

THE FALL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND FROM THE CHINESE PERSPECTIVE



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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)  
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เฟิง ฉูย : การล่มสลายของพรรคคอมมิวนิสต์แห่งประเทศไทยจากมุมมองของจีน (THE FALL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND FROM THE CHINESE PERSPECTIVE) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร.ธีระ นุชเปี่ยม, 82 หน้า.

ขบวนการคอมมิวนิสต์ในประเทศไทยเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของขบวนการคอมมิวนิสต์สากล ดังนั้นลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ในประเทศไทยจึงถูกนำมาจากภายนอก และได้รับอิทธิพลจากโลกภายนอกด้วย ประวัติของพรรคคอมมิวนิสต์แห่งประเทศไทย (CPT) เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของสงครามเย็น จริงๆ แล้วการก้าวขึ้นมามีบทบาทของ CPT และความช่วยเหลือของจีนเกี่ยวพันกันจนแยกออกจากกันไม่ได้ คอมมิวนิสต์ไทยไม่สามารถพัฒนาได้อย่างรวดเร็วโดยไม่ได้รับความช่วยเหลือจากจีนหลังทศวรรษ ๑๙๖๐ อย่างไรก็ตาม CPT ล้มเหลวในช่วงทศวรรษ ๑๙๘๐ เพราะความผิดพลาดด้านยุทธศาสตร์ในการพัฒนา ความแตกแยกขัดแย้งกันภายใน นโยบายต่อต้านการก่อการร้ายของรัฐบาล การสูญเสียการสนับสนุนจากจีน และปัจจัยอื่นๆ มีผลงานการศึกษาค้นคว้าจำนวนมากที่กล่าวถึงขบวนการคอมมิวนิสต์ในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ระหว่างสงครามเย็น แต่ผลงานเหล่านี้ส่วนมากมุ่งความสนใจไปที่รัฐต่างๆ ในอินโดจีน อย่างไรก็ตาม CPT นับเป็นส่วนสำคัญส่วนหนึ่งของขบวนการคอมมิวนิสต์ในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ CPT มีอิทธิพลต่อสังคมไทยอย่างลึกซึ้ง การขึ้นมามีบทบาทและการล่มสลายของ CPT เกี่ยวข้องกับจีน ประเทศไทย เวียดนาม และแม้กระทั่งสหรัฐอเมริกา ไม่ต้องสงสัยเลยว่าเราสามารถจะเข้าใจผลกระทบของสงครามเย็นต่อเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้โดยผ่านประวัติศาสตร์ของพรรคคอมมิวนิสต์แห่งประเทศไทย.

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สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา 2560

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต .....

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The Communist movement in Thailand was part of the international communist movement. So Communism in Thailand was introduced from outside and also influenced by the outside world. The history of Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was part of Cold War. In fact, the rise of the CPT and China's help were inseparably intertwined. Thai communists could not develop so fast without the help of China after the 1960s. However, the CPT finally failed in the 1980s due to its wrong strategy of development, internal divisions and struggles, the government's counterinsurgency, the loss of support from China, among other factors. There are many papers that mentioned the Communist movements during the Cold War in Southeast Asia, but most of them focus on the Indochina states. However, the CPT was also an important part of the communist movement in Southeast Asia. The CPT profoundly influenced the society of Thailand. The rise and fall of the Communist Party of Thailand was related to China, Thailand, Vietnam, and even the United States. Doubtlessly, we can understand the impact of the Cold War on Southeast Asia through the history of the Communist Party of Thailand.

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies      Student's Signature .....

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# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Rationale/Background

### 1.1.1 The founding of the Communist Party of Thailand

The Communist Party of Thailand plays a very important role in the history of Cold War in Thailand. Although the CPT had never been powerful enough to overthrow the government until its dissolution, it has profoundly influenced the society of Thailand. When we do the research of the Communist Party of Thailand, we cannot just focus on Thailand itself. Because communist movements are international movements, for most countries, communism is introduced from outside and also influenced by the outside world.

In 1927, the Communist Party of Siam, mainly made up of Thai Chinese and hundreds of China left-wing youth, was established in Bangkok.<sup>1</sup> Both the Communist International and Chinese Communist Party had provided assistance to the Communist Party of Siam (CPS) in the early time. The Communist Party of Siam was the predecessor of the Communist Party of Thailand which was established in December 1st 1942 during the First Congress of the CPS. After Thailand allied with Japan, Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) also joined the Free Thai Movement which was a Thai underground resistance movement against Japan during Second World War. In general, the power of CPT was still weak during the Second World War, and CPT was mainly responsible for intelligence gathering and anti-Japanese propaganda.

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<sup>1</sup> Wei Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand" (University of Yunnan, 2015).

### 1.12 The rise of Communist Party of Thailand

In fact, the CPT had not been too strong from the establishment of party to early 1960s. The CIA document in 1960s showed that the CPT was not a serious problem in Thailand and CIA also believed that Thailand government would be able to maintain reasonable levels of security in the Northeast and other possible trouble spots during that period.<sup>2</sup> CPT had never made any real impact in the country until the late 1960s.

Like other communist parties in Southeast Asia during the Cold War, CPT was deeply influenced by China. The situation of Southeast Asia was quite complicated in the Cold War. America wanted to contain communism movement in Southeast Asia. ASEAN members also worried about the spread of communism insurgencies in their own countries. In fact, the rise of the CPT and China's help were inseparably intertwined. Thai communists could not develop so fast without the help of China after 1960s.

The turning point of CPT was in 1965, because Chinese officials had publicly stated their support for the CPT in 1965. Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi openly said, "We hope to have a guerrilla war going in Thailand in this year."<sup>3</sup> According to the document of CIA, Thai youth were recruited, sent to Communist China for indoctrination and paramilitary training, and returned to the Northeast Thailand.<sup>4</sup> So the armed conflicts between CPT and the Thailand government increased greatly with the help of China. The Voice of the People of Thailand, the most important propaganda station for CPT, announced the aims of CPT were to drive out US imperialism in Thailand, overthrow the Bangkok government, fighting for national independence and democracy.<sup>5</sup> This station, part of China aid program, located in China Yunnan province. Without doubt,

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<sup>2</sup> "Communist Insurgency in Thailand," ed. CIA (1966).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel D. Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), pp.218-219.

<sup>4</sup> "Communist Insurgency in Thailand."

<sup>5</sup> Stephen I. Alpern, "Insurgency in Northeast Thailand: A New Cause for Alarm," *Asia Survey* 15 (1975), p.689.

the CPT also received strong support from Laos and Vietnam before the Sino-Vietnamese relations broke down. Many CPT bases were located in Laos so that they could avoid being cleared by Thai government forces.

### 1.13 The final wave of development of CPT

The military dictator Thanom Kittikachorn stepped down because of the popular uprising of 14 October 1973. The downfall of ruling military dictatorship promoted Thailand to resume its democratic system from the very beginning. Meanwhile Left-wing movements had entered a short period of prosperity between 1973 and 1976. Left-wing political parties, such as Socialist Party, the Socialist Front and *Palang Mai* (New Force) stood candidates and won 14.4% of the national vote in the 1975 General Election.<sup>6</sup> But actually the Communist Party of Thailand did not participate much in the urban political movement during this short period of democracy. Because CPT took the armed struggle and focused on the rural area according to Maoism. CPT followed the way of Chinese communist revolution which was called 'the countryside surrounds the city'.

However, because of the Thammasat University massacre and the suppression to the Left, many radical students, young activists fled to the jungle to join the CPT after the second half of the 1970s. In the short period, CPT won a very large number of new members who were more educated and energetic. An assessment showed that more than 3,000 radicals, including students, professors, journalists, gave up their urban life and fled to the jungle between 1975 and 1978.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this peak was also the beginning of CPT's decline. In the end, the vast majority of students and members of

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<sup>6</sup> Ji Giles Ungpakorn, ed. *Radicalising Thailand: New Political Perspectives*, The Thai Left after 1973 (Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, 2003), p202.

<sup>7</sup> Yuangrat Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought," *Southeast Asia Affairs* 21 (1981), pp.326-339.

the CPT left the jungle, and the CPT gradually disappeared in Thailand in 1980s. There are many reasons for the decline of the CPT: wrong strategy of CPT's leadership; internal divisions and struggles; the government's counterinsurgency; changing international environment and so on. I conducted a detailed research and analysis of the rise and fall of the CPT.

## 1.2 Objectives

- 1) To study the rise of the Communist Party of Thailand
- 2) To explore the causes of the fall of the Communist Part of Thailand.

The causes of the fall of CPT can be analyzed from two aspects: external causes and internal causes. External causes include the impact from what such as China, US, Thai government and Indochina states. For internal causes, the focus is on the CPT itself such as the leadership, ideology, internal conflicts and develop strategy.

## 1.3 Major arguments/Hypotheses

There are two aspects that lead to the decline of the Communist Party of Thailand, external and internal aspect.

For external aspect, firstly the Thai government launched a series of measures to contain and suppress the Communist Party of Thailand, including political, military and economic means. In order to get the resource, CPT relied too much on international assistance, whether it was aid from China, Vietnam or Laos. But after Sino Vietnamese relations broke down, CPT lost its neighbor's support because of its pro-China standpoint. Soon after, with the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, China also gradually stopped its aid to the CPT. China changed the

strategy towards Southeast Asia because of the changes of international situation. After CPT lost the support from China, its life lost the vitality.

For internal aspect, there were many problems in CPT, especially the differences between young people and the old comrades, urban radicals and rural communists. So the serious split broke out between CPT and radicals after the late 1970s. CPT also relied too much on ideology in Maoism from China which was not suitable to Thai society. And the CPT relied heavily on China, both theoretical and material. There had always been line struggles in CPT: whether to rely on China and whether to apply Mao Zedong thought (army struggle; rural areas encircling urban) to CPT and Thai communist revolution. So the internal split always happened through the rise and fall of CPT. But the leadership of CPT is rigid and conservative. They cannot unite the party and make a good decision for the CPT's development. Internal split weakened the CPT in both ideology and strength.

#### 1.4 Methodology

Documentary research and historical method are used in studying the fall of the Communist Party of Thailand. I identify related documents and literatures, especially those published in the period of the CPT. I also identify some important Chinese sources which mentioned the Chinese assistance to CPT. VOPT (the Voice of the People of Thailand) is a communist radio that is one of the important propaganda tool of CPT. Chinese government newspaper *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) published every major broadcast by VOPT in Chinese language. The Chinese newspaper carried a great deal of information about CPT and VOPT just have limited information or sources in English.



### 1.5 Literature Reviews

Many researches about the CPT emerged in the late Cold War period, especially after the fall of CPT. Some of them focused on the history of Communist movement in Thailand, and some mentioned ideology of CPT. *Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand*, written by Kanok Wongtrangan (1982), described the history of CPT. In this PhD thesis, Kanok Wongtrangan gave a comprehensive perspective of CPT's history which was also related to the Thai government, China and the United States of America. In this paper, the author studied the ideology of CPT and its external relations such as the relation with Chinese Communist Party (CPT). Kanok Wongtrangan also mentioned how the Thai government took measures against the CPT and how did these measures work.

*The Thai Radicals and the Communist Party* written by Yuangrat Wedel of 1981 mainly focused on the relation between radical students and CPT. The author interviewed a large number of radical students who fled to jungle and then came back to the urban after the amnesty. There was deep disagreement between most of the radical students and the CPT. According to CPT, the Maoism was completely the guiding principle and forever correct ideology. However, most of the students who fled to jungle from urban disagreed with Maoism. CPT did not trust students, they thought those students were urban bourgeoisie and the communism should rely on the peasants. Students, on the other hand, thought the CPT out of touch with the actual society of Thailand. Finally, most of the students returned to the city when the amnesty came. In this book we also know a lot of details of CPT's history. For example, how the international changes influenced the CPT and students; what was the CPT's main strategy; the CPT view of Thai society.

*Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective* (Tom Marks) published in Bangkok in 1994. In this book, author studied the

Thai communist revolution and its impact on Thailand. The author made a detailed analysis of some unrealistic tactics of the CPT. Tom Marks described the whole picture of CPT in this book. We can know the construction of the CPT Infrastructure and the Government response to the CPT after frequent insurgences from Tom Marks's research. He also analyzed the problems existing in Thai society that caused people's dissatisfaction and communist movement.

China and CPT had very close ties in history. The book *China and 'People's War' in Thailand 1948-1969* (Daniel D. Lovelace) of 1971 shows the relation between China and CPT. China supported the CPT as launching armed struggles in Thailand. The international situation in Southeast Asia was extremely complicated and involved all the main powers during the Cold War. Author considered that China wanted to promote its own revolutionary ideology of Maoism by supporting the CPT's armed struggles. Meanwhile there was communist ideological competition between China and Soviet Union.

*Radicalizing Thailand: New political Perspectives* (edited by Ji Giles Ungpakorn in 2003) mentioned the history of Thai Left after 1973. The Left-wing ideas spread among Thai society in the early 1970s. But after the government suppressed Left movements, a lot of radicals fled to the jungle to join the CPT. Nevertheless, radical students found that their communist ideology or left ideas was quite different from that of the CPT. CPT totally adopted Maoism for their discipline. The students were very disappointed, they thought the CPT was closer to China rather than Thai society. They also thought that Maoism was unsuitable to Thailand. Then, author also analyzed how the CPT missed opportunities to strengthen its power. In this book, we can also find the analysis of the internal problems in CPT, such as lack of Marxist education. This book also shows the weakness of Maoism in Thailand. According to author, Maoism was not suitable in Thailand due to different national conditions.

*The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand (1937-1987)* written by Gawin Chutima in 1990. In this book, Gawin Chutima gave three main factors which led to the decline of CPT. First, China cut off most of the assistance to CPT in the late 1970s. Second, Thai government changed the policy and strategy which provided the opportunity for the radical students to return to the society. Third, the ideology and organization of CPT completely failed and lost the attractiveness. But the leaders of CPT did not change anything even the party met serious problems before its collapse.

Furthermore, many academic journal articles, thesis and documents also provided the important information of CPT. *Exodus from the Jungle* was an article published in 1981 talking about the situation before CPT collapsed—the wave of surrender. This article showed how serious the crisis in CPT in the late 1970s and early 1980s. *ASEAN Communist Parties and China* (Sep 1981) was an article in *Economic and Political Weekly*. This article indicated that China changed the strategy towards Southeast Asia after Deng Xiaoping got the power. China even pressured CPT to negotiate with the Thai government. *People's Liberation Army: Strategy of Self-Reliance* published in *Economic and Political Weekly* in 1980 whose author indicated that both Laos and Vietnam cut down the aid to the CPT in the late 1970s because of political reasons. The loss of neighboring countries' help was a strong damage to CPT.

*The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-insurgency 1965-1985* written by General Saiyud Kerdphol in 1986 who was one of the important leaders to make the counter-insurgency policy and advice for government and military. We can see the communist movement of Thailand in the government perspective which is very valuable to help people to study CPT. A lot of government inside information of counter-insurgency can be found in this book. We can know how the Thai government formulated the anti-communist

policy and how to implement the policy and the final result. As a direct participant, General Saiyud Kerdphol gave readers a very detailed and vivid analysis in this book.

*Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction Revolution* written by David Morell and Chai-Anna Samudavanija in 1981. This book describes the political turmoil in Thailand throughout the 1970s. Left-wing movement was developing rapidly after 1973, meanwhile both the left and right had become extreme. Finally, the worst clashes broke out in 1976. In addition to analyzing the student movement, authors also analyzed the influence and role of CPT in the left movement during 1970s. This book also shows the capabilities of CPT's leadership in 1977 to 1978 and the CPT's crisis in 1978 to 1980. There is very little information on the leadership of the CPT in other source, so this book provides important information of that.

*The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand* is a doctoral dissertation written by Jie Du in 2016. This academic thesis explained how Marxism developed in Thailand. The author also mentioned CPT's role in promoting Marxism in Thai society and the CPT's weaknesses in launching a communist revolution. As we know, CPT had a very close relation and connection with CCP (Chinese Communist Party). This dissertation cited a lot of Chinese sources which hardly be found in other language literature. The author reexamined the achievements and deficiencies of Marxism and CPT from the perspective of outsiders.

#### 1.6 Significance/Usefulness of research

The history of Communist Party of Thailand is a part of Cold War. There are many academic papers talking about Communist movements during Cold War in Southeast Asia, but most of them focus on Indochina states. Although the CPT did not have much impact on the country, it is also an important part of the communist movement in

Southeast Asia. Understanding the fall of the CPT helps to understand the era of change in the late of Cold War.

I have summed up the academic achievements of scholar in previous literature review. There are many important sources of CPT published from 1960s to the present. These scholarly works have deeply studied the development and decline of the Thai left-wing movement and the CPT. China cannot be ignored when people study CPT because China and CPT have unusual relations as most scholars mentioned. However, due to information restrictions, many Chinese materials of CPT have not been discovered yet, so I try to find more Chinese source to develop and enrich this topic.

Chinese newspaper *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) and *Cankao Xiaoxi* (Reference News) are very important way to know the activity of CPT. *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) covered almost all the important events of CPT from early 1960s to 1980s. That is a very large database spanning thirty years. So I will do a lot of documentary researches for that and analysis the rise and fall of CPT.

In addition, for some special historical reasons, the remaining KMT troops which fled to north Thailand also participated in the suppression of the CPT army. The KMT troops were nominally compiled by Thai Royal Army. So there are very few English studies on their war against CPT army. Since these troops were the remnants of the ROC (Republic of China), there are very few Chinese academic resource about them. But I find that these troops participated in the war with Hmong tribes (ethnic Communists armed forces) in north Thailand. So I want to research these contents as well. I identified some sources that were rarely have been used such as the sources about KMT activities in Thailand and the news or statements form People's Daily.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1 Communists in the early period in Siam

Communism in Southeast Asia spread to the whole region along with the anti-colonial and anti-aggression war in 20th century. Siam as the only one independent country in Southeast Asia with the bud of communism in 20<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter covers the history of the communists from birth to early 1950s in Thailand. I try to explain how the communists emerged in Siam and what was their purpose in the beginning. The communists in Thailand had set up two communist parties, CPS and CPT. What kind of reasons making these communists and CPT change its mission in different period? And how the early communists were influenced by the international situation such as China? In fact, the early communists took a long way to develop the communist movement but finally giving up the city in early 1950s.

Since King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) started to send royal family members to study in Europe, more and more young princes held the positions in government after they came back from foreign countries. But in the late nineteenth century, more and more commoners were also sent to study abroad. The royal government extended the scholarships to talented students of common origin who were selected by competitive examinations.<sup>8</sup> There were nearly four hundred abroad on government scholarships in 1924 and an indeterminate smaller number on private funds.<sup>9</sup> These Siamese students accepted various new ideas in Europe and of course also included communist ideas that rose in the early twentieth in Europe.

German sources named 'Communist Intrigues in Siam' showed that the Siamese student who got education in the United Kingdom had lately gone back to Bangkok with the

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<sup>8</sup> Thawatt Mokarapong, *History of the Thai Revolution* (Bangkok: Erawan Arcade, 1972), p.77.

<sup>9</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand a Short History* (Chaing Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004), p.238.

communist emissaries to unite into one body of anti-dynastic party. According to this government report, Siamese students in Europe were an important propaganda target to the communists.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly some Siamese students had been influenced by communist ideology. The private letter from Prince Charoon<sup>11</sup> in 1926 mentioned:

*I have heard but I can not give proof so I am precluded from speaking officially about it , that they(students in France) discussed very advanced political views ...They are of the class that I consider the danger of Siam in the future , namely , the half educated class....<sup>12</sup>*

At that time some of the royal family members had begun to worry about the issue of overseas students who may be influenced by some Leftwing ideologies.

But generally speaking, the early spread of communism in Siam (Thailand) mainly relied on the Chinese communities rather than overseas students. In other words, Communism was introduced from China to Thailand rather than from Europe which was the birthplace of communism. Moreover, the Chinese communists were also a major participant in the formation of the early Communist organization in Thailand.

Scholar Yuangrat Wedel mentioned that the first Communist underground organization in Thailand was established by six Chinese Communist Party members who came from Shanghai in the late 1920s.<sup>13</sup> Shortly afterwards, some CCP members came to Thailand to take refuge because of the split and conflict between the CCT and KMT (Chinese Nationalist Party). These Chinese exiled Communists had also become important participants in the early communist activities in Thailand. But the main goal of the Thai

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984).p.168.

<sup>11</sup> Charoon (1875-1928), the oldest son of Prince Nares and grandson of King Mongkut.

<sup>12</sup> Batson, *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam* p.80.

<sup>13</sup> Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought."pp.326-339.

communists during this period was to get the support from Chinese communities to promote the communist revolution in China. Then the Communist Party of Siam was founded around the beginning of 1930s.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Vietnam Communist Party (VCP) also shifted its bases to northeast of Siam during the early 1930s because of the intense pressure from the French. However, the Chinese still dominated the Communist movement in Thailand.<sup>15</sup> The aim of the Communist Party of Siam (CPS) at this time was “to overthrow imperialism and feudalism; and establish a workers’ and peasants’ state in Siam.”<sup>16</sup>

Soon after the Communist Party of Siam’s formation, the Royal Thai government passed the first anticommunist act in 1933. According to documents from the Communist Party of Thailand, the government vigorously suppressed the communists after the founding of CPS:

*Leading Party organs were disrupted several times, and numerous Party members imprisoned. The dissemination of Marxism and Party activities were kept within limits for a long duration, and the Party still inexperienced.*<sup>17</sup>

There is no doubt that the communist party suffered a great setback under the severe government sanctions in the early period. Another source also showed that Royal Thai

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<sup>14</sup> There is still some controversy over the timing and beginning of the founding of the Communist Party of Siam. According to Yuangrat Wedel in *The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought*, CPS changed its name from Chinese communist party, Siam to Communist Party of Siam in 1932. But the Documents from the CPT mentioned that the CPS was founded in 1930 directly. Some sources also said that Ho Chi Minh also participated in the establishment of the early Communist organization in Thailand.

<sup>15</sup> Tom Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994), p.31

<sup>16</sup> Chris Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, no. 4 (2003), p.521.

<sup>17</sup> "The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand," (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1980), p.2



Government arrested several communists in Bangkok and Phitsanulok (North Thailand) in the early 1930s.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the early Communists had no experience of struggle with Royal Thai Government. The size of the Communist Party was very small and did not have any real influence in Siam society. The communist organizations had long been dormant until the outbreak of Second World War.

## 2.2 The Communist Party of Thailand in World War II

In September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany after Germany invaded Poland. This event opened the prelude to World War II. The Empire of Japan aimed to dominate Asia and build the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere during the war. Southeast Asia, including Thailand, was part of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. All of Southeast Asia fell into the hands of the Japanese army during the Second World War.

The Thai government, dominated by Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram, allied with Japan and declared war on the United Kingdom and the United States on 25 January 1942. Therefore, many Thai people who were unwilling to cooperate with Japan organized a resistance against Japan's aggression. Seni Pramoj, the Thai ambassador in Washington, organized the Free Thai Movement with American assistance. Many Thai students and Thai embassies joined the Free Thai Movement which aimed at resisting Japan and training intelligence personnel working for Allies of World War II.

During this period, the main purposes of Thailand communists were 'restore and build up a proletarian political party based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the

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<sup>18</sup> David Morell & Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* (Cambridge: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981). P.79

thought of Mao Zedong; lead the people's fight to expel the invading piratical Japanese; overthrow the traitorous regime; restore independence and safeguard the fatherland"<sup>19</sup>.

The Free Thai Movement provided the communists with a good opportunity for its development. Many Chinese communists and Thais joined the anti-Japanese activities together. It was believed that communists contacted with some members of the Free Thai movement—Tieng Sirikhan, Tong-in Buripat, and Tim Buripat.<sup>20</sup> Communists were able to attract a number of Thais to join the party which was the first time communists could spread their ideas outside of the Chinese ethnic community through the anti-Japanese movement.<sup>21</sup>

The goal of "restore and build up a proletarian political party" was soon fulfilled. The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was founded in December 1942 during the first National Deputies' Party Congress. This congress was an important step in the development of CPT. In this Congress, CPT proclaimed the Party program; adopted the Party constitution; established the leading organ at the national level.<sup>22</sup> To summarize, the CPT began to form the basic form of a revolutionary party at this time. And the three major goals of the CPT were struggling for national independence; achieving people's democracy; building socialism.<sup>23</sup>

As mentioned earlier, due to the anti-Japanese movement, the CPT had the first good opportunity to spread their ideas to more diverse groups such as students and workers.

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<sup>19</sup> "The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand." p.2

<sup>20</sup> *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* P.79

<sup>21</sup> Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought." pp.326-339.

<sup>22</sup> "The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand." pp.2-3

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

The CPT already had the power to organize and mobilize workers in factories in this period. According to the CPT's history recording written by a leading party member:

*“Several workers in the Japanese work forces were organized. These workers were used as supporting forces. The Japanese had established several types of factories. We organized workers in these factories to oppose Japan through methods of strike, go-slow, machine-breaking, and the destruction of products to obstruct their war effort.”<sup>24</sup>*

In addition, CPT had also done some intelligence gathering and propaganda on armed actions for anti-fascist alliance. However, CPT did not play any important and crucial role in the anti-Japanese military activities. In the scholar Pierre Rousset's view, the CPT mainly focused on the movement-building rather than military activities at that time.<sup>25</sup> Two organizations were organized by CPT in 1945: Anti-Japanese United Association and Bangkok's All-Round Trade Union. Bangkok's All-Round Trade Union was an underground organization intended to enhance the CPT's ability to organize and mobilize workers. As we have seen, after World War II, the CPT already possessed the ability to organize large-scale strikes in Bangkok.

### 2.3 CPT in The Post-War Period

The European theater of the World War II ended with the German surrender on May 8, 1945. On the other hand, the United States successfully defeated the Japanese naval forces in 1944 and 1945. At the end, the U.S. troops dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively and caused a large number of Japanese civilians to die. August 8, 1945 Soviet Union attacked on northeastern China under Japan's

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<sup>24</sup> Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand." p.521.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand," (2009).  
<http://links.org.au/node/1247>

control. Finally, Japan announced its willingness to accept the conditions for unconditional surrender in August 14. With the cease-fire of the Asian war, it means the official conclusion of World War II.

Thailand wants to join the United Nations after the end of World War II, but the Soviet Union demanded that Thailand abandon anti-Communist law first. In order to join the UN, Thailand repealed of the anti-Communist law in 1946. With the abolition of the Anti-Communist Act, the CPT was finally able to come out in the open.<sup>26</sup>

When the CPT got the legal status, its main focus was on the urban area. Therefore, most of the communists went to the urban area from jungle and rural area to develop the power of the CPT in the cities.<sup>27</sup> The armed struggle was closed down by CPT itself. And the CPT promoted the ideology of communism by peaceful and political means such as issued newspaper, participated in parliamentary elections and organized worker's movement. After the World War II, the CPT improved its ability to organize workers. Bangkok Labor Federation and Association of United Workers of Thailand were established by CPT in Bangkok. The CPT and another left-wing party (Sahachip Party) successfully organized a general rice mills strike near Chao Phraya river in early 1948. It was reported that 69 rice mills join the Chao Phraya strike which put the industry into trouble.<sup>28</sup>

But according to Chinese scholar Dujie, in fact the CPT maintained two parallel methodology development in this period, one was legal public organization and another

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<sup>26</sup> Alessandro Casella, "Communism and Insurrection in Thailand," *The World Today* 26, no. 5 (1970), p.200.

<sup>27</sup> Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand." p522.

<sup>28</sup> Jie Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand" (University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, 2016), p.50.

one was underground illegal organization.<sup>29</sup> Another source also proved this situation, Prasert Sapsuntorn who was the famous communist leader registered the legal communist party organization and published a weekly known as the *Masses*. Meanwhile the real CPT remained underground but invited Prasert to be the front man of the underground CPT.<sup>30</sup>

Some CPT members also joined the parliamentary election in 1946. As a result, Prasert Sapsunthorn as the secretary-general of the CPT<sup>31</sup> was elected to the House. Although the CPT received only one seat in the parliamentary elections, this was also a major development of the CPT after it had acquired its legal status. And it was clear that the CPT was prepared to take the parliamentary route in this period. We can prove it through the CPT's policy statement:

*To have the members of parliament elected directly by the people.*

*To extend the election of local government to districts, tambon and rural areas throughout the country.*

*To abolish the second category members of municipal councils in order to give to councils at every level the power to elect their own administrative organizations.<sup>32</sup>*

During the period of political liberalization, the CPT had participated in and published number of magazines, newspapers and pamphlets to promote Marxism-Leninism. In addition to weekly *Mahachon* (The Masses), the CPT also participated in the publication of *Karnmuang Weekly* (Political weekly), *Sangkhomniyon* (Socialist Weekly), *Puangchon* (Mass weekly), *SiangNisit* (Student Voice Biweekly) and so on.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought." pp.326-339.

<sup>31</sup> During this period, CPT adopted double organization, one is underground one is open organization. So this time Prasert probably was just a nominal leadership of CPT.

<sup>32</sup> Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* .p.80

<sup>33</sup> Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand." pp.91-92.

However, the political situation had undergone dramatic changes in November 1947. Royal Thai Army carried out a coup to force the Prime Minister Thamrong to resign. Then Phibunsongkhram who controlled the army regained the power of government. Left-wing sympathetic politician Pridi Phanomyong, who was considered a sympathizer of the communists, was also forced to flee. When Pirdi fled Thailand in 1947 due to the coup, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) asked Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) to protect Pridi and bring him to China.<sup>34</sup> The spy *Sun Peiwen*, who was the member of Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), met Pridi in Hong Kong secretly and then brought him to China.<sup>35</sup> With the suppression of the new government, the left-wing movement entered a downturn. *Tho Phianwitthaya*<sup>36</sup>, the member of CPT's central committee and political department (Politburo), commented on the leadership's thinking after the coup in 1948. He mentioned that the leadership of CPT still dreamed of the opportunity to work openly or semi-openly, and they thought of helping Pridi rise to power again.<sup>37</sup>

A long time later, *Phianwitthaya*, criticized the strategy of CPT in this post-war period: *"The armed force was closed down (by CPT). The conditions were not seen to be right for further armed struggle. But we did not manage the ending of the struggle correctly. We brought the armed forces back from the jungle to the city. We did not use those forces to remain in the countryside to mobilize the peasants further... Upper classes were from the ruling classes which holds power. They took positions which were not*

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<sup>34</sup> weiguo Lin, "The Story of Four Chinese-Thai Communism Spies," (2014).<http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2014/0508/c85037-24993472-4.html>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Tho Phianwitthaya is the one of pseudonyms of Wirat Anghathawon, He also used other pseudonyms such as Comrade Than, Jang Yuan.

<sup>37</sup> Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand."pp.522-523.

*democratic... We did not do enough to resist, oppose, criticize, and struggle against the ruling classes's policies... ”<sup>38</sup>*

Meanwhile, the situation in Southeast Asia was quite complicated after the Second World War. The Communist insurgencies had grown rapidly in Indochina states. The Republic of China lost mainland China in the civil anti-communist war. Chinese Communist Party established the new regime which name is the People's Republic of China in October 1949. Thailand regarded the Communist victory in mainland China as a threat to Thailand. Scholar Chulacheeb Chinwanno gave three reasons why Thailand regarded Communism China as a threat:

“First, the incompatibility between Chinese Communist ideology and the Thai ideology of “Nation, Religion and Monarchy”;

Second, the perceived expansionist policy of China in supporting North Korea and Communist Viet Minh in Indochina;

Third, the Cold War atmosphere drove Thailand to collective defense with the US to deter the perceived threat from China.”<sup>39</sup>

In any case, the Victory of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gave great encouragement to the CPT. The leadership of the CPT was also more firmly convinced of the path of armed struggle. In CPT's perspective, the victory of CCP paved the correct path to liberation for all semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries including Thailand.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Chulacheeb Chinwanno, “Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement,” in *The Rise of China: Responses from Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989),p.82.

<sup>40</sup>“The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand.”p.6

In 1952, CPT secretly held its second National Deputies' Party Congress in Bangkok in order to adapt to the new situation. The second Congress adopted a political report, low-level policy principles and elected a new Central Committee.<sup>41</sup> The main contents of this political report included: go back the rural area and use the countryside as the foundation of the revolution; focus on the peasant question and create a foundation in rural area for armed struggle.<sup>42</sup> The CPT's goal at this time was "accelerate the mobilization of hundreds and thousands of the masses to struggle and win victory for independence and democracy."<sup>43</sup> The newly elected members of the Central Committee were mostly Maoists.<sup>44</sup> The influence of Mao Zedong Thought on the CPT had begun to emerge in the second National Congress.

Meanwhile, Phibun government also enacted the second anti-communist law in 1952. It should be noted that the Anti-communist Act was promulgated after the Second National Congress of CPT. It is quite possible that the Phibun Government already obtained prior intelligence that the CPT adopted the armed struggle as the policy after the CPT's second Congress. Obviously, the enactment of the Anti-communist Act by the Phibun Government was not just about trying to eliminate the Communists but also to suppress the left and ethnic Chinese community.<sup>45</sup> Many leftist politicians were arrested by government and others went abroad.

Since Phibunsongkhram came to power and suppressed the left-wing movement, the activities of the CPT had gradually shifted underground. In the previous section I mentioned that the CPT adopted double organization after the World War II. Open and

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<sup>41</sup>Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand."p524.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>"The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand."p.7

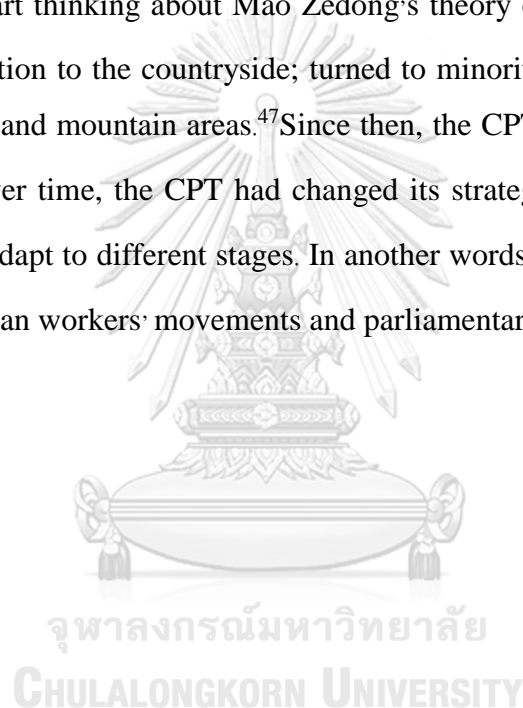
<sup>44</sup>Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought." pp.326-339.

<sup>45</sup>Wyatt, *Thailand a Short History* . pp.254-257.



secret organizations operate simultaneously. Therefore, the CPT did not suffer much losses when the Phibun government started to crack down on communists and leftist. As the scholar Yuangrat Wedel mentioned “Many radicals, including some communists, were arrested, but the leadership and underground organization of the CPT still remained intact”.<sup>46</sup>

However, CPT had also adjusted its development strategy. The three main development strategies were: start thinking about Mao Zedong’s theory of armed struggle; transfer the party organization to the countryside; turned to minority groups of Thailand who live in the remote and mountain areas.<sup>47</sup> Since then, the CPT has gradually abandoned the urban area. Over time, the CPT had changed its strategies of development many times in order to adapt to different stages. In another words, the CPT’s goal of seizing power through urban workers’ movements and parliamentary means had failed.



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<sup>46</sup> Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought." pp.326-339.

<sup>47</sup> Casella, "Communism and Insurrection in Thailand."p.201.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1 The CPT in the Third Party Congress and China's influence

Since holding the second National Deputies' Party Congress in Bangkok in 1952, the CPT began to change its development strategy. CPT gradually shifted its attention to the countryside without giving up the development of its urban activities.<sup>48</sup> But the most important achievement for CPT in Second Party Congress was that the CPT officially completed the Party-building, the Politburo and the Central Committee. Prasong Wongwiwat was elected to be the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Thailand. The leaderships of CPT, including the members of Politburo and the Central Committee, were almost dominated by Sino-Thai after the Second Congress.<sup>49</sup> Of course, most of Sino-Thai in CPT were Maoist.

The minimum program of CPT in the second Congress were striving for national independence, democracy and progress; establishing a people's democratic government and practicing agrarian revolution.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the CPT had entered an inactive period after 1952. Scholar Du jie called this period (1952-1960) of the CPT a "long time hibernation period"<sup>51</sup>. Because CPT activities recorded very little during this period.

In 1954 Thailand became the member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), the organization which aimed to fight against communist insurgency. After the new coup in 1957, General Sarit Thanarat got the power of government. Then the new military regime arrested few well-known left-wing people and stopped the import

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<sup>48</sup> Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>49</sup> Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*. p.31

<sup>50</sup> Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand." pp.50-51.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

trade with mainland China in 1959.<sup>52</sup> It was believed that China influenced the CPT to adopt the army struggle later to fight against Thai government. In September 30, 1959, the Chinese official radio broadcast stated:

*Since the coup d'etat last year, the Sarit Thanarat ruling clique has been following a line devised by the U.S. Imperialists: Stepping up war preparation on one hand and suppressing the nationalist and progressive elements who advocate peace, neutrality, democracy and national independence on the other.*<sup>53</sup>

One of the reasons why the mainland China started to pay attention to the Communist movement of Thailand in 1950s was that Stalin, the supreme leader of the Soviet Union, believed that communism China could lead the Asian revolution and establish the close relationship with communist parties in Southeast Asia.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, Mao Zedong also wanted the CCP to be the leader of the Asian communist revolution.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, Peking became the event and contact center of all the communist parties in Southeast Asia in 1950s; meanwhile, the CCP had become the leading and guiding organization of the communist parties in various countries including Southeast Asia states.<sup>56</sup> As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the CPT which was dominated by ethnic Chinese had been inextricably linked with China since its birth. The policy direction of China directly affected the policy of the CPT which viewed CCP as a success model of the revolutionary armed struggle in seizing state power.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> General Sarit Thanarat issued many executive orders, one of which was Revolutionary Decree No.56 which prohibited trade with mainland China.

<sup>53</sup> Peking, in English to Asia, October 1,1959, in *Foreign Radio Broadcasts, Daily Report*, quoted by Daniel D.Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand,1964-1969*, University of California,1971, p33.

<sup>54</sup> Yanan Li, "Zhong Guo Yu Dong Nan Ya Gong Chan Dang Guan Xi De Zheng Chang Hua Ji Qi Ying Xiang," [the Relation and Influence between China and Communist Parties in Southeast Asia ] *New Heights* 33, no.3 (2014).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

China also feared that the United States would suppress China through Thailand. From mid-1950s to 1960, Xinhua News Agency<sup>58</sup> issued a number of editorials criticizing Thailand and the United States. China believed that the U.S. and Thai which were launching military operations in Laos interfered in internal affairs of Laos. In China's perspective, the entry of U.S. forces into Southeast Asia was to suppress China. For its part, Thailand had worked closely with the United States. That was one of the reasons why Thailand had also become a hostile country to China. On September 23, 1960, Xinhua News Agency published one statement criticizing Thailand, SEATO and U.S involving Laos's internal affairs:

*Sarit reactionary clique interfered in Laos's internal affairs with the help of U.S. Imperialism...Reactionary newspapers in Thailand cooperated with the Sarit reactionary clique and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) to justify aggression in Laos...*<sup>59</sup>

Immediately after China criticized the Thai government and the United States, the CPT issued a letter in October whose name was *Report to the national compatriots*. The report proposed to overthrow the Sarit government and drove away U.S. forces in Thailand; exiting the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); stop interfering in the internal affairs of neighboring country.<sup>60</sup> Obviously, the CPT seemed to be guided by China.

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<sup>58</sup> Xinhua News Agency (New China News Agency) is the official press agency of the People's Republic of China. It is the highest ranking state media organ in China. It's President is a member of the Central Committee of China's Communist Party. Usually, we regard the statement of Xinhua News Agency as the statement of the top CCP.

<sup>59</sup> Information from Xinhua News Agency on September 23, 1960.

<sup>60</sup> *Report to the national compatriots* was translated in Chinese language and published in Xinhua News Agency on October 14, 1960.

Prasong Wongwiwat, General Secretary of the CPT, visited China in April 1961 before the third Party congress of CPT. Prasong Wongwiwat met with Deng Xiaoping, vice premier of the State Council in charge of foreign affairs, and also met with CCP's Politburo member Peng Zhen.<sup>61</sup> Soon after, the Chinese newspaper, *Da Gong Bao* (*Peking*), published an article stating:

*The broad masses of Thailand are getting more and more restive under the criminal rule of imperialism and the reactionary circles in their country... The people of Thailand are raising their voice even more vehemently against U.S imperialism and the Sarit regime which is betraying them.*<sup>62</sup>

Although there was no direct reference to the CPT and the armed struggle in the Chinese official statement at this time, China had begun to show hostility toward the Thai government. Chinese state media openly encouraged 'Thai people' to overthrow the Sarit regime.

It was believed that the leadership of CPT discussed the future development strategy with top level leaders of CCP. There was no doubt that the CPT's development strategy had been acquiesced or guided by China. Just four months after the leadership of the CPT visited China, the third National Deputies' Party Congress of the CPT was held secretly in Bangkok in September 1961. The armed struggle and Mao Zedong Thought were formally carried out in this meeting. The congress made concrete preparations for armed revolution and also amended the Party constitution.<sup>63</sup> The meeting proposed that

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<sup>61</sup>Shi Xi, "Deng Xiaoping He Peng Zheng Hui Jian Tai Gong Zong Shu Ji Basong Wenweiwa," (1961). <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64107/66150/66152/66156/66199/4470978.html>

<sup>62</sup>*Da Gong Bao*(Peking), May 25,1961, quoted by Daniel D.Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand,1964-1969*, University of California,1971, p44.

<sup>63</sup>"The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand."p.10

according to the experience of the Chinese revolution, the CPT take the road of rural encircling the cities.<sup>64</sup>



Photo 1. Prasong Wongwiwat visited China and met Deng Xiaoping in April 1961 (The second one on the right). The photo from News of the Communist Party of China

Another incident that took place this year also contributed to the development of the CPT. Left-wing politician Khrong Chandawong was executed by Sarit government in May 1961. Khrong Chandawong was very popular in Sakon Nakhon so that he was elected to the House of Representatives from this area in 1957.<sup>65</sup> However, Khrong supported the proposal to abolish the Anticommunist Act and also started the *Samakhi Tham* (United in Dharma) movement<sup>66</sup> which aimed at merging the northeast and Laos. Then Khrong was arrested and executed by Sarit government. Following his execution, his whole family joined the CPT and his daughter Rassamee became one of the top guerrilla leaders of the CPT.<sup>67</sup> Very soon, the CPT used Khrong and his families' popularity to recruit a large number of local people in the northeast region, so Northeast had also become the main area of the communist insurgency.

<sup>64</sup>Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand."p.51.

<sup>65</sup>Chai-ananSamudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand.Reform,Reaction,Revolution* P.81

<sup>66</sup>Khrong's motto was, "where there is a lump of sticky rice, that is the frontier of the Kingdom of Lao." Quoted by David Morell in *Political Conflict*.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

### 3.2 Armed struggle road of the CPT

#### 3.21 The early period of armed struggle (1965-1969)

When the CPT gradually shifted from the cities to remote areas, communism began to combine with regionalism in Thailand. The combination of communism and regionalism in the remote areas had immediately brought new troubles to the Royal Thai Government (RTG).<sup>68</sup> This is because Thailand is divided geographically into many different regions, while some remote mountainous areas were ethnic minority areas which had the very distant and even hostile relationship with Bangkok government because of historical or political reasons. Historically, many in the northeast have in fact more favored themselves as Laos than Thai. The nation-building of Thailand did not spread from the central area to the ethnic minorities in remote mountainous areas that time. Therefore, the CPT quickly used minorities to develop anti-government forces in the mountains or peripheries such as the Muslim communist guerrillas in south and Hmong tribes' guerrillas in North. So one of the obvious features of the Thai communism was that communism always combined with non-Thai ethnic groups.<sup>69</sup>

Hmong have been the hill tribe minority in north Thailand. Hmong tribes estimated of 50,000 people made their home in the jungle-clad mountain terrain of Thailand in 1960s.<sup>70</sup> These hill tribe people felt they were being treated unfairly by the Thai government or lowland countrymen. Most of the hill tribesmen maintained independent, nomadic, and had little loyalty toward the central Thai government.<sup>71</sup> The CPT took the opportunity to recruit a large number of new members who had suffered at the hands

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<sup>68</sup>Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand*, p16-18.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*, P33.

<sup>71</sup>"Communist Insurgency in Thailand."

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/0000012498>

of their lowland countrymen or local government.<sup>72</sup> It was believed that the armed forces of the CPT were growing at about 6% to 10% a year.

1965 was the crucial year for the CPT. Former CIA officer Bob Bergin mentioned that even the CPT proclaimed its armed struggles several times in 1950s, its insurgency did not get under way until 1965.<sup>73</sup> In late 1965, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi was reported to have said, “We hope to have a guerrilla war going in Thailand before the years is out.”<sup>74</sup> After China openly expressed its support for the armed struggle in Thailand, the armed clashes between the CPT and the Royal Thai Government (RTG) began to take place intensively. On August 7, 1965 CPT's guerrillas launched the first attack on security forces in Na Kae District of Nakhon Phanom Province.<sup>75</sup> In CPT's perspective, this was the first victorious gunshot of armed struggle. Then, in September 1965, Politburo decided to implement armed struggle in all regions where conditions required.<sup>76</sup>

The armed struggle rapidly expanded in 1966. The document from United States Armed Forces,<sup>77</sup> Psychological Operations Group<sup>77</sup>, showed that there were about 1,000 official members of the CPT operating in Thailand around 1966. CPT based in the mountain areas where around 3.5 million villagers lived, hence the CPT's guerrillas got

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<sup>72</sup>*Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.P33.

<sup>73</sup>Bob Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965–Ca. 1982," *Studies in Intelligence* 60, no. 2 (2016). p27.

<sup>74</sup>Chinwanno, "Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement."p.83.

<sup>75</sup>Saiyud Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* (Bangkok: S.Research Center Co, 1986).p.180.

<sup>76</sup>"The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand."p.11.

<sup>77</sup>The 7<sup>th</sup>Psychological Operations Group is a psychological operations unit of the United States Army Reserve.



the supply easily from the popular support from villagers or ethnic tribesmen.<sup>78</sup> The *SEATO Report* stated “Communist subversive and terrorist activities increased considerably...”<sup>79</sup> The U.S. State Department estimated that CPT armed forces reached between 2,000 and 2,200 during 1967.<sup>80</sup> *People's Daily* reported that the CPT's armed action had spread to 25 provinces and fought more than 500 times; meanwhile, more than 1,000 enemy were wiped out by CPT's armed struggle between 1965 and 1967.<sup>81</sup> But the communist record was likely to be exaggerated a lot. Because data from the General Saiyud Kerdphol show that just 425 people were killed or wounded in government side during 1965 and 1967.<sup>82</sup>

In 1968, the guerrilla range of activities had been extended to some part of Thailand such as the border area of Loei province, Phitsanulok province and Phetchaburi province.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, the CPT's army bases were established in Nan and Chiang Rai.<sup>84</sup> In June, the governor of Sakon Nakhon acknowledged that there were more than 600 villages harassed by CPT's guerrillas in Sakon Nakhon province.<sup>85</sup> However, even if the CPT expanded the scope of the guerrilla region, the scale of the conflict between RTG and CPT was not large, usually based on harassing guerrilla warfare. The CPT's guerrillas adopted the CCP's strategy of early development that is ‘we retreat when the

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<sup>78</sup>Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand* p52.

<sup>79</sup>*The SEATO Report*, 1967, P.5. Quoted by Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand*, pp.53-54.

<sup>80</sup>Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand* p.53.

<sup>81</sup>"Tai Guo Ren Ming Wu Zhuang Dou Zheng De Xing Xing Zhi Huo Yue Ran Yue Wang (the Increase of People's War in Thailand)," *People's Daily*, 17 Aug 1967.

<sup>82</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* p.186.

<sup>83</sup>Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand." p.53.

<sup>84</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* p.180.

<sup>85</sup>"Tai Guo Ren Ming Wu Zhuang Dou Zheng De Xing Xing Zhi Huo Yue Ran Yue Wang (the Increase of People's War in Thailand)."

enemy attack us; we attack the enemy when the enemy stops attack; we fight the enemy when the enemy is tired; we chase the enemy when the enemy retreat'.<sup>86</sup>

On the afternoon of August 9, 1968, the delegation of TPF (Thai Patriotic Front)<sup>87</sup> whose name is Phayom Chulanon held a press conference in Beijing in order to introduce the battle results of the CPT's guerrilla war. Phayom Chulanon said:

*The people's war in Thailand has spread to 30 of the 71 provinces in the country, this is a new stage of Thai history...in three years armed struggle, the people's armed forces have fought over 1,100 battles with the enemy and wiped out 2,400 enemy troops ...*<sup>88</sup>

Although the CPT may have exaggerated the battle record, we still have reason to believe that the CPT got the development of the armed struggle. According to scholar Yuangrat Wedel's opinion, the CPT managed to grow steadily throughout the 1960s.<sup>89</sup>

### 3.22 The development of armed struggle in the mid-term

From 1965 to 1968, the armed forces of CPT were scattered in different regions of the country. In order to improve the scale of fighting and facilitate unified command, the Supreme Command of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT) was established by CPT in January 1969.<sup>90</sup> The establishment of the Supreme Command meant that the armed forces of CPT had grown and entered a new period of thoroughgoing armed uprising.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> On January 1, 1965, the CPT established the "Thai Patriotic Front" with the help of China. The TPF called for the establishment of a patriotic and democratic government and opposed the Thai government forces and the U.S. Forces stationed in Thailand.

<sup>88</sup> "Tai Guo Ai Guo Zhen Xian Zhu Guo Wai Dai Biao Jie Shao Wu Zhuang Dou Zhen Zhan Ji (the Delegate of Tpf Introduce the Result of People's War in Thailand)," *People's Daily*, 10 Aug 1968.

<sup>89</sup> Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought."

<sup>90</sup> "Tai Guo Ren Min Jie Fang Jun Zui Gao Si Ling Bu Xuan Gao Cheng Li (the Establishment of the Supreme Command of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand)," *People's Daily*, 8 Jan 1969.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1969, The Supreme Command of the PLAT issued a New Year's Day declaration by secret radio broadcast Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT) which was the main front of CPT's propaganda ideology. According to declaration of Supreme Command, the People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT) was not only a fighting unit but also mobilized and encouraged masses to join the revolution.<sup>91</sup> In other words, PLAT was both armed and political units. The PLAT was a very highly politicized military body with Maoist principles.<sup>92</sup> PLAT units, which were called as 'mobile armed groups'<sup>93</sup>, circulated in various villages for political propaganda and recruitment of new members. As of 1973, the CPT armed forces had set up several temporary bases or mobile bases in many provinces including Nan, Phetchabun, Phitsanulok and so on.<sup>94</sup> CPT adopted two models to get the supply for the bases. One way was about getting support in the lowland or semi-lowland area, another way was about getting support in the hill area. The CPT thought it was difficult for government to restrict and suppress revolutionary activities in hill area where the armed forces could mobilize masses to do cultivation. But for lowland area, CPT used the agrarian revolution as the slogan to mobilize the masses to support the armed struggle.<sup>95</sup> The leadership of CPT thought that the CPT should create an extensive guerrilla zone in the lowland and semi-lowland in order to overthrow the administration of local government in the guerrilla zone, because the power of small local administration in a guerrilla zone was too weak to defend the government.<sup>96</sup> During this period, the insurgency also spread south from the

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>"The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought."

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand."p531.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

Nakhon Si Thammarat-SuratThani and Trang-Phattalung provincial border areas in lowland Phattalung and further south into Songkhla and Satun.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.23 Thammasat University massacre and the last wave of CPT's development

After the introduction of light industry in Thailand in the early twentieth century, the gap between urban and rural areas gradually widened. Meanwhile, the majority of the population living in rural areas did not get the benefits of economic development, scholar Chen Zhiyi considered that the widespread poverty in the villages and a low level of education contributed to the 1973 social movement.<sup>98</sup> One of the major demands of the 1973 movement was that of creating a stable and equal economic environment. In October 1973, hundreds of thousands of students and people assembled in front of the Thai Democracy Monument, demanding that the government immediately released students and professors arrested for political reasons. Finally, the Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn was forced to step down and exile in the United States, ending a decade-long dictatorship.

After failing the military dictatorship, the left-wing idea spread in Thailand, especially in young generation. From 1973 to 1976, old values were challenged in Thai society. So the left and right struggled with each other. However, the leadership of CPT insisted on the armed struggle strategy of countryside encircling the cities, so that the CPT did not play an important role in the left-wing movement in urban area between 1973 and 1976. Then, in September 1976, former Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn returned to Thailand. But his returning triggered a large-scale protest of students at Thammasat University. On October 6, 1976 police, military and anti-left wing paramilitary forces

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<sup>97</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* p.181.

<sup>98</sup>Zhiyi Chen, "Tai Guo Xue Sheng Yun Dong Fa Zhan Zhi Yan Jiu, 1973-1992 (the Study for the Development of Student Movement in Thailand 1973-1992)" (National Sun Yat-Sen University, 2003).

opened fire on protesters in Thammasat which caused a lot of dead and shook the country.<sup>99</sup>

According to statistics, after the Thammasat University massacre, more than two to three thousand young students and radicals fled to the jungle to join the CPT.<sup>100</sup> The strength of the CPT gained rapid promotion in a very short period. In 1977, the number of CPT's armed forces had grown from 9,000 to 12,000.<sup>101</sup> By the end of 1978, the number of armed forces had reached 14,000 and was distributed in fifty-two provinces in the country to fight.<sup>102</sup> The CPT's armed forces even possessed a lot of advanced weapons and equipment. A military operations report from Khaio-ya Mountain of Pechabun province in 1981 showed that the communist army in this area had offensive weapons, including SKS submachine guns, 57 recoilless guns, 60 mortars, rocket artillery and anti-aircraft machine guns.<sup>103</sup>

However, this was the last wave of the CPT's development. Soon after, the CPT faced a very serious problem and declined sharply. I will analyze this issue in next chapter.

### 3.3 The strong support from China

It can be said that the steady growth of CPT cannot be separated from the help of China. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, since its birth, the CPT had been led by the Chinese. But China did not pay attention to the communist movement in Thailand until mid-1960s. Aid of China to CPT was comprehensive and included both material and

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<sup>99</sup>Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>100</sup>Du, "The Spreading and Influence of Marxism in Thailand."p.55.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Maoxiu Chen, "The Report of the Military Operation of Khaio-Ya Mountain," (from Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum in Chiang Rai). pp.22-28

ideological support. However, the changes in China's domestic political situation also affected the direction of CPT's development.

There were two major reasons why China started supporting CPT's armed struggle in 1960s. First reason was Sino-Soviet split in the late 1950s. After Stalin's death, the contradictions between China and Soviet Union were beginning to come to the surface. Chinese historian Shen Zhihua believed that Mao Zedong firmly believed that the CCP had found the correct way, through the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune Movement, to build the communist society; however, Nikita Khrushchev criticized the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune and thus offended Mao Zedong.<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, China considered that Nikita Khrushchev totally negating Stalin would have a negative impact on the international communist movement. In CCP's opinion, Stalin was still a great Marxist but also made a few mistakes.<sup>105</sup> The CCP also regarded the Nikita Khrushchev's peace policy as revisionism. So China wanted to be the leader of the socialist camp by exporting the armed revolution. So that the conflict between ideological issues and the border issues had ruptured Sino-Soviet relations since late 1950s. And Thailand had naturally become one of the major battlegrounds for the CCP in exporting revolutionary ideology.

Another reason why China supported the communist revolution in Thailand was the fear that the U.S. would dominate Southeast Asia and suppress China.<sup>106</sup> Since the United States stepped in Vietnam and Laos, the U.S. troops had been stationed in Thailand in large numbers and built military bases in Thailand. China was very wary of

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<sup>104</sup>Zhihua Shen, "Da Yue Jing Ren Ming Gong She Yu Zhong Su Tong Meng De Po Lie (the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune and Sino-Soviet Split)," (2009).  
[http://news.ifeng.com/history/zt/zj/shenzhihua/200906/0608\\_6016\\_1193227.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/history/zt/zj/shenzhihua/200906/0608_6016_1193227.shtml)

<sup>105</sup>Zedong Mao, *Mao Zedong Xuan Ji (Mao's Anthology)*, vol. 5 (Bei Jing: Peking: Peking People Press, 1977, 1977). p286.

<sup>106</sup>Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand*.pp.43-59.

U.S. forces entering Thailand and cooperating with Thai government. On March 7, 1962, Peking Radio broadcast "...the U.S. is doing its utmost to strengthen the Thai armed forces, stepping up its intervention in Southeast Asia, and actively preparing for war."<sup>107</sup> Ignoring China's warning, the American forces on duty in Thailand rose to 34,000 in 1966, and 80 percent of the bombing missions over the North Vietnam originated from Thai bases.<sup>108</sup> Obviously, China wanted to oppose the United States and Thai government by supporting the armed struggle of the CPT.

The establishment of the Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT) in 1962 was the first step for China to assist CPT. This radio station in Yunnan, China, played a very important role in the development of the CPT. Because the VOPT was the only official media used by CPT to do propaganda and promote the communist revolution. The guiding principle and theoretical program of the CPT were broadcast by VOPT; at the same time, the armed struggle was also encouraged by VOPT.<sup>109</sup> The radio was broadcast for a total of seventeen years until it stopped in 1979.

The leadership of the CPT had a very close relationship with China. In fact, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) focused on the CPT leadership in very early period but hardly got any useful information, which was due to most of the CPT leadership hidden in the jungle or living in China.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Xinhua News Agency (New China News Agency), Peking, in English to Asia, March 7, 1962, quoted by Lovelace, p.45.

<sup>108</sup>*New York Times*, November 27, 1966. Quoted by Daniel D. Lovelace, *China and People's War in Thailand, 1964-1969*, University of California, 1971, p.51.

<sup>109</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>110</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965-Ca. 1982."p27.

In 1950s, Chinese Communist Party established the Foreign Economic Liaison Department (*dui wai jing ji lian Lou bu*) to support the insurgencies of communist parties by financial assistance in Asia and Southeast Asia. The CPT's military operations, which increased to 10,000 from 1,200 in 1970s, had gained the strong support of China from 1960s to 1970s.<sup>111</sup>

The internal reports of the CIA attributed the part of the reason of the CPT's rapid growth to China's comprehensive assistance. CIA document stated that the CPT's growth will be due primarily to continuing direction, guidance, and support by the Chinese Communist Party, and Thai youth were also sent to China for paramilitary training.<sup>112</sup>

General Saiyud Kerdphol mentioned:

*China further (1960s) extended support for the CPT by arranging for political and weapons training courses for Thai recruits in Laos and Vietnam, as well as providing training on her own soil. Once trained, communist terrorists were sent back to their native areas to develop insurgent capabilities...According to our intelligence, Chinese financial support for CPT activities in 1965 amounted to approximately US\$ 1 million.*<sup>113</sup>

Another source from U.S. military in 1967 showed that communist China was the real directorate of operations of CPT in Thailand, and North Vietnam was acting as CPT's training cadre.<sup>114</sup> China also helped CPT to establish two revolutionary organizations

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<sup>111</sup>Li, "Zhong Guo Yu Dong Nan Ya Gong Chan Dang Guan Xi De Zheng Chang Hua Ji Qi Ying Xiang."

<sup>112</sup>"*Communist Insurgency in Thailand.*"

<sup>113</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985*, p.32.

<sup>114</sup>"The Communist Party of Thailand," ed. Department of The Army Headquarters (7th Psychological Operations Group APO SAN FRANCISCO 1967).



in 1964, the Patriotic Front of Thailand (PFT) and the Thailand Independent Movement (TIM).<sup>115</sup> The headquarters of both organizations were initially established in Beijing.

China also provided assistance to the CPT through the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok. A former CPT Politburo member whose name was Pin Bua-on confirmed that the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok played an important role of supply of the CPT's revolutionary bases.<sup>116</sup> Supply materials from the Chinese embassy arrived in the CPT's rural revolutionary bases through the urban underground CPT members.

Table 1. Supply line from China to CPT revolutionary bases



Source: Kanok Wongtrangan in *Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand*, University Microfilms International, 1982, Ph.D. Thesis, p.304.

In addition, China also transported supplies to CPT through the routes of Laos or Vietnam. However, most of these routes were cut off when relations between China and Vietnam deteriorated. All in all, aid of China played an important role for CPT's armed revolution.

<sup>115</sup>Chinwanno, "Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement."p.83.

<sup>116</sup>Interview by Kanok Wongtranganand quoted in Kanok Wongtranganand, "Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand " (University Microfilms International, 1982).,p.347.

## Chapter 4

### 4.1 The Government's Response to the CPT before 1973

Since Thailand passed its first anti-communist Act in 1933, the Communist activities had long been in an illegal state except for a very short period after the Second World War. In most cases, however, anti-communism was only an excuse for the political struggle. Due to the weak forces of the CPT, the Thai government was even more worried about the threats from Indochina communist states rather than internal communists. In fact, the Royal Thai government had hardly paid attention to the communist movement in Thailand until 1960s, when the CPT got the support from China and gradually adopted the armed struggle.<sup>117</sup> In scholar Liu Lianfen and Shi Yili's opinion, the main active period of the CPT's social influence was also from the 1960s to the 1970s.<sup>118</sup> During this period, Royal Thai Government (RTG) implemented a series of measures to counter communist insurgency.

As we mentioned in the previous chapters, after the coup of 1947, there were almost no public activities of the CPT in the urban areas because of the strict suppression of government in city. Therefore, the CPT once disappeared in the public field of vision until the beginning of armed struggle. The Thai government had taken measures to encounter insurgency in the three aspects, including military operations, political propaganda and economic development.

In Saiyud Kerdphol's opinion, the local authorities could not handle the communist violent activities in 1960s, it was necessary to respond to the CPT by national level

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<sup>117</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965–Ca. 1982."p27.

<sup>118</sup>Lianfen Liu & Yili Shi, "Guo Wai Guan Yu Er Shi Shi Ji Dong Nan Ya Gong Chan Zhu Yi Yun Dong De Yan Jiu Shu Ping," [Overseas Studies on Southeast Asian Communism in the 20th Century.] *Dang dai shi jie yu she hui zhu yi (Contemporary world with socialism)* 6 (2015).

agency.<sup>119</sup> Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) was established by government in 1965. CSOC was the coordinating agency for civilians, police, military, and linking Bangkok to local headquarters to deal with the communist insurgencies.<sup>120</sup>

However, CSOC had not achieved effective results in this period due to the lack of active cooperation between the Royal Thai Army (RTA) and police forces; as well as many of the leadership's thoughts stuck in the past anti-insurgencies experiences which were quite different with the CPT's armed struggle.<sup>121</sup> In fact, Bob Bergin, a former U.S. CIA official, admitted that the forces of the CPT had actually increased in 1960s because of the RTA opposed CSOC's counter-insurgency methods.<sup>122</sup>

The director of CSOC, General Saiyud Kerdphol who had experiences in fighting against the communists in Laos, thought the name of CSOC was full of military colors which made people misunderstood the role of CSOC.<sup>123</sup> This was because CSOC also focused on the economic and social problems. He preferred regarding the CPT struggle as a political issue than as a military one. So the CSOC changed the name to Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) in 1974.

In addition, the Border Patrol Police (BBP) was also established as a paramilitary force to fight the communists in 1961. BBP mainly focused on the north and northeast Thailand which shared the long common borders with Indochina states where emerged

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<sup>119</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand:Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* , p.14-17.

<sup>120</sup>Kusuma Snitwongse, "Thai Government Responses to Armed Communist and Separatist Movements," in *Governments and Rebellions in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institution of Southeast Asia Studies, 1985).

<sup>121</sup>Marks, *Making Revolution:The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.pp.99-109.

<sup>122</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965–Ca. 1982."p27.

<sup>123</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand:Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* pp.14-17.

a large number of Communist activities. However, the CIA's assessment of the BPP showed that the role of the BPP was limited, because the BPP was "fragmented into small, widely-dispersed platoons and thus is vulnerable to guerrilla attack".<sup>124</sup> The Volunteer Defense Corps<sup>125</sup> (VDC) was the subordinate paramilitary force of the BPP. But the VDC was more effective in anti-insurgency. Because the VDC which gradually became the mobile combat forces in rural and remote area was a countrywide organization whose members from rural area or mountain village knew their local regions more than other military units or national polices.<sup>126</sup>

09/10 Plan was launched by CSOC in January 1967 because of the increasing communist insurgency. This plan focused mainly on the village security issues. The aim of 09/10 plan was to recruit and train security forces for critical areas, improve communications between villagers and authorities, increase civic action programmers, and develop information and psychological operations programs for the benefit of the rural population.<sup>127</sup> Obviously, this plan did not make military operations a primary option. The radio broadcast was launched across the countryside in order to win the ideological field and explain the government programs and policies to villagers.<sup>128</sup> In scholar Kanok Wongtrangan's opinion, the 09/10 plan has two main objectives: to locate and destroy communist activists and to isolate the CPT from the people.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>"Communist Insurgency in Thailand."p7.

<sup>125</sup>Some scholars use the term which is Village Defense Corps(VDC) instead of the Volunteer Defense Corps.

<sup>126</sup>Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.p.109.

<sup>127</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* , pp.14-17.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Wongtranganand, "Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand ".p.88.

For 09/10 plan, General Saiyud Kerdphol, the director of CSOC, expressed his satisfaction with the 09/10 plan in his speech to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand in February 1968.<sup>130</sup> However, Kanok Wongtrangan thought that the 09/10 plan failed because the military and police could not cooperate effectively and the plan also failed to create a good relationship between the people and authorities.<sup>131</sup> Other reasons also led to the failure of the plan, such as the geographical difficulties, ignorance of guerrilla warfare, and inability to improve villagers' living standards.<sup>132</sup> Soon after launching the 09/10 plan, the CSOC openly split into two groups, one advocating the use of military means to fight and clean up the CPT, and the other advocating political means domination.<sup>133</sup>

The new parliamentary election was completed in 1969 and Thanom Kittikachorn appointed prime minister. Then the Second Anti-Communist Act of 1969 was promulgated by Thai government. The government at least nominally strengthened its emphasis on the CPT armed struggle. In CPT's perspective, this was a coalition of Thanom regime and the imperialist U.S. that would suppress the people and progressive force of Thailand. The Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT) made a fierce response to the Second Anti-Communist Act:

*U.S. and Thanom clique adopted the new anti-communist law to suppress the Thai people. This act will promote the fierce resistance and revolution of the Thai people. This anti-communist Act is an evil law of fascism which can causally dismantle people's*

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<sup>130</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* p.31.

<sup>131</sup>Wongtranganand, "Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand ".pp.89-90.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

*houses and keep people in concentration camps. Thanom held fake elections to deceive the people. The only reaction made by the CPT is the armed struggle...*<sup>134</sup>

As the previous anti-communist effect was not very satisfactory in past years, the Thai government had formulated new measures. On May 30, 1969, government established the combined force under the CSOC. Government hoped to combine force between civilians, police and the military to suppress the CPT in CPT-threatened areas.<sup>135</sup>

With previous experience of failure, the CSOC clearly divided the respective responsibilities in the civilians, police and military:

1. The civilian officials focus on the protection of life, property and local development;
2. The police officials are responsible for blocking or cutting relationships between villagers and the CPT;
3. The mission of military is that of attacking and destroying CPT's bases, supplies and training camps.<sup>136</sup>

It was clear that the government wanted to suppress the CPT by both political and military means. Combining the political and military means to suppress the CPT was the right way. However, a lot of bases of the CPT were set in Laos where the Thai army could not reach. And a lot of supplies came from China so that these supplies were not easy to be cut down. Usually, the CPT members also got training in China or Vietnam instead of Thailand itself. Therefore, no breakthrough had been made in military

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<sup>134</sup>"Tai Guo Ren Ming Zhi Sheng Qiang Lie Qian Ze Tai Mei Fan Dong Pai Zhi Ding Fa Xi Si Fa Lu Zhen Ya Ren Ming (the Vopt Strongly Condemned Thereactionary Group's New Anti-Communist Law)," *People's Daily*, 20 Jan 1969.

<sup>135</sup>"Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Cmmunist Party of Thailand ".pp.91-92.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

measures between 1960s and early 1970s. Ironically, the CPT's armed force was suffering because of the breaking relations with Laos. Laos cleaned up all the bases of the CPT in Laos in late 1970s.

In addition, Thai government had also taken some policies to improve people's livelihoods in remote areas with the help of the United States. Improving people's living standards and reducing poverty were considered as one of the weapons to eliminate communism. The Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) was officially launched on 12 May 1964. The central government provided funds to the provincial governors to implement the program, but this program covered only the provinces where Communist activities were frequent. The main goals of the ARD included:

1. To improve the villagers' living standards by increasing infrastructure construction, such as road construction.
2. Let the villagers actively join these projects and strengthen cooperation with the government.
3. Carry out technical training for villagers to increase their production capacity.<sup>137</sup>

As of 1969, the government had spent \$58,824,000 to the ARD program, and the United States also provided extra \$49,308,000.<sup>138</sup> Although the purpose of these aid programs was in line with the actual situation, many problems had been encountered in the implementation process. So it had caused the negative impact. In some ways, these projects had strengthened the connection between people and the government. However, due to the corrupt and terrible behaviors of officials, villagers were pushed further away

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<sup>137</sup>Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*. pp.111-112.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

from the officials and held negative views on the political means of government.<sup>139</sup> Meanwhile, only a few, including officials, had benefited from these projects, most villagers had not changed substantively.<sup>140</sup>

To a certain extent, these projects were also detrimental to the CPT. The construction of the road made it easier for the army or the police to enter the rural areas. If the government received the information, it would arrive at the site of the incident very soon to fight against the CPT's army. As the scholar mentioned:

*U.S. aid built ARD roads into action between officials and villagers, into which the police could now drive in their jeeps, carrying their weapons. The army was given arms and ammunition to use against terrorists.*<sup>141</sup>

As to the outcome of the government response measures during this period, General Saiyud Kerdphol also admitted that although the government made remarkable achievements in suppressing the CPT, the communist forces still increased in early 1970s. On, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1971, Saiyud said:

*I can say with confidence that after five years of fighting, the CPT's organizational infrastructure has suffered a great deal. A number of their Central Committee members have been rounded up and insurgent activities in target areas are no longer ignored by the government. A considerable number of communist cadres and supporters in villages in or near those areas have been eliminated or neutralized...Nevertheless, despite our efforts, the communists did succeed in establishing the People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT) in 1969. And the number of armed insurgents has also increased.*<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* .P.91

<sup>140</sup> Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.p.117.

<sup>141</sup> Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* .P.91

<sup>142</sup> Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* p.48.



Obviously, the anti-communist strategy of the Thai government did not achieve much in this period. In Ding Wei's opinion, although some social development issues started to be put forward during this period, the military group was still the leader of the anti-communist insurgency, and large military operations were costly but ineffective.<sup>143</sup> Another reason that led to the unabated strength of the CPT is that China had stepped up its assistance. According to Chinese sources, China had greatly increased its aid to the CPT since the early 1970s due to the rapid growth of the communist revolution in Thailand.<sup>144</sup> In the meantime, China had also sent around 100,000 assistant troops to build five roads connecting with Thai border in the northern part of Laos.<sup>145</sup> The CPT could resist the pressure from the government because of the strong support from China.

On the CPT's side, PLAT was formally established in 1969 and clashes between CPT and government increased sharply. The CPT launched a lot of armed attacks in the border region of Pisanulok-Petchburn-Loei provinces from 1971 to 1972.<sup>146</sup> *The document from the Communist Party of Thailand* showed that "in 1973, the first revolutionary base in the Northeastern region was built up in the midst of the vast expanse of guerrilla zones and could as well make sorties on the enemy's encirclement in successive order."<sup>147</sup> It could be seen that the CPT still had made many achievements even under the suppression of the Thai government between 1960s and early 1970s.

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<sup>143</sup> Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>144</sup> Jianye Guo, "Yuan Zhu Tai Gong Wu Zhuang Gong Zuo Pian Duan " [Assistance to the Communist Party of Thailand.] *JINQIU* 12 (2009). pp.35-36.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> "The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand." pp.12-13.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.2 The counter-insurgency actions of government between 1970s and early 1980s

In October 1973, students and other civilians assembled in front of the Democracy Monument, demanding that the government immediately release some political prisoners. Then Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn fled to America and Thailand had entered a short period of democracy. After Thailand entered the short period of democratic era in 1973, using political measures to solve the communist problem became the main conception within CSOC.<sup>148</sup> And the CSOC also changed the name to Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) in 1974. However, due to the intense clashes between the left and the right, political situation was instability in this period. Therefore, the crackdown on the CPT had also entered a period of stagnation. General Saiyud Kerdphol recalled:

*After October 1973, five governments came and went over the next three years, two appointed and three elected administrations. But without stable government counter-insurgency programs could not be effectively implemented...CSOC had to endure strong and continued attacks from the student and labor Left, the CPT and its front organizations, and some misled Rightists, including members of Parliament and some cabinet ministers.*<sup>149</sup>

The situation had changed since 1979. From this period onwards, the Thai government responded effectively to the Communist threat.<sup>150</sup> Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond issued Directive No. 66/2523 and No. 65/2525 stressing the need for political measures to be given priority over military operations in countering communist insurgencies.<sup>151</sup> The new policies paid attention to economic and social development as well as

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<sup>148</sup>Wongtranganand, "Communist Revolutionary Process: A Study of the Communist Party of Thailand".p.99.

<sup>149</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand:Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* .p.118.

<sup>150</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>151</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand:Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* .182.

political situation, thus eliminating the mass support of the CPT. The new policy can mainly be summarized in five parts:

1. Thailand began to gradually develop democratic politics and establish a representative government.
2. Implement a series of development projects in remote areas to help villagers improve their living standards.
3. Strengthen the management of local government officials to curb corruption.
4. Amnesty for the CPT members and radicals who surrendered to government, allowing them to return to normal life in society and guarantee their fundamental rights.
5. Continue to use military operations to crack down on the armed bases of the CPT.<sup>152</sup>

Meanwhile, political measures were accompanied by large-scale military operations against the CPT strongholds in all regions.<sup>153</sup> In 1981, the large counter-insurgency operation was launched by military. This operation pushed CPT forces out of the Khao Khor stronghold in Phetchabun, a key position in the tri-province base area.<sup>154</sup> Since the late 1970s, Thailand's military had commissioned a special army unit to fight against the CPT forces. This army unit was constituted by Kuomintang (KMT) Soldiers who fled to North Thailand because of the Chinese civil war. These soldiers had a wealth of combat experience. In order to survive in Thailand, these soldiers were recruited by the Thai military and participated in the fight to eliminate the CPT. They participated in a total of six battles against the CPT from 1970 to 1975.<sup>155</sup> According to the records, the

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<sup>152</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>153</sup>Snitwongse, "Thai Government Responses to Armed Communist and Separatist Movements."p.261

<sup>154</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand:Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* .p.183.

<sup>155</sup>Source from Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum in Chiang Rai.

KMT army had more than 3,000 person-times participated in the battles with the CPT in many locations in Chiang Rai from 1970 to 1975 and destroyed many bases of the CPT.<sup>156</sup>

Table 2. The battles data of KMT troops in Thailand between 1970 and 1975

Year	The number of participants of KMT	CPT Losses	KMT Losses	Battle regions
1970	200	80	78	Chiang Khong
1971	700	50	20	When-Han, Whei-Koo area
1972	600	50	7	Whei Jar-Yin area Whei Bar-Liang area
1973	800	50	23	Whei Jar-Yin area
1974	700	70	30	Ba-Two-Jai When Din-Dou area
1975	400	30	7	Whei-Pa-Lian area
Total	3,400	300	165	

The table was based on the source from *Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum* in Chiang Rai

Thai government wanted to use both political measures and large-scale military operations fighting against the CPT armed bases in the early 1980s. Thailand's defense budget has greatly increased from \$525 million in 1977 to \$950 million in 1979.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>156</sup>Ibid.

<sup>157</sup>Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.p.187.

In 1979, General Serm Na Nakorn of the supreme command headquarters of Royal Thai Army (RTA) issued his direct order to notify the Chinese solitary armed forces in Thailand's north border to assist the war against the Communists in Phetchabun region.<sup>158</sup> In January 1981, around four hundred KMT soldiers went to war in the name of Volunteer Defense Corps (VDC).<sup>159</sup> This military action was a part of operation called Operation Phamuang Padetsuek which lasted four months from January to April.<sup>160</sup> Eventually these Chinese forces and RTA captured the entire Khao-Ya and Khao-Khor areas and destroyed all the communist bases in this region.<sup>161</sup> One of the Chinese sources stated:

*The Volunteer army played an important role in attacking the guerrillas and occupying the CPT armed bases. They captured Khao Khor area which is considered an invincible Communist armed base...Under the crackdown of targeted armed forces, the CPT was steadily losing ground.*<sup>162</sup>

Therefore, with the cooperation of the military and Volunteer Defense Corps, the CPT was also losing ground in military affairs. Thai government troops during the early 1980s won a number of military victories over the insurgents, such as smashing of Pha Daeng which was the major guerrilla base in Nan province; and the offensive in Krabi in the South.<sup>163</sup> The victory of the government military operation also accelerated the demise of the CPT.

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<sup>158</sup>Source from Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum in Chiang Rai.

<sup>159</sup>"Tai Bei Yi Ming Wen Shi Guan Zhi (General Recorders of the Martyrs in North Thailand)," Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum.

<sup>160</sup>Kerdphol, *The Struggle for Thailand: Counter-Insurgency 1965-1985* .p.183.

<sup>161</sup>"Tai Bei Yi Ming Wen Shi Guan Zhi (General Recorders of the Martyrs in North Thailand)."

<sup>162</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>163</sup>Bertil Lintner, "Exodus from the Jungle," *Economic and Political Weekly* 16, no. 7 (1981).p.231.

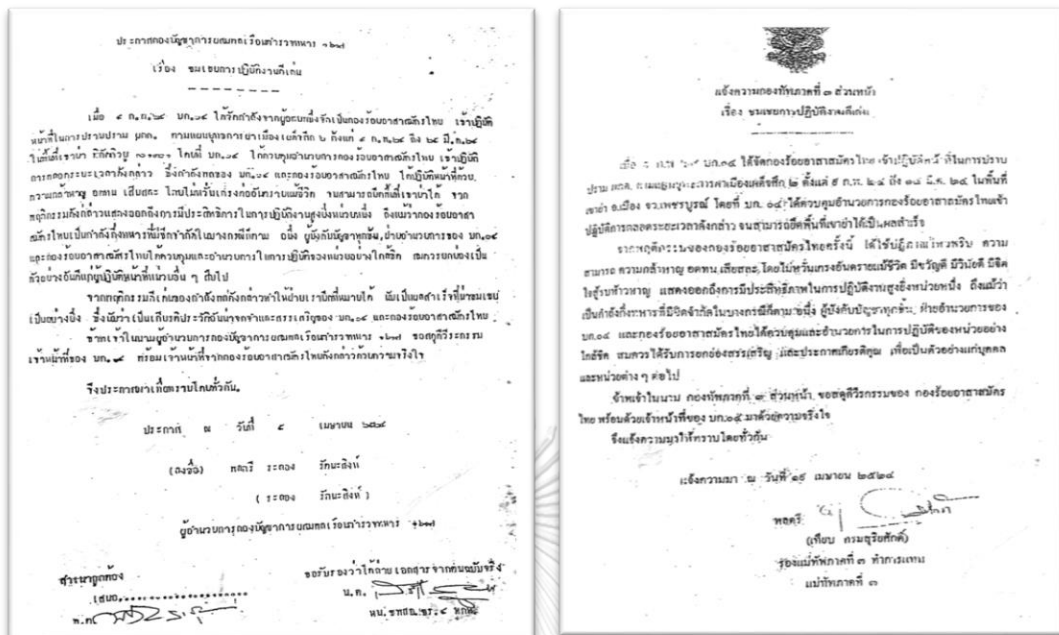


Photo 2. The order of commendations to Volunteer Defense Corps (VDC) for Military action against the CPT. Sources from Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museumino Chiang Rai.



Photo 3. Memorial tablets of KMT Volunteer Defense Corps who used to fight with CPT forces in Thailand. The photo taken by author in Mae Salong.

### 4.3 Changes in the international situation

#### 4.3.1 The end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China

Cultural Revolution was launched by Mao Zedong from 1966 to 1976. Academics are still full of controversy or disagreements about why Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution. However, it is quite clear that China vigorously exports Maoism during the Cultural Revolution. The CPT got the strong support from China during the period of the China's Cultural Revolution.<sup>164</sup> The CPT was not the same as the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe or even Vietnam in ideology. From the branch of communism, the CPT was a complete Maoist.<sup>165</sup> The leadership of the CPT had a very good relationship with the "Gang of Four"<sup>166</sup> who were the radical Maoists in China's leadership in Cultural Revolution. However, after the Cultural Revolution, China began to gradually develop its economy and abandoned its ideological diplomacy.

In fact, as early as the mid-1970s, China had gradually begun to develop relations with governments of Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, however, China had not reduced its aid to the Communist parties in Southeast Asia. So that China had adopted Dual Track Diplomacy since mid-1970s. Dual Track Diplomacy means that the Chinese government (RPC) maintains normal diplomatic relations with other national governments; meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues its party relations with other communist parties no matter these communist parties held the legal status or not in their own counties. China had implemented Two-Track diplomacy for two reasons. First, the CCP has never abandoned the ideal of world communism revolution until end of the 1978; second, Southeast Asia was the important communist

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<sup>164</sup>Guo, "Yuan Zhu Tai Gong Wu Zhuang Gong Zuo Pian Duan ".pp.35-36.

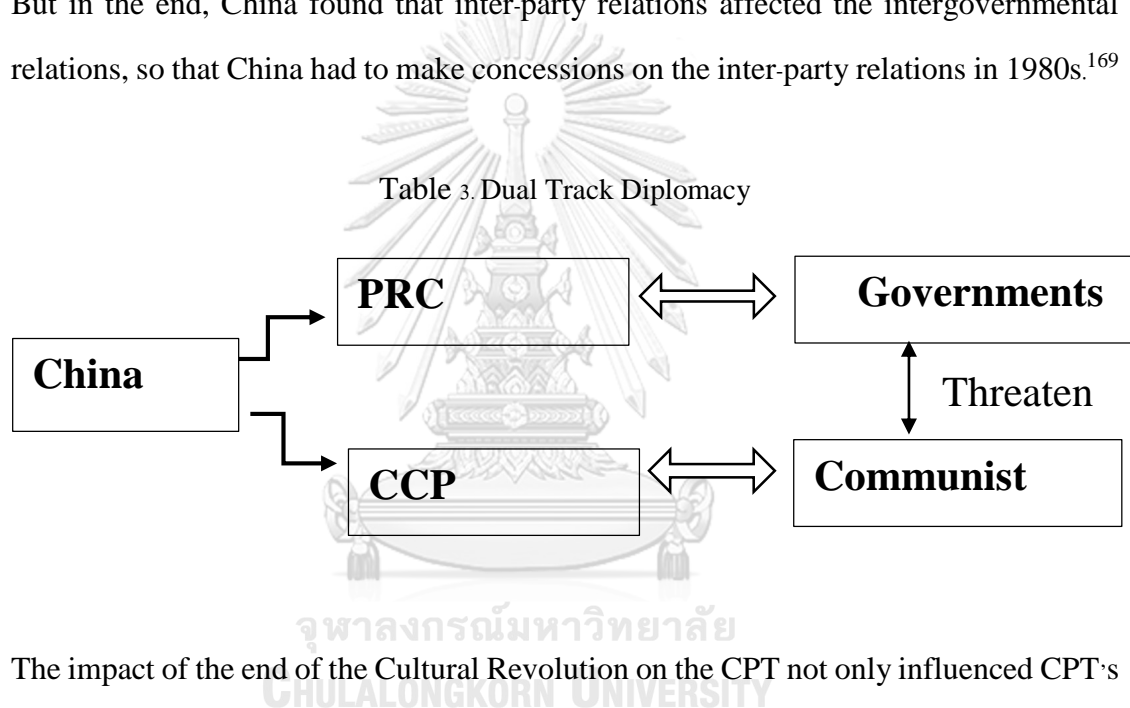
<sup>165</sup>Lan G. Baird, "The Hmong in the Communist Party of Thailand" (paper presented at the the 5th International Conference on Hmong Studies Wisconsin, 2015).

<sup>166</sup>The Gang of Four was a political faction composed of four Chinese officials. The Gang Four includes Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen, Jiang Qing who is the wife of Mao Zedong.

ideological battle field between China and Soviet camps (including Vietnam), so that China didn't want to lose the ideological war in this region.<sup>167</sup> China's premier Zhao Ziyang made a statement when he visited ASEAN countries, he said:

*If China cuts its ties with the regions communist parties, Vietnam and the Soviet Union would fill the vacuum and exploit the situation... The relations between China and communist parties in these countries are only political and moral ones.*<sup>168</sup>

But in the end, China found that inter-party relations affected the intergovernmental relations, so that China had to make concessions on the inter-party relations in 1980s.<sup>169</sup>



The impact of the end of the Cultural Revolution on the CPT not only influenced CPT's strategy of development, but also hurt the CPT's Maoist ideology. Two years after the Cultural Revolution, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the CCP was held in Peking, China. This meeting officially denounced Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and started the policy of reform.<sup>170</sup> Many senior members of the CCP had

<sup>167</sup>Li, "Zhong Guo Yu Dong Nan Ya Gong Chan Dang Guan Xi De Zheng Chang Hua Ji Qi Ying Xiang."

<sup>168</sup>Michael Chossudovsky, "Asean Communist Parties and China," *Economic and Political Weekly* 16, no. 39 (1981), p.1571

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>Jisheng Yang, *Zhong Guo Gai Ge Nian Dai De Zheng Zhi Dou Zheng* [The Chinese



even fiercely criticized Mao Zedong who launched dozens of radical political movements after the CCP got the power in China. In fact, although the CCP did not completely deny Mao Zedong's thought, Mao Zedong's thought has been essentially abandoned by the new leaders. Peking China used to be the sacred land for the CPT which was a totally Maoist Party. For a long time, the CPT won the Maoist guidance and assistance in Peking. Therefore, Peking's reform and opening up has caused negative ideological impact on the CPT who regarded Mao Zedong as the great revolutionary leader in this world. The Central Committee of the CPT sent a telegram to China celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The telegram stated that the CPT advocated the change of the ultra-leftist line of China and elimination of the Gang of Four, but the CPT persisted in taking the armed revolutionary strategy of Maoism of surrounding the cities by countryside.<sup>171</sup> However, this was the last public interaction between the CCP and the CPT. I could not find any public information about the communication between CCP and CPT in the following years.

#### 4.32 China's cooperation with Thailand in Cambodia issue

Democratic Kampuchea just existed between 1975 and 1979. It was a really short history but full of brutal and ruthless acts. The period of Democratic Kampuchea was the time of the Cold War between the East and the West and also was the period of the Sino-Soviet breakdown. So Cambodia had also become a battle for all hegemony forces in that particular period. Ultimately, the Khmer Rouge chose to back China that gave them a lot of aid; meanwhile, the Democratic Kampuchea became a China's protectorate in Southeast Asia. Khmer Rouge leaders often visited China in order to gain some ideological experience and material aid. But the situation in Southeast Asia suddenly

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political struggle during the reform period] (Hong Kong: Excellent Culture Press, 2004), pp.60-79.

<sup>171</sup>The Celebration telegram from the Central Committee of the CPT on Sep 30<sup>th</sup>, 1979.

became serious after Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

Vietnamese troops invaded Democratic Kampuchea on 25 December 1978. Just fifteen days later, the new regime which was regarded as the puppet of Vietnam was installed in Phnom Penh. Vietnam and ASEAN had resumed hostilities because of the Cambodian issue. Thailand had to face concrete military incursions and activities on the part of Laos and Vietnam.

As a supporter of the Khmer Rouge, China could not stand Vietnam's overthrow of the Khmer Rouge. Soon after the Cambodian-Vietnamese War, the border war broke out between China and Vietnam which was called the Third Indochina war. This war also was considered to be China's response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. Vietnam had become the common enemy of China and ASEAN states (especially Thailand). China wanted to cooperate with the Thai government to jointly deal with the Cambodia issue.<sup>172</sup> At this time, Thailand also regarded Vietnam as the biggest enemy. China and Thailand cooperated to supply military assistance to the Cambodian resistance parties (including the Khmer Rouge) which operated in Cambodia from Thai territory.<sup>173</sup> Thailand helped the Khmer Rouge reorganize the armed forces of 2,000 to 40,000 people in order to crack down on Vietnam.<sup>174</sup>

#### 4.33 China giving up supporting the CPT

Thai leaders also took this opportunity to persuade China to give up its support for the CPT. General Chavalit visited China and met Deng Xiaoping in Peking in 1979,

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<sup>172</sup>Pao min Chang, "The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and Its Implications for Asean," *Pacific Affairs* 60, no. 4 (1988), pp.629-648.

<sup>173</sup> Frank Frost, "Vietnam's Membership of Asean : Issues and Implications," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 3 (1995).

<sup>174</sup> Lee Jones, "Asean Intervention in Cambodia: From Cold War to Conditionality," (2007).

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09512740701672001>

Chavalit said:

*I went to China and talk with Deng Xiaoping. My position was that it would seem better for China to side with the majority of Thai people rather than the small number that made up the CPT. Thailand could be a good friend.*<sup>175</sup>

Then, the Chinese complied by closing down the Voice of Thai People Radio (VOPT) in July 1979 and reduced material support for the CPT.<sup>176</sup> Former CIA officer Bob Bergin mentioned that the loss of the VOPT was a real disaster for the CPT:

*The VOPT broadcasts were not simply exhortations of ideology, but the channel through which policy and information was passed. The VOPT also helped maintain the morale of isolated insurgent units and individual CPT members. It was most important to sustaining the united front effort.*<sup>177</sup>

Although there was no source of when China completely stopped its aid to the CPT, in order to cooperate with Southeast Asia countries, China has to consider the opinions of ASEAN members who don't want China to support the Communists in this region. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew met China's Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang in August 1981, Lee Kuan Yew stated:

*None of the ASEAN countries has any need for communism or communist parties to bring about a better economic life for its people's. Every ASEAN government is convinced that its own communists are threats only because of outside assistance and interference.*<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup>Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, interview by Bob Bergin, 2016.

<sup>176</sup>Chinwanno, "Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement."p.91.

<sup>177</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965–Ca. 1982."p32.

<sup>178</sup>William R. Heaton, "China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements: The Decline of Dual Track Diplomacy," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 8 (1982).pp.779-800.

Surprisingly, New China News Agency (Xinhua She) also published Lee's speech later, which means Lee's viewpoint has been recognized by Chinese leadership.<sup>179</sup> Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian answered questions on the CPT issue at a press conference on August 20, 1983; he stated that the CCP adhered to the four principles to deal with the relations with other communist parties including independence, complete equality, non-interference and mutual respect. Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian also stated that China would not interfere in the CPT issue which was the internal affairs of Thailand; China would like to maintain friendship and cooperation with the Thai government and Thai people.<sup>180</sup> This is the last time the Chinese authorities mentioned the issue of the CPT. Since then, the official Chinese media *NCNA* has never published any news about the CPT. It is clear that CCP has totally abandoned the CPT at this time.

The reduction or cessation of aid to the CPT by China had brought a serious blow to the CPT, and one thing to note is that the CCP also used to exert pressure to the CPT to stop the armed struggle in Thailand.<sup>181</sup> Because of the pressure from Peking and internal split, the CPT decided to attempt to negotiate with the Thai government for a truce.<sup>182</sup> According to William R. Heaton's source, some CPT's leaders tried to negotiate with government officials, but the Thai government insisted that CPT must first surrender to the government and give up its base areas.<sup>183</sup> In the end, peace talks were not reached.

#### 4.34 Breakdown of the Relationship between CPT and Vietnam

In fact, the Vietnamese communists were not directly involved with the CPT on any large scale throughout the history of the CPT but just attempted to maintain a low profile

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<sup>179</sup>New China News Agency (NCNA) published Lee's speech on August 12, 1982.

<sup>180</sup>Chinese Foreign Minister's Press Conference in Bangkok on August 1, 1983, published by Xinhua News Agency on August 2, 1983.

<sup>181</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>182</sup>Heaton, "China and Southeast Asian Communist Movements: The Decline of Dual Track Diplomacy."pp.779-800.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid.

in order to avoid government suppression.<sup>184</sup> After the Sino-Vietnamese relations broke down, Vietnam was trying to gradually exert its influence in the CPT. Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) considered increasing of military assistance to the CPT, but the CPT refused because of the worrying about Vietnamese influence.<sup>185</sup> Vietnam even used to draw some of the Thai pro-Vietnamese communists to establish the base.<sup>186</sup> Generally speaking, CPT received a lot of support from the communist neighbors in Indochina. Laos permitted the CPT to organize training courses on its territory in three schools—a political, military and medical which together had at least a thousand pupils.<sup>187</sup> As we mentioned in the previous chapter, Laos was also a transport hub for the transport of supplies by China to the CPT bases.

However, CPT did not change its pro-China stand. Especially after the Vietnam invaded Cambodia, the CPT completely stood on the side of China and condemned Vietnam, so Vietnam and Laos interrupted all the aid to the CPT and also blocked the supply routes from China to Thailand. The former member of CPT's Central Committee Phadi Chai recalled that Vietnam wanted to help CPT liberate the Northeast Thailand but the CPT refused, because the leadership believed that the Vietnam wanted to invade Thailand by using CPT.<sup>188</sup>

Due to the CPT completely reversed China at the time of the Sino-Vietnam conflict, all the aid to the CPT was interrupted by Vietnam. Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Van

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<sup>184</sup> Alpern, "Insurgency in Northeast Thailand: A New Cause for Alarm." pp.684-692.

<sup>185</sup> Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>186</sup> Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.p.189.

<sup>187</sup> Peter Kistemaker, "People's Liberation Army: Strategy of Self-Reliance," *Economic and Political Weekly* 15, no. 39 (1980).pp.1614-1615.

<sup>188</sup> Youshun Lin, "Jie Kai Tai Gong Mi Mi Zhuan Fang Tai Gong Zhong Shu Ji," *Yazhou Zhoukan*, Jan 4 2018.

[https://yzzk.com/cfm/content\\_archive.cfm?id=1515036392917&docissue=2018-02](https://yzzk.com/cfm/content_archive.cfm?id=1515036392917&docissue=2018-02)

Dong openly announced that the Vietnam stopped the Vietnamese aid to the CPT in 1979.<sup>189</sup> Then the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) ordered the CPT to vacate their bases in Laos.<sup>190</sup> As the response of CPT, the VOPT broadcast by Si Inthapanti announced fighting against threats from Vietnam.<sup>191</sup> CPT had to face the problem of shortage of supplies and lost the large rear to evade the Thai military operations.<sup>192</sup> The former member of CPT's Central Committee Phadi Chai recalled:

*During the difficult period, the CPT dispatched a 10-member delegation to negotiate with Laos. Ten people were detained after the talks broke down. Three of the Central Representatives were killed by Laos. Because they are Chinese Thai and Maoism supporters. The other seven were later detained in a village where they finally escaped to Thailand with the help of a Chinese businessman.<sup>193</sup>*

Laos was the rear area of the CPT. China's supplies were delivered to the CPT through Laos. There was no doubt that the survival of the CPT had become extremely difficult after losing the support of their communist neighbors.

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<sup>189</sup> Kistemaker, "People's Liberation Army: Strategy of Self-Reliance."pp.1614-1615.

<sup>190</sup> Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.p.189.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Lin, "Jie Kai Tai Gong Mi Mi Zhuan Fang Tai Gong Zhong Shu Ji."

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 5

### 5.1 Internal conflicts in CPT between Second and Third Party Congress

From 1942, four National Deputies' Party Congresses were held in the history of the CPT. The CPT confirmed its development strategies by convening Party Congress. In early 1952, the second congress endorsed the "developing forces in rural area" of the CPT, without giving up the development of its urban activities.<sup>194</sup> If the Second Party Congress was just the initial formulation of armed struggle, then the Third Congress fully confirmed the dominance of Maoism and armed revolutionary theory in the CPT. From about 1965, the official media controlled by the CCP began the intensive reports about the CPT. In 1965, it was also the turning point of the CPT's armed struggle from theory to practice. Two years after the CPT launched its first attack in Nakhon Phanom Province, the *People's Daily*, China's official media, published an article named *The Increase of People's war in Thailand* (*People's Daily*, 17 Aug 1967) talking about the significant achievements of the CPT's armed revolution in the past two years. For the first time, Chinese official media openly pointed out that the armed struggle of the CPT was influenced by Chinese revolution and guided by Mao Zedong Thought.<sup>195</sup>

Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism was first proposed by Liu Shaoqi, an important leader of the CCP, in 1943. Liu Shaoqi stated that Mao Zedong Thought which combined Marxism and the reality of Chinese revolution was the theoretical basis of the CCP.<sup>196</sup> After several fierce and cruel political struggles, Mao Zedong and Maoism finally got

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<sup>194</sup>Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>195</sup>"Tai Guo Ren Ming Wu Zhuang Dou Zheng De Xing Xing Zhi Huo Yue Ran Yue Wang (the Increase of People's War in Thailand)."

<sup>196</sup>Hua Gao, *Hong Tai Yang Shi Zen Yang Shen Qi De* (How did the sun rise over Yanan: a history of the rectification movement) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000), pp.363-390.

the dominant position in CCP since the Seventh National Congress of the CCP.<sup>197</sup> There was a passage in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*<sup>198</sup> that highlighted the important position of Mao and Maoism:

*Comrade Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought were the correct path in the entire process of Chinese national liberation. Mao Zedong Thought was China's Marxism-Leninism, China's Bolshevism, and China's communism.*<sup>199</sup>

Mao Zedong Thought is a very huge system. But in short, some basic theories are simple and easy to understand, such as the power out of guns (qiang gan zi li mian chu zheng quan), using the rural areas to encircle the cities (nong cun bao wei cheng shi), third world theory (san ge shi jie li lun) and so on. The CPT is precisely a revolutionary party guided by Maoism. Everyone in the Party had to study Mao Zedong Thought; the following principles were adopted by CPT members:

1. *The most important and the most urgent task is to seriously and continuously study the Thought of Mao Zedong.*
2. *Every organization at every level must set up suitable programs, times and methods in studying Mao's thought. Each unit is required to report the result of its program.*
3. *The study of the thought of Mao Zedong must be done both in reading, thinking and speaking,*
4. *The Party must publish enough Mao Zedong works, especially "Mao's Quotations" for members of the Party.*<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>Ibid.

<sup>198</sup>*Selected Works of Mao Zedong* is a collection of personal writings by Mao Zedong. It was published by the People's Publishing House. There were 299 volumes of Mao Zedong's writings and speeches from 1925 to 1957. The *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* officially published in 26 languages and the total authorized circulation was 300 million.

<sup>199</sup>Jiaxiang Wang, "Zhong Gong Yu Zhong Hua Ming Zu Jie Fang De Dao Lu " in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Su Zhong Press, 1945).p.5.

<sup>200</sup>Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought."p.331.



The CPT was dominated by Maoists; however, Maoism has been questioned by a small number of people within CPT. This was one of the reasons for the split of the CPT. According to the internal documents of the CPT, the earliest challenge to the armed revolution within CPT occurred in the Second Congress.<sup>201</sup> Prasert Sapsunthorn who was the member of Central Committee of CPT opposed the armed struggle and using the rural areas to encircle the cities. He also opposed the use of rural areas as the revolutionary bases. He believed that the CPT should adopt the “united front line” which means that CPT led the masses to struggle peacefully for democracy instead of armed struggle in rural area.<sup>202</sup>

Because of the differences with the CPT’s line in 1960s, Prasert Sapsunthorn quit the CPT and became an advisor of ISOC which aimed at suppressing CPT.<sup>203</sup> The documents from CPT called the line Prasert Sapsunthorn represented as “right-leaning opportunism” and “modern revisionism”:

*The Party was beset with frenzied menace, Prasert Sapsunthorn rose to the occasion and opposed the Party line of mobilizing the peasantry in preparation for armed struggle as put forward by Second Congress. Members who were persistent in Marxist principle and Party line and policy opposed his incorrect line resolutely...on the international front, there was a counter-revolutionary tide of modern revisionism—the formulation of the theory of “peaceful transition...As for Thailand, there shall never be any other peaceful paths to be pursued, but that of the taking up of arms only.”<sup>204</sup>*

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<sup>201</sup>“The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand.”p.8.

<sup>202</sup>Baker, “An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand.”p.525.

<sup>203</sup>“The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand.”p.43.

<sup>204</sup>“The Road to Victory” pp.8-10.

VOPT broadcast in January 1967 stated that the members of CPT must learn Mao Zedong Thought and insisted on fighting revisionism and corrected the revisionist tendency in the CPT.<sup>205</sup> In the same broadcast, the CPT also condemned the revisionism of the Soviet Union, arguing that Soviet revisionism affected the armed revolution.

Although Prasert Sapsunthorn quit the CPT in the end, the question of the armed revolution within the CPT had not stopped. Another intra-party struggle took place in late 1960s. Amnat Yuthawiwat (Pin Bua-on) who was a member of the CPT's Central Committee was arrested by Thai government in 1967. Then he openly advocated parliamentary and peaceful means of struggle during the 1973 to 1976 period. During 1970s, Pin Bua-on in the name of Amnat Yuthawiwat wrote a lot of books to criticize the armed struggle and promoted peace-line. Pin Bua-on as a former Politburo member who publicly advocated peaceful means also caused an open debate about "peace-line" in the CPT.<sup>206</sup> Then the CPT issued some booklets against the peace-line as the response to the Pin Bua-on.<sup>207</sup>

The CPT also called Pin Bua-on a traitor and openly condemned his theoretical works in broadcasts by the VOPT.<sup>208</sup> CPT accused Pin Bua-on as a revisionist who opposed the Party's course of armed struggle.<sup>209</sup> Pin Bua-on's doubts about the armed struggle had caused a stir in Party and society. The CPT admitted that Pin Bua-on created confusion among the masses.<sup>210</sup> Since most of the CPT cadres were sent to train in

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<sup>205</sup>"Tai Guo Xing Shi Fa Zhan Dao Zhong Yao Zhuan Zhe Dian (the Turning Point of the Revolutionary Situation in Thailand)," *People's Daily*, 15 Jan 1967.

<sup>206</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965–Ca. 1982."p29.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid.

<sup>208</sup>"The Road to Victory: Documents from the Communist Party of Thailand."pp.44-45.

<sup>209</sup>The Road to Victory, p.14.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid.

Peking, Maoists dominated the CPT from the beginning to the end. As a response to the “revisionism” CPT announced that: “There is no middle road, and compromise is never allowed”, most of the leaders insisted Maoism and armed struggle.<sup>211</sup>

In addition to these two struggles, there even were disagreements within the pro-Beijing leadership. Wirat Anghathawon<sup>212</sup> who came from a Chinese-Thai trading family studied at the Marxism-Leninism Institute in China and became one of the leaders in politburo. According to Maoism, the CPT also defined Thailand as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society at the second Party Congress.<sup>213</sup> Nevertheless, Wirat proposed that Thailand should be analysed as new-colonial society instead of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society.<sup>214</sup> But this idea was opposed strongly by some CPT leaders who lived in China, so that Wirat had to go to China in order to solve the split in late 1968.<sup>215</sup>

Meanwhile, another split event of CPT occurred in 1968. The CPT of Phetchabun, Phitsanulok and Loei provinces attacked the highest leadership of the CPT. However, the information on this split event was extremely rare. It was believed that these CPT members who attacked the leadership of CPT were influenced by China's Cultural Revolution.<sup>216</sup> This internal separatist incident continued for a very long time. It was not until 1976 that the CPT leadership completely controlled the tri-province region; meanwhile, cadres from these regions were sent to Laos to be monitored and re-educated.<sup>217</sup> This split event caused great damage to the CPT.

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<sup>211</sup>“The Communist Party of Thailand.”

<sup>212</sup>Wirat Anghathawon has a lot of pseudonyms such as Tho Phianwithhaya, Comrade Than, Jang Yuan.

<sup>213</sup>Ding, "The Research on the Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>214</sup>Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand." p511.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid.

## 5.2 The disagreement between CPT and Radicals

In 1973, Thailand entered a short period of democracy under the impact of social movements. Whether it was the 1973 uprising or the 1976 student movement, radical students were always accused by many people of being communist. In fact, the Communist Party of Thailand was not at the initiative of the 1973 uprising and had little to offer in terms of orientation to the continuing mass struggles.<sup>218</sup> Even during the three years of democracy, the CPT's main force was still in rural areas. Since the Communist Party adhered to the rural line for so long, it did not play a key role in this urban movement. CPT was also surprised by this sudden urban movement. At least two points can be seen. First, the CPT lost a good opportunity to return to the city. Second, the CPT had completely faded out of the city so that it could not detect the urban mass movement in advance.

Then the Thammasat University massacre on 6 October 1976, gave the CPT a chance to grow and developed sharply at the surface. It was estimated that more than 3,000 radicals including students, labor leaders, journalists fled to the jungle and took refuge in the CPT.<sup>219</sup> For a time, the outside world felt that the CPT's forces had greatly increased. However, shortly afterwards, the direct contradiction and generation gap between the CPT cadres and newcomers had been exposed. When the government enacted amnesty, almost all the radicals went out of the CPT bases and returned to the city.

In fact, the CPT cadres distrusted these newcomers who fled to jungle after the mid-1970s, "party members were carefully segregated from the united front and from those who merely fled out of fear for their lives. The Party recognized that RTG military and civilian elements had taken advantage of an opportunity to infiltrate intelligence assets

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<sup>218</sup>Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>219</sup>Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought." pp.326-339.

into the jungle."<sup>220</sup> The CPT believed that the class composition of these newcomers was not good. Party cadres saw these radicals as urbanized intellectuals who had many weaknesses. According to Maoism, just the peasants were revolutionary leaders and main forces.<sup>221</sup> Students felt that they were not trusted by CPT:

*We were on the lower level. In political affairs we had no right to get involved...The CPT believed that intellectuals had many weaknesses... Especially the CPT leaders who had been influenced immensely by China. They saw the intellectuals' weaknesses as being liberal, undisciplined and so on.*<sup>222</sup>

In addition to this, another problem that radicals found unacceptable was the lack of democracy in the CPT. Undoubtedly, CPT followed Mao's concept which was "democratic centralism". Democratic centralism was the organizing principle of the CPT. Tho Phianwitthaya, one of the former CPT leaders, said that "we must expand democracy within the party to promote commitment to work and ownership of the revolution by every member of the party. At the same time, we must centralize at the high level so that various activities of the party can proceed".<sup>223</sup> Democratic centralism was developed by Chinese Communist Party from Vladimir Lenin. Mao Zedong summed up the democratic centralism as "the combination of democracy and centralization, democracy was guided by centralization, and centralization based on democracy".<sup>224</sup> There were four principles of democratic centralism in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*:

1. Individuals obey the organization

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<sup>220</sup> Glenn Ettinger, "Thailand's Defeat of Its Communist Party," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 20, no. 4 (2007), p.675.

<sup>221</sup> Mao, *Mao Zedong Xuan Ji (Mao's Anthology)*, 5, p.619.

<sup>222</sup> Radchadaporn, interview by Yuangrat Wedel, 1981, p.16.

<sup>223</sup> Baker, "An Internal History of the Communist Party of Thailand," p.536.

<sup>224</sup> Xiugui Wang, *Lun Ming Zhu He Ming Zhu Ji Zhong Zhi* [Analysis of democracy and democratic centralism] (Bei Jing: China Social Sciences Press, 1995), p.285

2. The minority obeys the majority
3. Subordinates are subject to superiors
4. The whole party obeys the Central Government<sup>225</sup>

However, Scholar Yin Kefu mentioned that democracy and centralization were contradictory. The essence of “democratic centralism” was despotism rather than democracy.<sup>226</sup> Democratic centralism eventually concentrated power in the hands of a few people or one person.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, students who did not well understand Maoism had an illusion of democracy within the CPT. When the radical students really touched the Communist Party, they felt very disappointed. Someone wrote in memoirs:

*One of the important issues suggested by the party's organizing ability was that the cadres created the ultimate organization which would be the all encompassing, omnipresent and unified decision-maker. That was an impossible predicament for an individual who has questions, doubts, misgivings, no less in their political outlook than in their personal life...Argument and criticism of the Party was not allowed. Anyone who asked the wrong questions was considered to be undisciplined, and enemy of the revolution or a revisionist.*<sup>228</sup>

In addition to feeling excluded and without democracy, young radicals also held different views on the CPT's ideology and theory. The CPT was a revolutionary party

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<sup>225</sup> Mao, *Mao Zedong Xuan Ji (Mao's Anthology)*, vol.2, p.491.

<sup>226</sup> Kefu Zhen, "Ming Zhu Ji Zhong Zhi De Beng Zhi Yu Mao Zedong De Ji Quran Si Xiang (the Essence of Democratic Centralism and Mao Zedong's Thought of Centralization)," in *dang dai zhong guo yan jiu (Modern China Studies)* (2005).  
<http://www.modernchinastudies.org/us/issues/past-issues/90-mcs-2005-issue-4/928-2012-01-05-15-34-56.html>

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Gunter Willing, "Comrades's Memoirs: Memory Work of the Former Thai Communist Resistance," in *The Conference, 2008, the 10th International Conference On Thai studies* (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 2008).

under the guidance of Maoism. However, for most students who escaped to the jungle, Maoism was not fully recognized. They even believed that the CPT's understanding of communism was confined to Maoism which has escaped Thai realities. Scholar Yuangrat Wedel interviewed a lot of radical students who had experience in jungle. These students thought that the CPT had relied too much on ideology from China and stayed in villages and jungle too long, so the leadership of CPT didn't understand the true Thai society.<sup>229</sup> Wichai who used to flee to jungle criticized:

*The CPT never really studied Thai society—how it developed, how it changed. They just accepted China as the model. They called it (Thailand) a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society. I wondered what kind of crazy country could be semi-semi. Society has no semi-characteristics. Actually characteristics are all mixed together inseparably. All the time there are changes and moves.*<sup>230</sup>

Former activist Bhumarat Jongkit said:

*The students had looked up to the CPT cadres as heroes. In the jungle, they were appalled to find their CPT heroes were actually coarse and uneducated. The students knew they could do a better job than the old cadres, but felt they were never given a chance.*<sup>231</sup>

Differences in thinking, educational background, and understanding of Communism caused the barrier between radicals and CPT. In CPT's perspective, these students were too free to observe discipline. They were not real communist fighters. They fled to the jungle only to get protection from the CPT. The end result was obvious, following the amnesty announced on September 16, 1978 by the Thai Prime Minister, a flood of

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<sup>229</sup>Wedel, "The Communist Party of Thailand and Thai Radical Thought."pp.326-339.

<sup>230</sup>Ibid.

<sup>231</sup>Bergin, "Defeating an Insurgency—the Thai Effort against the Communist Party of Thailand, 1965-Ca. 1982."p33.

radicals had left the jungle and surrendered.<sup>232</sup> In the end, the CPT was facing serious internal divisions.

### 5.3 Fourth National Deputies' Party Congresses and CPT's collapse

Many students and cadres went back to the city in late 1970s. However, there were also some people who stayed in the CPT's camp and waited for change. Some cadres argued that peasant revolution in Thailand was not the route to power as it was in China.<sup>233</sup>

These CPT members hoped that the CPT could carry out the reform. They placed their hope of reform on the Fourth National Deputies' Party Congresses. The CPT also needed to make up for internal differences and formulate new strategies by this congress.

More and more members of CPT began to question the armed struggle and "rural areas surrounding the cities" since the late 1970s. Reformers within the CPT proposed a reform plan which involved "three strategic zones". The reformers thought "using rural areas to surround the cities" did not meet Thailand's national conditions. The CPT should formulate different strategies according to different regions. The First Zone was Bangkok, the Second Zone was rural areas and the Third Zone was jungles.<sup>234</sup>

According to "three strategic zones", CPT should cooperate with left-wing progressive forces in Bangkok which was the first zone; meanwhile, establishing the political organization in villages (second zone) and remaining main forces in jungle to support the second zone.<sup>235</sup> More importantly, each zone was to have an independent command headquarters for policy and tactical decision making.<sup>236</sup> Another issue from reformers

<sup>232</sup> Lintner, "Exodus from the Jungle."p.231.

<sup>233</sup> Taylor & Francis, "Thai Communist Split," *Asian Affairs* 7, no. 2 (1979).p.135.

<sup>234</sup> Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand in Structural Perspective*.pp.191-192.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.



was that changing the term “semi-feudal” to “semi-capitalist” to identify Thailand. Obviously, these ideas challenged democratic centralism and Maoism of CPT.

The CPT held its Fourth Congress in 1982. The Third Congress was held 20 years ago. The CPT urgently needed to adjust its strategy in order to adapt to the new situation. Eventually, Central Committee members voted on these reform issues at the Fourth Congress. However, the highest authority within the party was still controlled by the Maoists of the old generation.<sup>237</sup> At the end, neither the Central Committee nor the Representatives Committee passed these reform issues.

The Fourth Congress did not solve any crucial problems. The reforms that members were looking for did not appear. After the Fourth Congress, more and more CPT members left the jungle to surrender to the government. By 1985, the CPT was reduced to a few hundred old Sino-Thai members, ceasing to be an internal threat to Thai security.<sup>238</sup> Many years later, the General Secretary of the CPT Vichai Chutam believed that the failure of the changing development strategy between 1970s and early 1980s was a serious mistake for CPT. He said:

*When the government advocated democracy, we cannot change our struggles in time to adapt to the new situation. In the past, the military government carried out cruel suppression. The later democratically elected government promoted democratization and broadened communists. The United States has also changed its course. They no longer set up military bases in Thailand. Instead, they came to invest and create jobs for the people. In this case, armed struggle should be stopped.*<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Rousset, "The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Thailand."

<sup>238</sup> Chinwanno, "Rising China and Thailand's Policy of Strategic Engagement."p.91.

<sup>239</sup> Lin, "Jie Kai Tai Gong Mi Mi Zhuan Fang Tai Gong Zhong Shu Ji."

In Vicha Chutam's perspective, the biggest problem of the CPT at that time was that it could not change itself in time.

#### 5.4 The CPT's misunderstanding of Thailand

The CPT considered that the main problem facing farmers was the problem of land. In CPT's perspective, U.S. imperialism, bureaucracy, and feudal landlords collaborated to deprive a large amount of land from peasants, thus plunging peasant into trouble.<sup>240</sup> Thailand's land was heavily concentrated in the hands of landlords and bureaucrats, so it is necessary to carry out the land revolution.<sup>241</sup> The CPT proposed to abolish the feudal land exploitation system, reduce rents and interest, cancel unreasonable debts, and allow peasants to obtain land for production.<sup>242</sup>

However, the most important issue for Thai peasants was not the land issue, but the relationship with the government or political system.<sup>243</sup> The corruption of the government in any level displeased the peasants and therefore the peasants had negative views on the government.<sup>244</sup> CPT also mentioned that farmers who lost or lacked land accounted for 85 percent of the total number of peasants in Thailand in 1968.<sup>245</sup> But the source from National Statistical Office Survey showed that most of Thai farmers had their own land in 1968. The land issue was not serious as the CPT described.

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<sup>240</sup>"Nong Ming Zai Tai Gong De Ling Dao Xia Jia Jing Wu Zhuang Dou Zhen Tui Fan Mei Tai Fan Dong Tong Zhi Tai Guo Ren Ming Cai Neng Jie Fang (the Peasants Can Be Liberated When the Cpt Overthrow Us Imperialism and Thai Reactionary Government)," *People's Daily*, 17 Feb 1968.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup>Ibid.

<sup>243</sup>Chai-anan Samudavanija, *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution* p.90.

<sup>244</sup>Ibid.

<sup>245</sup>"Nong Ming Zai Tai Gong De Ling Dao Xia Jia Jing Wu Zhuang Dou Zhen Tui Fan Mei Tai Fan Dong Tong Zhi Tai Guo Ren Ming Cai Neng Jie Fang (the Peasants Can Be Liberated When the Cpt Overthrow Us Imperialism and Thai Reactionary Government)."

Table 4. Land Ownership in Thailand, 1968/69 (percent)

	Center	North	Northeast	South
Owner-operator	59.34	81.72	97.33	84.37
Tenant	24.58	14.16	0.62	8.48
Part owner	16.08	4.12	2.05	7.15

Source: National Statistical Office Survey cited in Niphon Phuaphongsakorn, "Land Tenure in Thailand," *Thai Agricultural Economy*, 2 (1975); further cited in *Making revolution*, p.123.

Following Maoism, CPT regarded Thailand as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. CPT believed that the Japanese were the colonialists in Thailand during World War II, then United States became the new colonialist in Thailand after World War II. Colonialism combined with the original feudalism to oppress the people. However, Thai government and Japan should be described as having cooperative relations during World War II. As for the United States, Thailand was mainly used to curb the communism in mainland Southeast Asia. Although the United States built military bases in Thailand, the U.S. troops withdrew after the end of the Vietnam War. Thai people usually perceived that the Thailand was the only country in Southeast Asia that has not been colonized by western powers since the modern times. So the view of "semi-colonial" was difficult to get the recognition of most Thai people.

The CPT regarded rural areas as the main base of the revolution. In fact, all the movements that changed Thai society took place in cities, including the 1932 revolution and 1973 uprising. Rural areas played a very limited role in the political changes of Thailand in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Interestingly, after the revolution of 1932, most farmers in rural areas could not understand why people in the city wanted to overthrow the absolute monarchy. Rural areas of Thailand lacked influence in the

political system. In sum, over-reliance on Maoism has made it impossible for CPT to clearly analyze Thai society.



## Conclusion

Communism entered Thailand very early. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, the communists in Thailand were mainly aimed at China or Indochina instead of Thailand. Thai communists began to participate in Thai political activities during World War II. The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was formally founded in December 1942 during the first National Deputies' Party Congress. CPT joined the Free Thai Movement which aimed at resisting Japan during World War II. Although the CPT gained the legal status after the World War II, the Thai government stepped up its suppression of the CPT in 1950s. In 1952, CPT held its second National Deputies' Party Congress in Bangkok. After this congress, the CPT began to turn its attention to rural areas, but did not give up the city. The influence of Mao Zedong Thought on the CPT also had begun to emerge in the Second National Congress. Phibun government enacted the second anti-communist law in 1952 and strengthened the crackdown on the left-wing forces. The CPT abandoned its peace-line or parliamentary means probably in the 1950s.

From the 1960s, China had strengthened its influence on the CPT. Supporting for CPT was the response of China to the Sino-Soviet debate, and it also was China's resistance to the United States' forces in Southeast Asia. The Third National Deputies' Party Congress of the CPT was held secretly in Bangkok in September 1961. The armed struggle and Mao Zedong Thought were formally carried out in this meeting. After receiving China's support, CPT launched the first armed clash in 1965. Then the armed struggle rapidly expanded in the following years. The Supreme Command of the PLAT was established in January, 1969. Meanwhile, the CPT armed forces had set up several temporary bases or mobile bases in many provinces. In this period, CPT got the support from Indochina states especially Laos, and also got the supplies from China. After the

Thammasat University massacre in 1976, more than two to three thousand young students and radicals fled to the jungle to join the CPT. The power of the CPT was unprecedentedly strong.

During 1960s and early 1970s, Royal Thai Government (RTG) implemented a series of measures to encounter communist insurgency but the result was not so effective. Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) which was the coordinating agency for civilians, police, military, was established by government in 1965. Due to the inconsistency of internal opinions and the lack of cooperation, CSOC initially did not play an active role in counter-insurgency. There was no breakthrough in military measures between 1960s and early 1970s. Since late 1970s, Thai government started using political measures which were accompanied by large-scale military operations against the CPT strongholds in all regions. Neither the military nor the political methods achieved very effective result in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the same period, CPT lost the support from both China and Laos due to the changing international situation.

After losing external aid, the CPT entered a very difficult period. Many members hoped that the CPT could launch the reform in order to meet the new situation. However, the reforms in anticipation did not appear, and the CPT fell into the tide of defections and divisions. Since the government issued the first amnesty, most of the students who had fled to jungle because of the Thammasat University massacre already went back the cities. Then, after the Fourth National Deputies' Party Congresses, more and more cadres also surrendered to government. Until 1985, the CPT was reduced to a few hundred old Sino-Thai members, ceasing to be an internal threat to Thai security at all.

In sum, the CPT relied too much on China both on materials and ideology. However, Maoism was developed by Chinese Communist Party which meant that the Maoism was not suitable for communist revolution in Thailand. CPT regarded Maoism as sacred

dogma, so that CPT made the wrong conception for Thai society. Because of the differences between CPT and radicals who fled to jungle after 1976, these two groups could not cooperate very well. In addition, The CPT was caught in the breakdown of Sino-Vietnamese relations, resulting in the suspension of support from Laos. Old Maoism had lost its appeal in late 1970s, but the CPT could not make timely reform. Finally, the internal division was getting worse. Under the double blow of the military and politics from government, the CPT collapsed in the end.



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APPENDIX

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

## VITA

Feng Cui comes from China. He studied for Master Degree in Chulalongkorn University Southeast Asian Program. Cui Feng have done the Bachelor Degree of Management in China Beijing Normal University Zhuhai campus.

