

# **Associate Professor Giles Ji Ungpakorn will fight charges of les majesty over his academic book “A Coup for the Rich”**

Monday 12 January 2009, by [UNGPAKORN Giles Ji](#) (Date first published: 12 January 2009).

## **Les Majesty charge results from Book “A Coup for the Rich”**

Associate Professor Giles Ji Ungpakorn will fight charges of les majesty over his academic book “A Coup for the Rich”

I have been summonsed to Pathumwan police station for questioning and the new date and time is at 10.00 am on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The summons was issued as a result of a charge filed by Special Branch Police Lt Col. Pansak Sasana-anund. I have been accused of les majesty. The charge arises from my book “A Coup for the Rich”, published in 2007, just after the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006 military coup.

I have now sold all 1000 copies of “A Coup for the Rich”, but it is available to download from my blog <http://wdpress.blog.co.uk/> and from the International Socialist Tendency website in the U.K. Just after publication, the book was withdrawn from sale by Chulalongkorn University bookshop and later by Thammasart University bookshop. This is a gross attack on academic freedom. I encourage people to read my book and judge for themselves whether I should face criminal charges over this book. Relevant passages can be found in Chapter 1, pages 15, 23-27 and Chapter 2.

My most recent academic paper on the Monarchy appears on my blog. It argues that the Monarchy is not all powerful and that political and military factions claim Royal legitimacy in order to boost their own power and interests. Their recent actions may be bringing the institution of the Monarchy into crisis because they created an image of the Monarchy being directly involved in politics. I presented a Thai version of this paper at the National Thai Political Science Conference at Chulalongkorn University in December 2008.

The Monarchy has been quoted and used by various political factions in Thailand to legitimise their actions. The most notable cases are the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006 military coup and the illegal protests by the yellow-shirted P.A.D., which included violent protests and the shutting down the international airports. Les Majesty charges in Thailand are notorious for being used by different political factions to attack their opponents. Many believe that this law is actually counter-productive to defending the Monarchy. This is why it is very important that political scientists attempt to analyse the real role and nature of the Thai Monarchy in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy.

I am prepared to fight any les majesty charges in order to defend academic freedom, the freedom of expression and democracy in Thailand.

Since this accusation was filed by a Special Branch officer, the present Democrat Party Government should be questioned about its role in this and many other cases. The new Prime Minister has stated that he wants to see a firm crackdown on les majesty and many recent cases have been filed by the police.

## What you can do

1. Write a letter of protest/concern to Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, Government House, Bangkok, Thailand. Fax number +66(0)29727751
2. Write a letter of protest/concern to the Ambassador, The Royal Thai Embassy, in your country.
3. Demand that Amnesty International take up all Les Majesty cases in Thailand.
4. Demand the abolition of the les majesty law.