

up new job opportunities where they do not now exist.

Plans have been made to continue the work begun by the fair. A continuations committee which includes many scientists among its members has been set up for this purpose.

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Science versus Administration in Certain U. S. Foreign Aid Efforts

IT WAS to be expected that the foreign aid programs would receive the immediate and critical attention of the new administration. The American people perhaps do not realize what a powerful position the various foreign aid agencies, as a group, have occupied in the nation's international relations. The influence which our economic aid activities have had on those relations in the separate countries that have received the aid should not be underestimated.

There certainly should be little opposition to the idea, *per se*, that certain kinds of aid ought to be extended by the United States to various other nations. Our foreign aid efforts to date have contributed much toward the postwar development of some countries. It must be realized, nevertheless, that a particular program in whatever country is no better than the management of it or the soundness of its purpose.

The scientists of our own country are indispensable to the government's foreign economic aid efforts. Their interest in the programs has been essential to the development of the American foreign aid activities. The confidence of scientists in the government's aid efforts, however, can be based only upon the soundness and the effectiveness of the various programs. The program accomplishments of an American foreign economic aid organization in any country can be limited by the quality of the local administration of the program and by the support of that administration in Washington, regardless of the collective efforts of the technical field staff.

The contributions of science in the foreign aid efforts, therefore, can be greatly restricted, and the personnel affected by such restrictions can experience professional humiliation, whenever the administration of any particular technical aid program is placed by the government in the hands of persons who are professionally unqualified to administer such a program. The Mutual Security Agency (MSA) general agriculture program in Thailand has been representative of such a situation.

One of the ultimate purposes of any agricultural development program is to make those developments directly beneficial to the farmers. Americans, however, are foreigners to the other peoples of the world; and our intentions and activities in any country outside our own will usually be held in doubt by the rural populations of that country until we have properly demonstrated, in the course of time and by good works, just what our intentions are. Therefore, an all-

out "immediate impact" agricultural aid campaign at the "grass-roots" or "village level" in an economically undeveloped and slow-moving country is a risky matter in foreign relations.

It must also be remembered that, among other important considerations, no occupation brings a man closer to his religion than farming. Many Asiatic rural customs and religious beliefs are still closely associated with farming practices. Unrestrained tampering with this way of rural life through the importation and distribution of *untested* fertilizers, mechanical equipment, seeds, and ideas on farming practices is inviting possible outcomes we have not planned. Agricultural aid efforts, furthermore, at the "grass-roots" in a modern national economic development program soon lose impetus, when not supported by agricultural research and training programs and by certain agricultural economic considerations.

Certain countries in the Asiatic regions (such as Formosa, Indonesia, Japan, and to a limited extent, China and the Philippines) have carried on agricultural research as far back as the early part of this century. Our technical people probably have profited from this work in rendering aid to those countries. Such a stockpile of technical knowledge has not been available to our technical personnel in other areas.

Thailand has not been economically desperate, but the development of the country depends considerably on foreign technical guidance and on a proper amount of imported equipment. Thailand is over 90 per cent agricultural, yet the accumulation of scientific data and the application of the methodology of science to agricultural problems are only in the beginning stage. Original plans for American economic aid to the Kingdom, therefore, stressed the development of a sound general agricultural program on a long-term basis. This scheme provided for agricultural research and training programs which would, in turn, support a later extension service to the rural population. Only rarely could Thai farmers be properly advised on the basis of U. S. agricultural conditions or data. Only in a very limited manner could American efforts to aid general agriculture even attempt an "immediate impact" as of 1950-51.

The higher level MSA-Thailand administrative support of a soundly based general agricultural aid program for the Kingdom began to be withdrawn in late 1951. A confusion of new government "policies" overwhelmed the field operations. Reflections were cast by the program administrators upon the professional competence of the agricultural scientists, as a subtle campaign seemed to be in effect against the current agricultural technical activities and against the leaders of the research and training program.

The unethical administrative tactics employed against members of the agricultural technical staff make it interesting to speculate about just what was going on—and *for that matter still is*. The refusal of the leaders of the research and training program to cooperate in the proposed "give-away" and the "dramatic" tactics in the field operations only widened the

break in relations between the MSA and the scientists in this mission. The effectiveness of the efforts of certain staff members in the general agriculture program diminished rapidly.

In late January, 1952, the director of the agricultural training program finally requested his release from the Thailand mission. Soon afterwards, the livestock development specialist was asked to resign. The first scientist returned to the MSA in Washington in February, 1952, where his appeal was laid aside, after a farcical "hearing." Other divisions of the MSA in Washington were instructed not to secure the services of this scientist, and the director of his own division in the MSA would not confer with him after his return. The second staff member was not returned to Washington, where he might have attempted an appeal of the action taken against him.

Simultaneous with the departure from Thailand of the two men just mentioned, the Mutual Security Agency in Washington requested, through the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, the recall from service in Thailand of a third member of the general agriculture technical staff. This scientist's monumental work of fifteen years on the soils of Thailand has been a basis upon which much of the agricultural development of the Kingdom is now being laid. His thirty-odd years of outstanding research in the tropical areas of the world were recognized in the 1950 award of the American Geographical Society's Livingston medal. His recall from Thailand was halted by events in Bangkok which, to say the least, were anything but a master stroke in good relations between the Siamese and American peoples.

The Mutual Security Agency's only explanation for its actions regarding these men was that they could not get along with the Thai people. In Bangkok, abusive criticisms were heaped on them by the Chief of the MSA mission relative to their services in Thailand. It is interesting to note, however, that less than four months prior to these events, the Thai government had requested of the MSA that the soil scientist in question be appointed to fill the newly vacated directorship of the agricultural division in the mission, and it has recently asked him to assume responsibilities in Thailand's agricultural ministry. Furthermore, a second member of this trio was largely responsible for pioneering the new government vocational agriculture movement in another Asiatic country. Recent translations of his writings for the general population on home food production have already gone well into the third printing.

The technical work of the general agriculture program of the MSA mission in Thailand has continued to experience pressure against it. Not one of the original leaders of the project has completed his full term of service with the mission. In addition to the three mentioned above, two more members of the technical staff left Thailand in disgust during the spring of 1952. Another was discharged with no explanation or hearing from the program administration; and finally, several months ago, the last member of this

group suffered a nervous collapse in Thailand. It is to be hoped that the last vestige of a soundly based agricultural development program for Thailand—the important rice development project that was begun under the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations—will not, after its long-suffering struggle to get a job done, also experience the fate of other agricultural technical projects.

Why did the Mutual Security Agency force the dissipation of its staff of competent agricultural scientists, and turn some of their responsibilities over to graduate-level assistants? Perhaps the attitude of this kind of administration is best exemplified in an opinion voiced thus by one of the MSA agriculture administrators in Thailand: "The trouble with you technical people is that you're too slow. There's a war going on out here, and we can't wait for you."

There is no doubt that the state agricultural college in a farm state would soon hear in strong language from the state capitol (and from other sources) if it tried to install as dean of the college a boat builder who had no agricultural and no scientific training or experience. But the Mutual Security Agency actually paralleled such an unbelievable maneuver as this in a country which is over 90 per cent agricultural, when it installed the present director of the Thailand agricultural program in November, 1951—in spite of the fact that qualified agricultural leaders available for the post at the time were recommended to the MSA.

It is no wonder, therefore, that an agricultural technical aid staff is faced with a problem in getting on with the job when the administration of their program is supported by the kind of thinking that, for example, desires an immediate nation-wide fertilizer distribution program without experimental data to support such a program; and which does not believe that 120,000 selections of rice can even be kept track of, to say nothing of their culture, and of data on them, in a rice development program.

American scientists throughout the world are trying to do a job on behalf of world progress in their professional fields (such as agriculture) and in the interest of good relations between the American people and the people of other countries. If, as a professional group, the scientists were not wanted in certain areas for the kind of work they can do best, they should not have been recruited at all. A good technical man is suited for little more in the economic aid work than doing a good professional job. Qualified leadership is essential to the success of any technical aid program. The taxpayer has been paying enough to get it, and certainly our foreign relations and economic aid are important enough for it. Party politics and personal gainseeking should have no place in the foreign economic aid efforts of the American government, particularly as they might influence the activities and responsibilities of the technical personnel. The scientists also represent the American people.

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