

Notes

General Introduction

1. 6 June 1973.
2. Tr. note: This excerpt is a retranslation into English from the author's translation into French of the English original.
3. Tr. note: This article excerpt is a retranslation into English from the author's translation into French of the English original.
4. Tr. note: This text is a retranslation into English from the author's translation into French of the English original.
5. Tr. note: *The Devil's Discus* is an investigation into the death of King Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII) of Siam, first published in 1964 by Cassell. Although banned in Thailand, it absolved Pridi Banomyong from any rumoured involvement in the tragic death of the young monarch.
6. Tr. note: This excerpt is a retranslation into English from the author's translation into French of the English original.
7. Tr. note: The introduction to *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels begins, "A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism."
8. Tr. note: Like all officials of a certain grade, Pridi Banomyong received an official title: Luang Praditmanutham. Other romanizations of this title also exist.

Chap. 1: My Farewell to the People's Republic of China

9. Author's note: Mr. Guillaume Georges-Picot is an old friend, whom I met when he was secretary, and later temporary chargé d'affaires, at the French legation. He represented his country during negotiations over the unequal

treaties between France and Siam when I was foreign affairs minister. The negotiations led to the signing of a new friendship treaty between the two nations, following the principle of equality and excluding any extraterritorial rights or other privileges.

10. Tr. note: The French expression *plus royaliste que le roi* (more royalist than the king) was used by François-René de Chateaubriand in his *The Monarchy According to the Charter* (*De la Monarchie selon la charte*; 1815), which advocated constitutional monarchy with liberal as well as conservative elements. In his novel *Portrait of a Lady* (1880), Henry James translated this as “you needn’t be a better royalist than the king”.
11. Tr. note: Verse 202 of The Dhammapada reads: “There is no fire like lust, no evil like aversion, no dukkha like the aggregates, no higher bliss than Peace” (*natthi rāgasamo aggi natthi dosasamo kali | natthi khandhasamā dukkhā natthi santiparam sukham*).

Chap. 2: My Revolutionary Youth

12. Tr. note: Some years after this lesson, Pridi Banomyong would be a leader in the Siamese revolution of 1932, which ended Siam’s centuries-long absolute monarchy and resulted in a transition of Siam into a constitutional monarchy, the introduction of democracy and the first constitution, and the creation of the National Assembly.
13. Tr. note: The agreements reached between the Western powers and China following the Opium Wars came to be known as the unequal treaties because in practice they gave foreigners privileged status and extracted concessions from the Chinese.
14. Tr. note: Thammasat University was founded in 1934 by Pridi Banomyong, who named it the University of Moral and Political Sciences. In 1952 its name was changed to Thammasat, deriving from the Buddhist term Dhammasattha, or study of Dharma (karma).

Chap. 3: My Meetings with Mussolini

15. Tr. note: This mythologizing assertion by Mussolini is not confirmed by historians, who consider Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus, also known as Octavian, as the founder of the Roman Empire and first Roman emperor.

Chap. 4: The Underground Kingdom of Siam

16. Tr. note: This excerpt and the following two texts adhere to the transcription of the original English-language text as transcribed on the website of the Pridi Banomyong Institute at <https://pridi.or.th/th/content/2022/01/961> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
17. Tr. note: The text for this message and its reply is available on the website of the Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State, under the heading: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, volume VI; <https://>

- history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d942 (last accessed 11 August 2025).
18. Tr. note: While the telegram format may have encouraged concise writing, the use in English of the offensive term *Jap*, an English slur abbreviation of the word Japanese, may have been purposeful. By repeatedly using this term, Pridi Banomyong may have been reassuring the US state government of Thai opposition to the Japanese invader and alliance with America, even to the extent of echoing bigoted terms common in Anglo-American speech. A quarter century later, when translating his own message into French, Pridi more diplomatically wrote the full formal term “*Japonais*”. Also, in colloquial French, there is no specific derogatory term referring to Japanese people, unlike related French words for Chinese or Vietnamese people.
 19. Tr. note: Chamkad Balankura was sent by Pridi from the Free Thai movement in Thailand to Chongqing, China, to see if he could arrange a meeting with the American allies. However, delaying tactics by China defeated his efforts, in addition to ill health, which historians have ascribed to a range of causes, from gastric cancer to deliberate poisoning. Without specifying a cause of death, Pridi merely referred to symptoms of “arduous exhaustion” (*pénible fatigues*).
 20. Tr. note: Thavil Udol, a member of parliament from northeast Thailand, went to China in September 1944. His role was limited to maintaining liaison between the Chinese Government and the Thai underground. There is some disagreement over how many Seri Thai missions were sent to China around this time. Unlike Pridi, the historian Thamsook Numnonda, in *Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941–45* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), also counts a first mission sent to China in “early 1942 but they appeared to have disappeared without trace”. So Thamsook counts Chamkad as the second envoy and Thavil the fourth.
 21. *Lia Pah* might be translated as “grab and hit” or “capture and punch”.
- Chap. 5: The Southeast Asian League**
22. Tr. note: In French in the text, *entente cordiale* (cordial agreement or cordial understanding) refers to a friendly understanding between political powers, less formal than an alliance.
- Chap. 6: My Meeting with President Chiang Kai-Shek**
23. Pacific Overseas Airlines (Siam).
 24. Tr note: A press photograph of Pridi being decorated with the Medal of Freedom with Gold Palm in America during this visit would be reproduced in 2011 on a three-baht stamp issued by Thailand Post.
 25. Tr. note: Thailand became a member of the United Nations on 16 December 1946.
 26. Tr. note: In fact, Mongolia became a member of the UN on 27 October 1961—some fifteen years after Thailand joined.

27. Tr. note: The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is located on the Quai d'Orsay, between the Esplanade des Invalides and the National Assembly at the Palais Bourbon, and thus the ministry is often called the Quai d'Orsay.
28. Tr. note: The Golden-Fronted Leafbird (*Chloropsis aurifrons pridii*) was identified in 1946 by Herbert Girton Deignan.

Chap. 7: The Reactionary Coup D'état

29. Tr. note: Commander Skeats Gardas was US naval attaché in Thailand at the time. According to a coded cable dated 19 November 1947 sent by British ambassador Geoffrey Thompson to his US counterpart Edwin Stanton, Pridi was smuggled out of Bangkok "disguised in naval uniform, wearing thick glasses and a new moustache, and minus his upper dental plate". Ambassador Thompson added: "I disliked all this dangerous melodrama, but neither United States Ambassador nor I can see how else we can act. We are handicapped from every point of view, and the sooner these people get out and away the better." According to Thompson in a different message, the boat belonging to Gardas was piloted by the latter, his wife and his nineteen-year-old sister. Thompson added on 19 November: "I think you will probably agree that by our action today, my United States colleague and I have discharged our humanitarian and other obligations towards Nai Pridi. So far as I am concerned, he will have to paddle his own canoe henceforth." The following day, Thompson noted: "Whatever [Pridi's] political opponents may think, he took grave risks for the Allies during the war and consequently has earned our gratitude."
30. Tr. note: Pridi and his entourage boarded the Shell Company tanker *Fusus*.
31. Tr. note: Poonsuk and Pridi Banomyong had six children: Lalida, Parl, Suda, Sookprida, Dusadee and Wani.

Chap. 8: The Defeat of the Grand Palace Insurrection

32. Tr. note: Pridi's memoir does not detail how, in the first week of February 1949, he secretly returned to Thailand from China, or that Marshal Phibun, on learning of Pridi's project, offered him a governmental post. Pridi rejected this ostensible compromise, and the ill-fated coup was attempted.

Chap. 9: The Adventure of My Second Escape from Siam

33. Tr. note: In the original French text, Pridi writes that his boat stopped at "île Balaïk". Karang Balik is in the Thousand Islands (Indonesian: Kepulauan Seribu) to the north of Jakarta's coast, but it is not clear if this is what was being referred to.

Chap. 14: Special Features of the Chinese Communist Party

34. Tr. note: Brainwashing was a notorious element in Mao's Laogai, a criminal justice system involving the use of penal labour and prison farms in the People's Republic of China. Some historians have estimated that the system caused tens of millions of deaths. Brainwashing occurred during prison sentences, driving

prisoners to insanity and suicide. See Philip F. Williams and Yenna Wu, *The Great Wall of Confinement: The Chinese Prison Camp Through Contemporary Fiction and Reportage* (University of California Press, 2004).

Chap. 15: The United Front Strategy

35. Tr. note: This text by Mao, reprinted in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, is from “On The People’s Democratic Dictatorship: In Commemoration of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China, 30 June 1949.” See https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_65.htm (last accessed 11 August 2025).

Chap. 16: The People’s Army Without Ranks or Stripes

36. Tr. note: Mao Zedong, “On Protracted War” (May 1958), *Selected Works*, vol. 2, pp. 143–44.

Chap. 17: The Socialist and Communist System in the PRC

37. Tr. note: Insofar as Mao read only Chinese, a language in which the comparative study in print of international socialism was limited in his era, it is unclear just how extensively he studied other traditions, as Pridi asserts.
38. Tr. note: See “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War” (October 1938), Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, p. 196: “China’s case, however, is different, because she is the victim of aggression. Chinese Communists must therefore combine patriotism with internationalism. We are at once internationalists and patriots, and our slogan is, ‘Fight to defend the motherland against the aggressors.’”
39. Tr. note: See *People’s Daily (Renmin Ribao)*, “More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, 29 December 1956.
40. Tr. note: Speech at Moscow Celebration Meeting on 6 November 1957. Reprinted in the magazine *People’s China*, Beijing, 1 December 1957, and in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. The occasion was a joint meeting of the two Soviets of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities).

Chap. 18: State Power Before Its Decline in the PRC

41. Author’s note: See chapter 15.
42. Tr. note: See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875).
43. Tr. note: See “On New Democracy”, January 1940, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*.
44. Tr. note: A fellow traveller is a person who is intellectually sympathetic to the ideology of a political organization and who cooperates in the organization’s politics without being a formal member. In the early history of the Soviet Union, the term was popularized by Leon Trotsky to identify intellectual supporters of the Bolshevik government.

45. Tr. note: One published translation of the 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China (Foreign Languages Press, 1954) declares: "Article 55: Local people's congresses at all levels are the organs of government authority in their respective localities." See <https://web.archive.org/web/20140328031523/http://www.hkpolitics.net/database/chicon/1954/1954ae.pdf> (last accessed 11 August 2025).

Chap. 20: People's Communes in China

46. Tr. note: This text appears to be a paraphrase of the Resolution on the Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas as presented by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on 29 August 1958. See <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/22323628-resolution-on-the-establishment-of-peoples-communes-in-the-rural-areas-central-committee-of-the-chinese-communist-party-august-29-1958> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
47. Tr. note: Pierre Fistié, *Sous-développement et utopie. Le programme de réformes présenté en 1933 par Pridi Phanomyong* (Mouton, 1969).

Chap. 21: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

48. Tr. note: This complex and murky episode was made more opaque by the fact that Hai Rui, a politician of the Ming dynasty who was remembered as a model of integrity, was reportedly one of Mao Zedong's favourite historical characters.
49. Tr. note: See "Sweep Away All Monsters", reprinted in *The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution in China* (3) (Foreign Language Press, 1966), <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/china/cr-3.pdf> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
50. Tr. note. See "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Adopted on August 8, 1966): A New Stage in the Socialist Revolution", reprinted in *Peking Review*, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-33g.htm> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
51. Tr. note: "This democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people was epitomized in 1942 in the formula 'unity—criticism — unity'.... In our experience this is the correct method of resolving contradictions among the people." From "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", 27 February 1957, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, originally a speech at the Eleventh Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference, revised before publication in the *People's Daily* on 19 June 1957, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_58.htm (last accessed 11 August 2025).
52. Tr. note: The word *huài dàn* is a Mandarin Chinese profanity literally meaning bad egg.

53. Tr. note: The dunce cap forced on wearers during the Cultural Revolution is known in Chinese as *dǎnzidǎng*, or hat of shame. It was a symbol of public humiliation and punishment, known as “wearing tall hats”.
54. Tr. note: “Decision of the Central Committee”, pp. 6–11 (refer to note 50).
55. Tr. note: The political slogan “Labourers of the world, unite!” is in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (literally, “Proletarians of all countries, unite!”). It was popularized in English as “Labourers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!”

Chap. 23: A New Type of Chinese Person

56. Tr. note: Whilst Pridi Banomyong left China at a time when the failure of the Cultural Revolution was becoming evident, his overall publicly stated view of the movement remained positive, largely following Maoist propaganda. For more reliably documented viewpoints, see Pierre Ryckmans, *The Chairman's New Clothes: Mao and the Cultural Revolution* (St. Martin's, 1977) and Lingchei Letty Chen, *The Great Leap Backward: Forgetting and Representing the Mao Years* (Cambria, 2020).
57. Tr. note: See Thomas P. Bernstein, “Mao Zedong and the Famine of 1959–1960: A Study in Wilfulness”, *China Quarterly* 186 (2006): 421–25; Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–62* (Walker, 2010); and Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958–1962* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).
58. Tr. note: See *The State and the Revolution: The Marxist Doctrine of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution* (1917) by Vladimir Lenin describing the role of the state in society, the necessity of proletarian revolution, and the theoretic inadequacies of social democracy in achieving revolution to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.
59. Tr. note: See J.C. Cheng, “Half-Work and Half-Study in Communist China”, *Pacific Affairs* 32, no. 2 (1959): 187–93; and Jonathan Unger, “Bending the School Ladder: The Failure of Chinese Educational Reform in the 1960s”, *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 2, pt. 1 (1980): 221–37

Chap. 25: International Policies of the PRC

60. Tr. note: “On the People's Democratic Dictatorship” (refer to note 35).
61. Tr. note: Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1954); [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_\(1954\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_(1954)) (last accessed 11 August 2025).
62. Tr. note: Reprinted in the magazine *People's China*, 1 December 1957, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_479.htm (last accessed 11 August 2025).
63. Tr. note: See “U.S. Imperialism is the Most Ferocious Enemy of the World's People”, statement in support of the Panamanian people, *Hung-Ch'i*, no. 2–3 1964, pp. 2–3, *Peking Review*, no. 2, 164, reprinted in *Selected Works of Mao*

- Tse-tung*, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_11.htm (last accessed 11 August 2025).
64. For more information on the Sino-Soviet split that is more balanced than Pridi's entirely pro-Chinese perspective, see Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961* (Princeton University Press, 1962); Chen Jian, *Mao's China & the Cold War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton University Press, 2010).
65. Tr. note: The term “fraternal parties” (*partis frères* in the original French) was often applied to fellow socialist states.
66. Tr. note: “Speech at the Meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution”, 6 November 1957. Reprinted in *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch18.htm> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
67. This article appeared in the 5 April 1956 issue of *The People's Daily* and was reprinted in *The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Foreign Languages Press, 1959), pp. 1–20, <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/HEDP56.pdf> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
68. Tr. note: OIAS is not a common acronym in either French or English. It may have been intended here as an acronym for Office of International and Area Studies.

Chap. 26: The Problem of Overseas Chinese People

69. Tr. note: As many of Pridi's assertions about Overseas Chinese in this chapter may be controversial or unfounded in terms of historical consensus, readers may wish to refer to more reliable accounts, such as Lynn Pan, *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (Harvard University Press, 1998); Ung Ho Chin, *The Chinese of South East Asia* (Minority Rights Group, 2000); Annabelle R. Gambe, *Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurship and Capitalist Development in Southeast Asia* (LIT, 2000); and Elena Barabantseva, *Overseas Chinese, Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism: De-centering China* (Routledge, 2011).

Chap. 27: Methods for Liberating Chinese Provinces

70. Tr. note: This account presents the Communist Chinese viewpoint on Tibetan independence. International historians concur that China and Tibet were independent before the Yuan dynasty and that Tibet has been governed by the People's Republic of China only since 1959. See Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (University of California Press, 1997).
71. Tr. note: For more historical background on controversies over the political status of Taiwan, see R. Bush, *Untying the Knot: Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait* (Brookings Institution Press, 2006); J. Copper, *Playing with Fire: The Looming War with China over Taiwan* (Praeger Security, 2006); S. Tsang, *If*

China Attacks Taiwan: Military Strategy, Politics and Economics (Routledge, 2006); and N.B. Tucker, *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis* (Columbia University Press, 2005).

Chap. 28: Mao Zedong's Real Conception of Paper Tigers

72. Tr. note: The often-controversial reports of Anna Louise Strong—who was pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese Communist—are analysed in Tracy B. Strong and Helene Keyssar, *Right in Her Soul: The Life of Anna Louise Strong* (Random House, 1983).
73. Mao used the traditional Chinese expression “paper tiger” (*zhilāohū*), meaning something that appears powerful but is actually ineffectual. In the August 1946 interview with Strong, Mao added: “All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful.” A decade later, again interviewed by Strong, Mao stated about American imperialism: “In appearance it is very powerful but in reality it is nothing to be afraid of; it is a paper tiger. Outwardly a tiger, it is made of paper, unable to withstand the wind and the rain.” See Mao Zedong, “U.S. Imperialism is a Paper Tiger”, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5 (Foreign Languages Press, 1956).
74. Tr. note: In 1963, when Mao criticized Soviet appeasement of the United States during the Sino-Soviet split, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev reportedly said, “the paper tiger has nuclear teeth”. See “The World: What They Are Fighting About”, *Time*, 12 July 1963, pp. 24–25.
75. Tr. note: “On Protracted War”, May 1958, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, pp. 143–44, reprinted in *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*. “On Protracted War” comprises a series of speeches given by Mao Zedong in May and June 1938 at the Yenan Association for the Study of the War of Resistance Against Japan.
76. Mao’s speech, “All Reactionaries are Paper Tigers”, was reprinted in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_70.htm (last accessed 11 August 2025).
77. Tr. note: From a speech at the Wuchang Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1 December 1958, quoted in the explanatory note to “Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong”, *Selected Works*, vol. 4, pp. 98–99. Also reprinted in *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*; <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch06.htm> (last accessed 11 August 2025).
78. Tr. note: “Over a long period, we have developed this concept for the struggle against the enemy: strategically we should despise all our enemies, but tactically we should take them all seriously. This also means that we must despise the enemy with respect to the whole, but that we must take him seriously with respect to each concrete question.” Mai Zedong, from a speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Labourers’ Parties, 18 November 1957, reprinted in *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch06.htm> (last accessed 11 August 2025).

Chap. 29: Issues of Pollution and Automobile Accidents in the PRC

79. Tr. note: As may be expected, the author's observations from a half-century ago about pollution in China are no longer timely or accurate.
80. Tr. note: "The Hare and the Tortoise" appears in Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*, first published in 1668. It is inspired by Aesop's Fable, "The Tortoise and the Hare". La Fontaine's text begins, "Rien ne sert de courir; il faut partir à point."

Chap. 30: The Former Chinese Emperor Who Became a New Citizen

81. Tr. note: The title of Emperor of the French was intended to indicate that Napoleon's coronation was not a restoration of the monarchy but an introduction of a new political system: the French Empire.

Conclusion

82. Tr. note: In his section IV of the General Introduction, the author expresses concern: "Personally, I fear that if no equitable solution is found to the problem of clashes in the nation's interior and internationally, Siam will not be the sole nation to become another Vietnam. There remain several others, including some large nations. History has shown that expeditionary force troops who are displeased with their respective governments have risen up after returning from combat, causing a revolution or civil war." Yet, by the end of his book, he describes democracy as a solution for peaceful coexistence between nations, with no further need of violent uprisings. Optimism and realism combined in Pridi Banomyong's view of the future of Southeast Asia, Asia and the rest of the world.