Four Years of Investigations Fail to Solve Fatal Shooting
Suicide Seen Possibility

By TILLMAN DURDIN
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BANGKOK, Thailand, March 31 — How Thailand's King Ananda
Mahidol met his death remains to-
day one of the baffling enigmas of this far-flung Asian country.

For four years after the shin, shy, twenty-year-old monarch was found in his palace
quarters lying dead, his head crushed under a chandelier, the mystery seems fur-
ther from solution than ever.

Within the last six months the trial of three men charged with complicity in the murder has been
heard in the capital.

One certainty in the case is that the King killed himself, drastically ex-
tricately tangled by the net of Thai political rivalries and in-
tigue that no satisfactory ex-
planation is likely ever to be
found for it. There is still deep in the rescuing of the King at the casual and often-recessed trial,
but people have shrugged off the pos-
nibility of the killing.

Ananda was found shot one night in 1946. Two years and four months after having been administered a dose of castor oil by his mother for poisoning him, the King's body was picked up near his head.

Three different commissions of inquiry have studied the case. The police have investigated end-
lessly but without a definite re-
sult.

To Buddhist Thais suicide is so repugnant that the belief that the King killed himself can hardly be
accepted as an official theory, although the theory is accepted by many. Probably the most widely accepted explanation is that the young and handsome, wartime leader of the anti-Japa-
nese Free Thai movement and Premier in the struggle against his father's death, was responsible.

Whether Prithi is suspected of ordering Ananda's death, his son, who has been so smeared as a result of his father's death, has not been disclosed by the police. Several powerful factional groups have almost eliminated from politics. Prithi has been grouped in the camp backed by the present Premier, Field Marshal Phibul Songgram, two years and four months. Whether Prithi has been in hiding ever since.

Prithi's failure to solve the mys-
tery of the King's death was one of the main reasons advanced by the Phibul faction for throwing out the United States as a Western power. There may be little reason to see the difference in the Pridi camp backed by the present Premier, Field Marshal Phibul Songgram, two years and four months. Whether Prithi has been in hiding ever since.

Some persons advance the theory that Prithi was not involved at all and were under-
comforted to discredit him. Some say a rival branch of the royal family is trying to establish the possiblity that Phumiphon was in-
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The persons now on trial are Bhumibol Phumiphon Ananda's private secretary, and two royal pages.