthana, graciously conferred to the participants of the seminar on National identity and Thai national development), in *ibid.*, pp. 26–7.

80 'Sarupphon kansammana nayobai khong ratthaban nai soemsang ekkalak khong chat' [Seminar outcomes: government policy to promote national identity], in Khana anukammakan udomkan khong chat *Raignan kansamamana reuang ekkalak khong chat*, pp. 81–4. The policy was adopted on 26 July 1983 (p. 84).

81 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*

84 Khanaanukammakan udomkan khong chat nai khanakammakan ekkalak khong chat, *Khwanrueuang prachathipatai pheu prachachon* [Knowledge about democracy for the people], 1984.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 9–13.

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

89 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–101.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

92 Samnakngan lekthathikan naiyokratthamontri, *Chuay kan khit kansang prachathipatai pen nathi khong khrai?* [Let's think together . . . Whose duty is building democracy?], 1984.

93 Kosin Wongsurawat and Likhit Thirawekhin, 'Winai khong chaoban' [Discipline of the people], in *ibid.*, pp. 1–8, p. 2.

94 Kosin Wongsurawat and Wisut Phothithaen, 'Seriphap kap prachathipatai' [Freedom and democracy], in *ibid.*, 1984, pp. 58–65, p. 61.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

96 Kosin Wongsurawat and Chaiya Yimwilai, 'Khanton khong prachathipatai' [Stages of democracy], in *ibid.*, pp. 66–71, p. 69.

97 See for example Khanakammakan ekkalak khong chat, *Raingan sammana reuang ja phathana prachathipatai yangrai hai mankhong* (Report on seminar on How can democracy be developed so it is secure?), 1993; Khanaanukammakan kansongsoem phathana prachathipatai munithi phathana kharachakan lae khana kammakan ekkalak khong chat [Subcommittee to promote the development of democracy, Office to promote national identity, and Foundation for the development of the bureaucracy], *Nana thatsana peu soemsang phathanaprachathipatai* [Many viewpoints for the creative development of democracy], 1990.

98 Samnakngan soemsang ekkalak khong chat, *Thotsaphitrachatham* [The ten royal virtues], 1990, p. 42. Just for the record, the Australian National University, I am informed, declined to offer the degree.