

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT
MARCH - APRIL 1978

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INTRODUCTION

This report is again divided into four self contained parts for the convenience of our readers. Those who are mainly interested in the legal aspects of the situation should refer to the first part. In the second part we attempt to provide information on the broader human rights situation, and have three special features; one dealing with the suffering caused to villagers by the policy of relocation of villages into strategic hamlets; one dealing with the problems faced by political prisoners (particularly unconvicted prisoners) in Bangkok jails, and one dealing with the problems of labour under the Kriengsak administration. In the third part we analyse the considerable progress being made by CGRS and other human rights organisation; whilst in the fourth and final part we provide a brief analyses of the political situation and other important news relating to the human rights situation.

Part One starts off with a continuation of the story of the arrested CGRS workers, who thanks to the great efforts and support of our overseas friends were released on a bail of \$5,000 cash each (a total of 300,000 Baht had to be paid), by the military court in Nakornsi Thammarat on March 17th. They have to appear in court again on June 11th, and are likely to be remanded for a further 90 days, probably on bail again, though we cannot be certain. The situation is extremely complex as no one government unit seems to have real authority over this case (e.g the Police Department refused bail, but the military court granted bail) and despite the fact that the governor of Suratthani, the commander of the fourth army region, and the investigating police officer all feel there is insufficient evidence, the deputy commander of the Special Branch police (Colonel Chalart Saengchuto) is trying to keep the case alive, in order to cause the maximum possible problems to CGRS (with which he has had a long-standing feud)

Thus for this case we still need all possible support from our overseas friends, both moral and financial (the 300,000 Baht we have had to borrow for the bail fund has put us in a very difficult financial situation)

We include short reports on most of the political trials that are taking place. The trial of the Bangkok 18 continues to proceed at a snail's pace, with up to now almost no evidence relating to the trial having been presented. There have been statements from both Thongbai Thongpao (leader of the team of 14 defence lawyers), and the military prosecutor about the need to accelerate the proceedings, but up to now no practical steps have been taken. Since the Prime Minister has again reiterated that the 19 will be pardoned once the trial is complete (except on the Lese Majeste charges), a speeding up of the proceedings so that they can be completed in less than 8 years is essential. In the minds of the government the 19 are considered very much as criminals, and Sutham, for example was not even allowed to go to his mother's funeral.

Other political trials continue to be postponed more often than they take place. For example, despite the fact that there is only one more prosecution witness in Boonchart Sathienthamani's case, hearings have been postponed for seven weeks. Hearings for Somboon and Wichai Banlusilp have been continuously postponed from January. Worst of all however is the case of Udom Ekakrong and his group who will have had only one hearing in their case between February and July - a five month period / The court officials and prosecutors

calmly postpone cases as if it was the simplest thing in the world, perhaps not realising that these innocent people (innocent because they have not yet been proved guilty) languish in jail for months and years, unconvicted, whilst almost no progress is made in their trial. It seems a fact that any defended political case takes years to complete.

Even when the prisoners are acquitted, their problems are not over, as can be seen from the case of the Thai Blanket Factory workers. They can be rearrested, or fired from their jobs at will, no matter what theoretical protection the law provides them. In Thailand, as in many other countries the law is administered in one way for the poor and oppressed, and in another way for the rich. A poor man can be sentenced to six months for stealing an egg, a rich man can get off scot-free after corrupting millions of baht or plotting the overthrow of the government.

We open Part Two with some information on a situation which is causing us increasing concern. This is the implementation of the government's policy of relocating villages into strategic hamlets as a central part of its counter insurgency strategy. 4,000 such villages, involving the relocation of 10,000-12,000 villagers (about 20% of all villages in the country) are planned, but up to now, more often than not villagers are just forced out of their homes, and no real attempt is made to resettle them. In order to show how inhumane this relocation policy is we describe in some detail the plight and the suffering of villagers recently moved to one such strategic hamlet, and the way they are being dragged into a fight that they do not believe in and do not understand.

According to the law, unconvicted prisoners have many rights including visits from relatives, have food brought in, have access to legally printed materials, and not to be shackled etc. In our special report on the life of a political prisoner we show how the rights are never granted, and how the life of a prisoner is full of unnecessary suffering, particularly in this hot season. We feel that in the near future we should attempt to legally challenge the Corrections Department, so that at least unconvicted prisoners have the basic rights to which they are due.

In the section on continuing arrests, we draw special attention to the situation in Nong Khai (in the N.E of the country, bordering Laos), where the governor seems to be using decree 22 of NARC, to arrest and detain anyone he wants, for any reason. Over the past two months he has arrested more than 200 people for "endangering society". Fortunately some of the arrested are beginning to fight back, and are suing for their release. In our next report we intend to analyse this situation in greater detail as a possible prelude to campaigning for the abolition of decree 22.

Other arrests of people for political reasons seem to be continuing to take place at a steady rate with 321 people being arrested as "communists" alone over the last ten months, including increasing numbers of people in the central region. Apart from what is happening in Nong Khai, not too many people seem to be being arrested for endangering society, but nor do many people seem to be being released. Despite the liberal human rights image this government is trying to create for itself, there are just as many, if not more, political prisoners now, than there were when it came to power in October last year. In addition we continue to receive information about the murder of innocent citizens by police and government officials, and there appears to be very little attempt to punish the offenders.

In our report from the South we include details of the conditions in detention centres and prisons, as well as on the increasingly destructive conflict between insurgents and government forces (where the villagers obviously suffer more than either of the protagonists). From this report it can be seen clearly that government uses the communist suppression act as a way of detaining people they do not like for up to 180 days in atrocious conditions, only to drop charges in the end because of lack of evidence.

From the NE we have a very disturbing story of a 16 year old Thai girl of vietnamese origin, who was arrested, sold to a brothel, contacted syphillis, was rearrested, and sent to be detained in Lard Bua Kaw in Korat.

The period covered by this report is one where the labour situation has become increasingly confused. The government has reduced its restrictions on labour unions, and has allowed meetings and even some strikes to take place, and instead has been trying to pursue an alternative strategy of dividing and fragmenting the unions so that they spend most of their time fighting with each other. In this latter policy it has had some success, as there are now three national labour federations, and the disagreements and rivalries amongst them are so great, that only about 500 workers turned up for the officially sponsored Labour Day celebrations. Nevertheless the state enterprise labour unions (and various public employee groups) have shown their strength by mounting (or threatening) strikes and other actions in defiance of martial law which is still in force.

In Part Three of the report we discuss the growing activities of CGRS and other organisations working in the field of human rights. Despite the arrest of the CGRS workers, and the continuous harrassment of committee members and workers, CGRS has been growing in strength during the period covered by this report, having increased its staff by three, and started several new activities. These include supporting the establishment of a cooperative in a labour union; supporting monks who are producing a journal directed at rural monks, designed to promote their understanding of their role both in defending human rights and in development; running a training programme for activists from many organisations in non-violent direct action; publishing a book on the Supap Pasaong case etc. The human rights activities obviously however remain the core of the groups work, but it is being increasingly realised that unless a viable third force and be created it will be difficult to create any lasting solution to human rights problems.

CGRS is also participating actively in the Amnesty International May/June campaign, proposed various topics and strategies for the campaign and is exploiting the campaign to create a greater awareness of Amnesty in Thailand, by producing a leaflet and distributing 5,000 copies.

Other groups are also becoming increasingly open and active. For example the leader of the team of 14 lawyers defending the Bangkok 19 is going on a world wide lecture tour and this group of lawyers is publishing a book on the Oct 6th case. The human rights research group, composed of more than 30 academics is just about to start work.

This period of relative freedom of expression in Thailand is being exploited by CGRS and all other organisations involved in human rights, to try to conscientize the population as much as possible, so that when the next wave of repression takes place,

it will be harder for the government to act.

In the fourth and final part of the report, as usual, we summarise the news about the political situation. It seems that P.M. Kriengsak's government passed through an extremely difficult period in March, with the "Sangad Chaloryu" group, the "Yos-Prapass" group, and the "palace" group all actively plotting in every possible way to destroy the Prime Minister. However by getting the three groups to fight amongst themselves the P.M. weathered the storm, and appears now to be in a stronger position than he has been in for the last three or four months.

We also include a very brief summary of the news relating to the communist party of Thailand and Malaysian-Thai cooperation, in addition to our usual features on news relating to human rights and the conflicts taking place in different parts of the country.

On this last point it appears that last year something of the order of 300 communists, 580 government officials, and almost 1,000 villagers were killed in battles between communists and government forces. This combined with the suffering caused by summary arrests and executions (by both sides), forced relocation of villages, and forced reeducation (by both sides) seems a high price to pay for any theoretical ideology, particularly when one realises that the conflict is becoming increasingly severe, with each year more and more death and suffering being caused.

It is realised that in order to bring equality, peace and justice to the country, and a development based on human and spiritual values, a long struggle lies ahead. In this struggle there will be many advances and setbacks, and thus the greatest hope, courage and commitment are needed. After passing through a dark and dangerous period, those involved in the non-violent struggle for a more just society are again regaining their hope and their strength.

PART ONE
POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. CGRS Human Rights Workers Released on Bail, but Charges not Dropped.

All our friends should by now have received our circular letter about the release on bail of Chaiwat Yao-wapongsiri and Sukhon Tanthakeyoon full time workers of CGRS, and their local guide Miss Boontham Chindawong. Bail (\$5,000 cash each) was first refused by the Director General of the Police Department, but was later accepted by the Military Court in Nakhon Sri Thammaraj on 17th March, 1978, after all three had been detained for 30 days at Ban Na San police station. The reason given by the Military Court for granting bail (against the orders of the Police Department) was that "the evidence was vcry weak!"

The situation in this case has been and still is extremely confusing, but also instructive for our understanding of the power situation in the sensitive provinces. On the government side there are four main actors none of whom seem to be playing a completely straightforward game. These are:-

- Police Captain Pon Pet Kemkeow, chief investigation officer at Ban Na San police station
- Chalit Pimolsiri, Governor of Surat Thani
- General Pin Thammasri, commander of the fourth army region.
- Police Colonel Chalart Sengchato, deputy commander of the police special branch

Captain PonPet, after his preliminary antagonism against our three colleagues, he seemed to be quite impressed by the frequent flow of visitors to Ban Na San, including an ICJ representative; lawyers; Buddhist monks; Catholic Bishops, sisters and priests; businessmen etc. He thus claimed to be eager to help, theoretically agreed to support the original bail request to the Police Department, and theoretically agreed to complete his investigations by 5th of May. We do not know whether he supported the bail request or not, but we do know that it was turned down by the Director General of the Police Department "because the crimes were serious crimes, with a possible punishment of life imprisonment or execution". We now know that PonPet is not making an attempt to complete the investigations quickly, but instead is trying to delay its completion as long as possible so that further remands can be sought.

Chalit Pimolsiri, seems to be playing many different games all at the same time. For example he was against our friends right from the beginning, and was convinced that they were communists. He thus sent a message to the police department asking for permission to detain the three for a further sixty days (after the preliminary detention period of thirty days). At about the same time (7th March) he gave an interview over Radio Thailand that he had ordered their release three days previously. This statement was widely reported in the newspapers so that most people in Thailand and overseas assumed that the case was over, when in fact the three were still in detention.

It is possible that his own changes of mind were caused by Capt. PonPet's influence. PonPet seemed to have his first change in heart sometime between his visit to the regional police HQ's in Songkhla and to the fourth army commander on 3rd of March, and his presentation of his preliminary report to police HQ's on the 6th of March. Or it may have resulted from him being informed of all the foreign concern on the case.

Nevertheless we find Chalit's behaviour difficult to understand because on the one hand he announces the prisoners are released, and also puts pressure on the Military court to grant bail; and on the other hand (at the same time) requests permission for a further 60 days detention, which was probably one of the main reasons bail was refused.

It should also be noted that Chalit has one of the worst reputations of any governor and is seen as an extreme "hawk" and it is rumoured that he turns a blind eye to his subordinates who release "communists", only to have them murdered after their release.

General Pin Thammasri, On 27th February 1978 General Pin gave an interview with the Nation Review, in which he said that the army firmly refused the granting of bail, and thought that the charges were so serious that they did not only effect his region but the whole country. He therefore wanted to send the detainees to Bangkok to be dealt with by the special branch police. (this statement may have been prompted by Chalart Sengchuto - see below)

However only 3 days later (2nd March) he send a radiogram to the governor of Surat Thani, saying that he had no objection to either releasing completely or bailing out the three detainees.

We feel that General Pin's and Chalit's (the latter who was hedging his bets) change in heart was caused by their realisation that the arrest of the three was not just an ordinary arrest of "communists" (currently running at over 30 a month) where nobody cares and the authorities can do what they want. This was partly because of the flood of visitors we arranged to go to Ban Na San, and to meet the governor, and partly because of the huge campaign (with hundreds of letters and telegrams) our friends overseas mounted in defence of the arrested CGRS workers. They thus decided that it was in their interests to give CGRS the benefit of the doubt.

However the final major actor on the government side does not seem to be willing to give such a benefit of the doubt to CGRS, This is Chalart Saengchuto.

For some time he has been interested in the influence of "communists" in religious organisations, and has for more than a year now been carrying out a personal vendetta against CGRS. In April 1977 for example he started by trying to chat up various women connected with CGRS, and also followed CGRS workers to the North of Thailand. During the Buddhist lent (July - October 1977) he went to Chiangmai to talk to two of the original founders of CGRS (Phra Fracha Psumthams and Phra Santisuk Satisukho) seven times to try to force them to disband CGRS, and get them to leave the monkhood. At the same time he was the person who spearheaded the campaign against Dr. Kosol Srisang (first chairman of CGRS) eventually forcing him to resign from his position in the Church of Christ in Thailand and leave the country. In March 1978 he went to Ubol to meet our current chairman, Bishop Bunluen Mansap, and tried very hard to get him to say things he should not say whilst secretly recording the conversation.

Chalart has claimed many times over that he has nothing to do with the case. However on 21st Febuary he cross examined the three detainees (with Col Thongchai Piphitasurakam military deputy - governor of Surat Thani). This was reported in a local newspaper 'Sieng Surat'.

On 6th of March he wrote a personal letter to Miss Boontham, in which he said that he was doing all in his power to help her as he knew she had nothing to do with CGRS, but that the power was not in his hands but in those of General Pin (who had already accepted that the three could be released)

On 6th March, before the interview with Chalit (saying the three had been released) had been broadcast, he phoned up CGRS in some annoyance, asking us to find out for him whether they had been released or not.

On 21st April he met Chaiwat, claimed that he was not interested in the case, and invited Chaiwat to take a three day trip to the south with him. The next day we heard from a high level and reliable source that Chalart had made considerable efforts to be appointed as official in charge of the case in the Police Department.

We feel that Chalart is extremely tricky and dangerous, and

because of his past failures in destroying CGRS (and the fact that we had used high level contacts to try to get him to lay off us in January) he is determined to exploit the arrest of our colleagues to the utmost. It is for example almost certainly Chalart who persuaded General Pin to make his first statement (proposing to transfer the case to the special branch), him who got the Police Department to refuse bail, him who got PonPet to slow down the submission of the investigation report, and him who will try to ensure further remands when the three appear in court on the 14th June, and him who in the long run will try to ensure that charges will be pressed.

In trying to resolve this case we have come to realise the extremely complicated situation that exists in sensitive areas, with no one person having clear cut authority. For example after the original 30 days detention period either the Police Department could order a further remand for 60 days, or the military court for 90 days. Both could accept or refuse to grant bail also. PonPet the police investigation officer falls under the direct authority of the governor, the fourth army commander, and regional police authorities (and hence the Police Department and thus the special branch police). The police are responsible for carrying out all investigations, but the army has the final say on whether charges will be pressed etc etc. With such a complicated situation it is difficult to decide exactly where we, and our overseas friends should be putting pressure.

Nevertheless the current situation is thus that the three are all remanded on bail until 14th of June, are all working in Bangkok for CGRS (given the large number of murders in Surat Thani we did not feel it safe for Boontham to return to her village), and are all preparing themselves for the possibility that at the next hearings in the Military court in Nakhon Sri Thammaraj, bail will not be granted, charges will not be dropped, and they will be redetained in the central prison of Nakorn Sri Thammaraj. Some preparation is needed for this eventuality. However as they have already been detained for three hours in that prison, and are aware of the terrible overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, and of the way "communist" prisoners are treated there, they know what to prepare for.

It is however by no means certain that Chalart will get his way, because as far as we can gather there is no evidence (true or false) for the charges of communism, or of threatenning the internal and external security of the state. Though we realise that for political cases in Thailand evidence is not needed, we feel that if the case is pursued many important people will loose face including General Pin, Governor Chalit, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (who has informed the U.S. State Department and other countries that the three have been released), and possibly the Prime Minister also who does not want another nonsense political trial on his hands.

We thus feel that if outside pressure can be kept up, the most that Chalart will be able to achieve will be to obtain one or two further remands of 90 days before the charges are dropped. In a case such as this, where the government does not have a clear cut policy (as opposed to the 6th October case) we feel that polite outside pressure is extremely effective and important. We are convinced that it is largely because of the tremendous support from all our old friends, and hundreds of new friends overseas, that bail was finally granted, but we are equally convinced that this pressure on the Prime Minister, and the Deputy Minister of the Interior must be kept up if the charges are to be eventually dropped.

The action of our friends overseas does not only have an effect on the government's attitude to CGRS, but also on CGRS itself. It is very difficult to express the extent to which the hundreds of letters, the donations to our bail and defence fund (totalling 73,756 Baht so far), and the expressions of support and concern have had on all of us at CGRS.

Your support is like a bright light which pushes away the dark clouds of danger, and rekindles hope and optimism in our hearts, for we now realise more than ever before that we are not alone in our struggle for greater justice and peace in Thailand.

Even bad things can have good effects, and the arrest of our colleagues, and the threats that accompanied this have shown that CGRS is a strong and resilient organisation. No committee member or full time worker backed down or withdrew, or said we shouldn't be doing what we are doing, but instead all redoubled their efforts for our cause, and a new stronger form of unity and community was created. Strangely enough CGRS has moved into a new growth period with the number of full time workers increasing from seven to ten and this happening at a time of greatest danger.

Thus whether our colleagues are jailed again or not, whether Chalart tries to destroy CGRS or not, and whether further arrests take place or not, we are convinced that with your moral and material support CGRS will continue to grow from strength to strength.

2) Trials and Legal Processes

A. Oct. 6th Defendants

1. The trial of Boonchart Sathienthamni at the Criminal Court

Criminal Court

March 3rd, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol. Lt. Col. Ulit Kanjanampa (continued)

Cross-examination: The trial was postponed to March 24th because the court official could not get the documents as he had lost the keys. But soon after the witness had left the court, the court official brought the documents. However, the judge insisted that the hearing be postponed for three weeks until March 24th.

March 24th, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol. Lt. Col. Ulit Kanjanampa, deputy superintendent of a Police Precinct's Department of Investigation.

Cross-examination: The witness said that after a film had been touched up, one could make a copy of the film on another film, which would show no sign of being touched up. Touching up could make a man's face look bigger, squarer, the eye-brow thicker or thinner, the hair thicker etc.

The defence lawyer asked whether the witness was ordered to develop only those films that looked like the Crown Prince, although a lot of films were sent to the CID. from many newspaper including Dao Siam, Bangkok Post, Daily-News and Daily-Times. The witness answered that he had the feeling that those films that he was ordered to develop looked like the Crown Prince.

The next hearing was first fixed for 14th of April, but the prosecutor claimed that this would interfere with his Songkran holiday (even though only 13th April was an official holiday). It was therefore postponed a further two weeks to the 28th April, but the court was not free on that day, it was postponed a further two weeks to the 12th of May, but again the court was not free, and thus finally the hearing was fixed for the 19th May, seven weeks after the previous hearing. Boonchart thus stays in jail for a further seven weeks for the convenience of the prosecutor and the court, and because once a hearing is on a Friday it always must be on a Friday.

On 19th of May the 12th and final prosecution witness, policeman Sanga Duengamphoe will present his evidence (or non-evidence if it is like much of the evidence already presented.)

2. The trial of the Bangkok 18 at the Military Court of Bangkok, Army Quartermaster's Division of the Royal Thai Army, Nontaburi Province

February 27th, 1978

Second Prosecution Witness: Mr. Thanong Laowanich (continued for the fourth time)

Cross-examination: Regarding the witness's former statements to the public prosecutor concerning the students' protest against the American military bases in Thailand in which the witness had asked why the students had not protested against the Russian, Cuban and Chinese bases (although there are and have never been such bases in Thailand), the witness said in his answer to the lawyer's question that the purpose of the American bases was to fight against the Thai Communist guerrillas in the jungles. He did not know whether or not it was the purpose of the American bases in Thailand to make war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The witness, having seen the picture in the English newspaper Bangkok Post, hurried to see the Prime Minister at the Government House, although he could not read any English. The lawyer asked about why he went there. The witness answered that he wanted to see Prime Minister to find out what the news was all about. When asked why he did not go to the Bangkok Post instead, the witness said that did not know where the Bangkok Post was. At Government House he did not meet the Prime Minister but instead met a group of about 100 housewives (who gathered in front of the Government House to ask for the dismissal of 3 ministers whom they accused of supporting the students, and for the appointment of Mr. Samak Suntoravej and Mr. Somboon Siritarn as ministers in their place. The witness showed the picture of the hanging scene to the crowd, and many women cried and one said that this was a serious case of Lese Majeste.

The witness was asked to point out which of the 18 defendants was the one who acted in the hanging scene as it appeared in the Bangkok Post. The 18 defendants stood up, but the witness could not identify who the actor was.

March 9th, 1978

Second Prosecution Witness: Mr. Thanong Laowanich (continued for the fifth time)

Cross-examination: The defence lawyer, Mr. Chan Kaswchasai referred to the witness's statement to the prosecutor in which he said that the students had no sense of responsibility. He asked if a student whose father was a farmer and whose mother was a worker joined a demonstration asking for more wages or for helping farmers with their debts, would it mean that the student was acting responsibly or not. The witness replied, "that is not the son's duty, but the parents; the student has the duty to learn".

The defence lawyer claimed to the court that the witness slowed down the hearings by not answering the lawyers' questions directly. The judge told the lawyer to continue with his questions.

Mr. Sompon Chirapat, the lawyer for Mr. Suchart Pacharasurawut, the 12th. defendant, referred to the witness's statement in the previous hearing in which he said that the American bases in Thailand were designed to suppress communist guerrillas in the country. Here, the judge said that the witness had not said so, but said that the purpose was to prevent interference from outside the country. There followed some argument between the defence lawyers, who insisted that the witness had said so, and the judge. The argument ended with the defence lawyers gave up and asked the witness a new question.

The defence lawyer asked whether the witness would have gone to the Government House on October 5th or not, if he had not seen the hanging picture in the Bangkok Post. The judge disallowed the lawyer's question as it involved a hypothetical situation.

The witness accepted that the employees who did not act according to the Labour Law had to some extent caused trouble to the society.

March 17th, 1978

Cross-examination: As both the defence lawyer and the prosecutor had no more questions to ask the witness and as the judge had not called the next witness, Mr. Prasert Pongprapan, to come to the court, the hearing was postponed to March 23rd, 1978.

Mr. Anupong Pongsuwan, the defendant, asked the judge to read the defendants' statement, because the judge had publicly read the prosecutor's indictment but not the defendants' statement; the judge said that it was the right of the judge to read or not to read anything he wanted to.

The defendants also claimed that the communist Suppression Act 1952 was against legal practice and asked the Court to abolish the Act. The judge accepted it under consideration.

Mr. Thongbai Thongpao, leader of the Oct 6th, defence lawyers announced that a total amount of 163,769 baht had already been received for defending this case.

March 23rd, 1978

Cross-examination: The trial was again postponed, this time to March 30th because the prosecutor could not manage to call the witness, Mr. Prasert Pongprapan, to the court. The defence lawyer, Mr. Suti Fuwanpan, said that the prosecutor continuously slowed down the hearings, and that the prosecutor should have made appointments with at least 5 witnesses, so that if someone was absent, there would be some other witnesses to give their testimony. But the prosecutor said that that would waste the witnesses' time (which is more valuable than that of the judges, lawyers, prosecutors, defendants, spectators, and policemen totalling several hundred people altogether???)

Mr. Dusit Nasomchai, one of the defence lawyers, said that as far as he knew, the reason the prosecutor could not find the witness was because the witness was hiding himself from criminal charges.

March 30, 1978

Third Prosecution Witness: Pan Wongdi

Prosecutor: Pan Wongdi had worked as a labourer until he was appointed as a member of the NARC National Assembly in 1976. As a labourer, he had been the secretary of the Iron Industrial Workers Association of Thailand in 1972, and was elected president of the Iron and Material Workers Labour-union at the beginning of 1975. After the Labour Relation Act B.E. 2518 (1975) came into force, employee's associations became labour-unions. These labour-unions used the meeting rooms in the Labour Department each time there were meetings. During this time there were a lot of strikes. There were many changes in the post of president of what was to become the Labour Federation of Thailand until Paisal Thawatchaiyanan was elected to be the president of the federation in 1974. Paisal decided to move the meeting place from the meeting-room of Labour Dept. to the

meeting-room of the Metropolitan Electricity Workers Union (Paisal was the president of the of the Metropolitan Electricity Workers Union). The group which later became the Labour Federation of Thailand had 3 objectives; first, to solve the problems of strikes; second, to solve the problems caused by employers firing workers and not keeping to the labour laws; and thirdly, to solve other labour problems caused by other people.

On May Day in 1975 Paisal changed "the group of labour unions" into "the Labour Federation of Thailand". This federation was illegal because it had not been legally registered. Later Arom Pongpangan and Aree Ponkthawe were elected to be deputy-presidents of the federation. There were some contacts with the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Foundation in order to ask for money to help in drafting the constitution of the Federation. With the support from FESF, a meeting to draft the constitution was held in Bangsaen.

Since 14th October 1973 there were many important movements of labourers. For example; the demonstration of labourers from Om Noi and Samutprakarn at SanamLuang; the demonstration to expel Prapass; the strike of labourers at the Standard Carment Industries. Pan felt that labourers were being increasingly involved in politics. The important persons who involved the labourers in politics were Seksan Prasertkul, Terdpan Chaidi and Prasit Chaiyo. One meeting was held at Rama VI Engineering School. In the meeting room there were about 20 students, including Thirayut Boonmee, Seksarn Prasertkul and Prapon Wongsiriphitak (defendant no. 5)

April 4, 1978

Third Prosecution Witness: Pan Wongdi (continued)

Prosecutor: Seksan was the secretary of the Labour Coordination Centre of Thailand of which Terdpan was the president. This centre always interfered in times of labourers' strikes. The above 2 persons always brought the labourers of the centre to coordinate with NSCT. Pan said that some of the strikes of the labourers were for their mouths and stomachs not for any political aims but many were also for political aims. Students from NSCT came to meet him often as he was the secretary of the Iron Industrial Workers Association of Thailand. They asked to participate in speaking with the employers, to support their struggles with money or with other resources, but he didn't agree. He said that he didn't believe in or trust the NSCT any longer after the meeting at the Rama VI Engineering School. According to the Labour Relation's Act, when there was a strike people who were not labourers in the particular factory could not be involved in the strike. Only someone appointed as a consultant who was known by the employers and Labour Department had a right to speak at labour meetings.

When the monk Thanom came into Thailand, the federation appointed a committees to coordinating with the NSCT. The committee members included Arom Pongpanjan, Suwinai Pinthep, Suwit Prayoosak and Fiyachet Kaew-Kand etc. Pan understood that the poster of the 2 labourers hung at Nakornprathom was designed to incite the people and to make them interested in the events.

Cross-examination: Thongbai Thongpao

Many organizations gave help to labourers of Thailand including Batu, the ICFTU, the Friedrich - Ebert Stiftung Foundation, the I.L.O. (International Labour Organization) and the AAFLT. These organizations helped to train the labour leaders and their activities were not subversive.

April 11, 1978

Third Prosecution Witness: Pan Wongdi (continued)

Cross-examination: Pan said that was interested in promoting a system of government that improved the economic situation and made people peaceful and happy. He was more interested in a democratic system of government than a dictatorship. He said that the labourers had a low education, and only about 20% of them knew about the labour laws. It was therefore right that students should be the advisers of the labourers, but they had to keep to the law.

He was not interested in the Labour Coordination Centre because it was illegal.

On May Day in 1976, there was a celebration presided over by P.M. Seni Pramroj. The objective of the celebration was to remind people of the struggles of the labourers at that time. There was also an exhibition about the working conditions of labourers, farmers, and peasants. He had gone to look at the exhibition at Thammasat University and remembered that Chuan Leekpai, a minister in the Seni government, was the chief speaker at the exhibition on that day.

The meeting of the federation about the case of the two labourers who were hung at Nakornprathom was called in order to appeal for justice. Usually there was a secretary for each meeting in order to record the minutes, these minutes would be accepted at the next meeting. The document no. J. 76 presented by the prosecution was not the official minutes but was merely the personal notes of Pan.

Cross-examination: Suthipong Laocharoen

In a democratic government, sometimes the state power did not belong to the people. The objectives of elections was only to give people an opportunity to check the characteristics of the rulers. The problem of the labourers was largely an economic problem which each government was interested in and tried to solve. Sometimes the economic situation of labourers got better, and sometimes worse. In the period of Sanya Thammasat's government the labour problems improved, but they got worse again during the period of Thanin's government.

It was not necessary that the left wing should always be against the government, particularly when the government was working in the interests of the people. The general public often gave money to NSCT in order that it could be the core of the struggle to resist dictatorship.

The labour problems came from the mistakes of the managers of factories who often insulted the labourers, gained too much profit, did not follow the labour laws, and did not give the workers welfare. The labourers in the period of Thanom did not directly appeal to the government because they were afraid to be arrested.

April 28, 1978

Fourth Prosecution Witness: Prasit Chaithongpan

Prosecutor: He was born at Ban Kam, ampher Sawangdandin, Sakolnakhorn province. He finished his bachelor's degree from the faculty of Economics, Thammasat University, and got a masters degree of Economics from Thammasat University. Up to present he has worked as a civil servant in the post of the head of the office of the labour relation committees. In addition, he has also worked for I.S.O.C. since 1972. At first his duty involved solving conflicts between labourers and employers, between people and officials and between farmers and landlords; and since November 1977 he has worked as the head of another department. He has a wide knowledge about communists from a very early age because the people in his village liked communists and many of them were communists.

He studied the theory of communism in Thammasat University.

In more practical terms, he had met Sahai Samrej during his work at Kalasin. Sahai Samrej was sent by the C.P.T. to survey and control the labourers looking for oil in the sub-district of Kao Wong. Prasit knew that he was a communist because he always spoke 'communist jargon'. Prasit brought Sahai Samrej to massage parlour in Konkaen. It made Sahai Samrej very satisfied because he said that he had never known such pleasure whilst he was in the jungle for 5-6 years. After that Sahai Samrej went to surrender to the officials at the suggestion of Prasit. He was sent for reeducation for more than 3 months following the project of "God's Mercy" (Karunyathep). After being trained, he went back to meet Prasit and gave him further information about communists and C.P.T. both in theory and the operations. Prasit said that it was the first time he knew the real nature of the C.P.T.

In May 1975 Prasit was invited to visit U.S.S.R. on the invitation of U.S.S.R. government. He also participated the May Day celebrations in the U.S.S.R. The U.S.S.R. government gave him a medal because of his courage in fighting for the labourers in a capitalist country. After that there were some officials of USSR who tried to train him about the way to carry out revolution in Thailand.

Prasit described the meaning of Marxist Leninism and its basic principles. And then he talked about the C.P.T.

He said that NSCT and democratic youth's association of Thailand were the fellow travelling organization of the C.P.T. which were formed to get rid of the monarchical institution. In the same way, the labourer Federation of Thailand, the National Labourer Coordination Centre and the United Farmers and Peasants organisation of Thailand were also front organization designed to destroy capitalism. This meant that all operations of these united front organizations were under the control of the C.P.T.

At present the C.P.T. was trying to create a revolution through democracy. It divided its revolutionary strategies into 2 parts; those for the jungle and those for the city. In the jungle, it used armed force. In the city, it used its front organizations. The organisations it wanted to destroy were the monarchy, the power of the state, the power of the government, the economic system, the political system and the social system.

The 6th October 1976 event was the organised by NSCT which was a front organization of the C.P.T. and had the objective to overthrowing the monarchy. Prasit saw the picture of the hanging in Dao Siam, Bangkok Post and Athipat. The picture was very like the Crown Prince so much so that he believed that it was a picture of the Crown Prince.

From 14th October 1973 to 6th October 1976 there were a lot of outside persons interfering in the strikes of labourers. Most of those persons came from NSCT and ^{the} national labourer coordination centre. They came to draw up the plans for the strikes.

The exhibition on the Republic of China at Thammasat University was designed to incite people to become politically active political creatures in order to give more power to the revolutionary forces. It was also organised by a front organization.

The national labourer coordination centre and the labourer's centre of Thailand were formed illegally. The Labour Council of Thailand had only just been registered in 1978.

ANNEX

News Report of Airmen Arrested in Oct 6th Incident and Held in Military Detention

Concerning the Oct 6th incident, it has long been believed that besides those injured, raped and killed during the incident in Thammasat University, the 19 persons being under the juridical proceedings in the Military Court and Criminal Court and Virat Truen, are the last victims still directly suffering from that incident. However, recently there have been newspaper reports (e.g. Matichon) that there is another group of victims who are suffering as much or even more than the nineteen. They are a group of Low-rank airmen who are, according to the news, being detained by the Airforce under heavy charges. They will eventually be tried in the Military Court without defence lawyers.

These airmen had joined the protest at Thammasat University against the return of Field Marshal Thanom Kitikajorn, and were arrested. Since then, according to the news reports, they have been secretly detained by the air force. Again according to the reports, which we havenot yet confirmed, these airmen have been shackled with very big and heavy chains. News also leaked out that an airman from this group has had to have had one of his legs amputated, because the shackle had cut deeply into his flesh, right to the bone.

We are trying to find out more precise and confirmed information on this case, and will report on it in later reports.

3 The trial of Nikom Pridakul

The case of Nikom Pridakul is notable for his frequent arrests. After having been arrested twice and each time being finally acquitted from the charges due to inadequate evidence, he was rearrested for the third time, this time charged with being a gangster, on January 25, 1978 (See human rights in Thailand report, Jan-Feb, 1978 pp 21-22)

On March 19, 1978, when he appeared in court, the court yet again acquitted him from the charges because there was not enough evidence against him, after he had been detained for almost 2 months.

Why this poor man is so frequently arrested on trumped up charges, with no evidence, we are not quite clear. The previous time he was arrested he was even asked to select his own charge.

B. Those arrested before Oct. 6th

1. The trial of Workers of Thai Blanket Factory at the Criminal Court

Judgement of the Court: On February 16th, 1978, the judge acquitted 3 defendants from the charges. As for the other 5 defendants, the judge did not make any decision. If the prosecutor did not appeal in 15 days, the defendants would all be set free. After the fifteen days, the prosecutor did not appeal, therefore the 5 remaining defendants were all set free.

However, as all the workers who were the defendants in this case (except the first defendant) had been dismissed from their work, the workers appealed to the Labour Department that the factory had fired them illegally, because, according to the Labour Law, the factory cannot fire any worker because of his participation in a strike. Later on, the labour relations committee decreed that the workers should obtain their former positions in the factory, or else the employers would have to pay them compensation. But the employers refused, and appealed the decision of the labour relations committee to the Ministry of Interior. Consequently, the labour relations committee and the workers became the defendants in a civil action.

Prateep Prakkratoke, the 7th defendant was rearrested just after his release under the new charge of gambling, and was detained in the prison in Nontaburi Province. Fortunately he was acquitted from this charge on February 24th, 1978.

This case is again an example of how it is very difficult for the poor to get any real justice from the courts. For if they are not rearrested on some false charge, they are inevitably likely to lose their jobs, and be blacklisted from employment in other factories.

2. The Trial of Supap Pasa-ong Group

March 1st, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol. Cap. Songpon Vongtongkam (continued)

(Songpon was among a group of policemen who arrested Supap and his friends on March 30th, 1976)

Cross-examination: The witness said that he had the responsibility to find information about the movements of both the employers and employees. He did not know much about Communism. The reason he stated to the prosecutor that Pisit (the defendant) was a committee member (in fact he was not) of the labour union was because he had not examined the evidence thoroughly.

The witness had been to the labour union only once, and had not gone upstairs. At that time he and about 10 other government officials were invited to a workers' party, though he could not remember for what occasion. All the officials invited had not gone

to the union's library nor had they looked at the books there. The reason he stated to the prosecutor that there were communist books at the labour union, though he had not seen the books himself was because he was "told" this by the library members.

According to the witness, the first strikes that took place could reach agreement easily, but the later ones never seemed to be able to reach an agreement. In fact the four demands which were difficult to resolve were firstly the provision by the employers of polaris drinking water; secondly, the provision of adequate toilet and bath-room facilities; thirdly, the granting of cost of living allowances and finally, compensation for workers whose wages were not paid. The witness accepted that the last demand for compensation was in accordance with the labour law.

Songpon said that there had also been workers' demands to be given the minimum wage as stipulated in law but he could not remember either at which factories nor in how many factories were such demands. He admitted that he ~~did~~ use the workers' demand as evidence for arresting the employers for contravening the labour law.

The hearing ended at 11.30 am. There was no afternoon hearing session because the witness had an official appointment. The next hearing was fixed for March 8

March 8, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol. Cap. Songpon Vongtongkam (Continued)

Cross-examination: The witness said that whenever the labour union interfered in any strikes more demands would be added, and with most of these extra demands no compromise or agreement could be reached. He accepted however that there were no factory owners who surrendered to the workers' demands easily.

Regarding the witness's prosecution statement in which he said that the strikers had attacked the monarchy and the religion, the witness now accepted that he had not heard the words directly himself but heard about them indirectly from 3-4 workers whose names he could not now remember.

He also accepted that the songs "kao-Koi*fon" and "Khon-kap-Khwai" sung by the strikers did not refer to the government, the monarchy or the religion (which contradicted his former statement that the strikers had sung two songs which attacked the monarchy and the religion)

He accepted that according to the defendants' document no. 307 concerning the registration of Samutprakarn Labour Union, none of the defendants in this case was a committee member of the labour Union.

The witness said that he had not seen Mr. Wimut (the defendant) with the rifle with his own eyes; but, according to an eye-witness, the gun he had was of the same type and the same make as the one captured by the policemen.

The hearing ended at 11.20 am with no afternoon session because the witness had some official bussiness to do. The next hearing was fixed for March the 15

March 15, 1978

The hearing was postponed to March 22, because the witness (Pol. Cap. Songpon) had some official bussiness to do.

March 22nd, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol. Cap. Songpon Vongotongkam (continued)

Cross-examination: The witness stated that after the Oct6th coup, he had arrested about 10 workers from Kratumbaen District under endangering society charges.

He said that both the employers and employees had the right to appoint their consultants after the employees had set their demands, and after the employers could not meet these demands nor could the two sides come to an agreement. Once appointed, the consultant could not be regarded as an "outsider" any more. He accepted that the defendants in the case had taken part in labour negotiations as consultants or as those directly involved in a case.

The witness said that the arrest of the defendants on March 30th, 1976 had benefited the employers, and Mr. Kamchad Sankapitak, an employers representative and personnel manager of 3 factories in the area had given a basket of flowers to the Head of the Police Department to congratulate and thank him for the arrest.

April 5th, 1978

Prosecution Witness: The manager of Hara Thailand Co.Ltd.

Prosecutor: The witness gave evidence concerning the workers' strike at the Hara Jeans factory, when the workers seized the factory and changed the name of the factory from "Hara Thailand" to "Workers Solidarity". The witness said that during the strike there were music and film shows and there were also some students who joined the strike. However, most of his testimony had nothing much to do with Supap and his friends' case.

April 12th, 1978: The trial was postponed to April 19th, 1978 because the defence lawyer had not enough documents to cross-examine the prosecution witness. (The manager of Hara Thailand Co.Ltd.)

It was agreed that for the next hearing of April 19th, another witness would give his evidence in the court, because the manager would not be free on that day.

April 26th, 1978

Prosecution Witness: Pol.Maj. Gen. Charoen Sombatsiri

Cross-examination: The witness accepted that it was a democratic right of the people to stage a strike or hold a demonstration. This right was only limited under a dictatorial regime. As a police deputy commander of the region, he had never been received complaints about mistreatment of workers by their employers, on the contrary, he often received reports on how the workers pressurised their employers.

According to the witness, during the workers' strike at Pechkasem 3 factory, there were about 30-40 policemen with firearms guarding the factory, so that the workers could not go in and out of the factory easily. The witness accepted that the law had forbidden the employer to close the factory or stop employment during a workers' strike. However, on January 14th, 1975 the employer closed the factory, and, as an excuse, informed the police that the workers would seize the factory.

The witness accepted that he had never been informed that the workers had verbally attacked the religion or the monarchy during their strike and also accepted that in Thai history there had never been any revolution which succeeded through seizing a factory.

C. From Sensitive Area

1. The Trial of Udom Pka-krong Group at the Criminal Court
February 24th, 1978: The trial was postponed for two whole months to April 24th-25th, 1978, because the prosecution witness could not come to give his evidence to the court before April 24th.

April 24th, 1978

Prosecution witness: Pol. Second Lt. Wanchai Ruengsripuerg, a policeman from Tasala local police station

Prosecutor: On May 10th, 1976, when the Village Defence Volunteer and Military Camps were attacked by the guerillas, the witness was at his home not far from the police station. After having been informed of the attack, he and 30 other policemen and civilians went to the place. When they reached the place, the guerillas had all gone. It was reported to him that there were about 100 guerillas. He did not know who the guerillas were, because he had not asked anybody that question and nobody had told him that they had recognized any of the guerillas.

On May 21st, 1976, the military, police and civilian officials searched the house of Mr. Chuay Joolapak, and found 2 shotguns and 3 bullets and so arrested him under the charge of illegally owning firearms. The investigation took place on that same evening and Mr. Chuay confessed that he had joined the guerillas in the attack.

Cross-examination: The witness said that 2 shotguns were found outside Mr. Chuay's house. They were buried in the ground, 15 metres from the house of Mr. Chey Srichaiyot who was Chuay's father in law.

Regarding the investigation of May 22nd, 1976, the witness did not interrogate the defendant himself; he just listened. He said that there was no torture during the cross examination and also said that he had not known that Mr. Chuay's brother had been shot dead by the guerillas a long time ago.

April 25th, 1978: The Trial was postponed again. This time for 3 months / The next trial will be on July 26th and 27th, 1978.

N.B. Several points about this case should be noted. First, the 11 defendants have so far been detained for about 2 years, yet the trial is proceeding very slowly because of the frequent postponements. It seems to be a normal thing to the authorities that in one, two (or even three) months, there is only one hearing or no hearing at all. But, as for the detainees, this is not so simple for them, because each postponement means that they have to spend longer in prison. Secondly, although the 11 detainees are only unconvicted prisoners, they had been shackled with leg irons since early 1977 until April 1978 when Udom Pkakrong's daughter petitioned to the corrections department about this, thus only recently they ~~were~~ unshackled. Thirdly, Mr. Pralom Kaewsuan, the brother of Mr. Puchong Kaewsuan who was the defendant in the case, was recently arrested in Nakornsri Thammarat province under the same (communist) charges and is going to be tried in the same case as his brother. And finally, although police/war-chai Ruengsripuerg, the prosecution witness denied that there had been torture during the investigation, we have been informed by reliable sources that almost every defendant in this case including Mr. Chuay had been tortured brutally during the investigation at the Military Camp in Nakornsri Thammarat province, and the reason that some confessed to the authorities that they were guerillas was to save their lives.

D) Communist Charges

1. The trial of Somboon and Vichai Banlusilpa at the Bangkok Military Court

In the last report it was pointed out that this case was notable for its slowness and frequent postponements, because though the two brothers had been detained for one year and four months they had not yet been tried in the court, as the trial hearings which were first scheduled for January 9th, 1978 were postponed again and again several times and finally were expected to take place on March 27th and 28th, 1978.

Again, the hearings on March 27th and 28th, 1978 were postponed to May 16th, 1978.

E) Endangering Society

1. Four Prisoners at Nongkhai appealed for Habeas Corpus

On March 24th, 1978 four prisoners arrested under endangering society charges in accordance with Decree No. 22 of the NARC on March 9th, 1978 at Nongkhai Province appealed to the court at Nongkhai for Habeas Corpus. The four are identified as Mr. Kasem Wongchanon, Mr. Noo Kankaew, Mr. Prasert Kemthong and Mr. Seng Sae-ia, all of whom are traders and agents for arranging export import certificates for Thai-Laos trade.

The four appealed to the court in accordance with the Criminal Code Decree 90 (Habeas Corpus), which allows people illegally imprisoned to appeal to the court for their release. They claimed that they had been illegally arrested and detained, that the officials had no power to arrest them as they were innocent, had a legal occupation and had a fixed residence, and asked that the court call the investigator Pol.Lt. Vanchai Tepputtangkul for trial hearings, and release them all.

The appeal was opposed by Pol.Lt. Vanchai, through the prosecutor, who claimed that the four had previously been arrested under endangering society charges on Oct. 14th, 1976 and had been through re-education but had not seen the error of their ways. Moreover, the four had no right to appeal by using the Decree 90, as the decree did not cover those arrested under endangering society charges.

The first and second hearings are supposed to take place on May 8th and 17th, 1978 and the cases of all four will be heard at the same time.

The text of the Decree 90 is that when a person is illegally detained or imprisoned, his/her wife/husband or relatives, or somebody concerned such as a prosecutor, a prison governor or a custodian may appeal to the court for his release. The court must then hold a hearing to consider the positions of those who caused the arrest or detention and the detainees or prisoners. If the court considers the detention illegal or not in accordance with the court judgement, it may release that person.

Finally, it should be noted that such an appeal for Habeas Corpus from those arrested and detained under endangering society charges has been successfully lodged at least twice. On April 23th, 1977, Mr. Rurn Chitman was acquitted of the endangering society charges after his wife had appeal^{ed} to the Choburi Court to consider his case again in accordance with the Decree 90. (See Human Rights in Thailand Report, July-August, 1977) Later on, on November 30th, 1977, Mr. Kaew Leekratoke, an endangering society prisoner, was also acquitted of the charges by

by Nakornrajsrima Court after his appeal. (See Human Rights in Thailand Report, Sep-Oct., 1977) Therefore, the Nongkhai prosecutor's statement that Decree 90 did not cover those arrested under endangering society charges does not sound convincing.

2. Endangering Society Ex-Detainees Sue for Damages

a) Mrs. Pimpan Puwapan

Mrs. Pimpan Puwapan was arrested in Oct. 1976 under endangering society charges and was detained for a total of 201 days without trial. After having been released on May 11th, 1977 she brought both civil and criminal actions against many people who had arrested her or caused her arrest. (See Human Rights in Thailand Report, Sep-Oct, 1977, pp. 17)

First, she sued Mr. Kluei Yensamur for having given a false desposition to the authorities..

Secondly, she sued Sergeant Sawat Nonchana for false desposition and carrying out his duties irresponsibly. (Sergeant Sawat was the one who accused Pimpan for having criticized the "dictatorial administration of the NARC"). The trial hearing of this case will begin in June 1978.

Thirdly, she sued Mr. Sanur Mulasart, the former district chief of the Central District of Surin Province (her home-town), Pol. Maj. Trakul Rakpan, Chief of Surin local police station, Pol. Cap. Banlu Tiensuntorn, Mr. Kluei Yensamur, and Sergeant Sawat Nouchana for defamation of Charactor and for carrying out their duties irresponsibly. The court reject this last plaint for lack of evidence. Mrs. Pimpan is now appealing the courts decision or this.

Finally, Mrs. Pimpan and her husband, Mr. Sutee Puwapan brought a civil action against the Interior Ministry under Minister Samak Sundaravej, Mr. Sanur Mulasart, Pol. Maj. Trakeen Rakpan and Pol. Cap. Banlu Tiensuntorn for having incorrectly carried out or omitted to carry out their duties and for giving false evidence. In this last plaint Pimpan and her husband asked for a compensation of 200,000 baht. The trial hearings have been postponed many times. The next hearings is scheduled for May 9th, 1978.

b) Mr. Suvit Prayoosak

Mr. Suvit Prayoosak was expelled from Kurusapa Trade Association's publishing house on November 4th, 1976 because he had been arrested under endangering society charges and thus absent from his work since October 14th, 1976. After he had been released, he sued the Kurusapa Trade Association for having dismissed him from his work without proper reasons and for defamation of charactor. (See Human Rights in Thailand Report, Nov-Dec, 1977, pp. 38)

The first trial hearings was supposed to be on November 14th, 1977, but as the defendant claimed that he had not enough evidence, the trial was postponed to December 26th. However, on December 26th, the judge claimed that he wanted to clear up former cases, so the trial was postponed again to February 2nd, 1978. On that day the trial was postponed to March 14th, and then postponed again to May 16th.

In conclusion, after 6 months the first trial hearing has not yet begun, and at present Suvit is still unemployed.

F. Danger to the Security of the State

1. Mr. Surin Suanpan

Mr. Surin Suanpan, a former member of the Socialist Party of Thailand, was arrested under endangering society charges in July 1977

while walking along Bangkok street, carrying a paper bag full of illegal documents and stickers urging the release of the October 6th political prisoners. On January 7th, 1978 he was released from endangering society charges but was remanded because another charge of danger to the security of the state was filed on him.

The first trial hearing which was supposed to be on January 17th, 1978 was postponed to February 28th. On February 28th, Surin's lawyer did not come to the court because he had to defend another case on that day, so the trial was postponed to April 28th, 1978. During this time Surin changed his lawyer, therefore the trial of April 28th was again postponed to July 14th, so as to give time for the new lawyer to study his case.

PART TWO
THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

1) Misuse of Government Power

A. Relocation of Villages

There is a tendency for governments of countries facing internal insurgency to assume that villagers can be moved from one place to another at will to meet the needs of a particular military campaign or suppression strategy. The urban based military and civilian bureaucrats do not understand the love a peasant has for the land that he and his family have been cultivating for years or generations, nor do they understand the fact that the peasant wants to maintain his own self sufficiency, pride, and independence. Even further, because of the wide cultural gap that exists between officials and peasants, these officials often assume that "stupid" villagers can easily be duped by terrorists, and thus consider that the villagers that they cannot control are their potential enemies.

Thus from Vietnam to Rhodesia villagers have been shuttled around at the will of particular officials, usually being finally forced to live in so called "strategic" hamlets, which are basically a cross between an open prison (surrounded by barbed wire, and "protected" by military forces) and a charity camp (with free handouts to win the hearts of the inmates). This policy continues in many countries all over the world, including Thailand, despite its obvious failure in Vietnam and other places. The failure of the policy is caused by five main factors:-

- The villagers are never consulted about whether they want to move or not.

- The place where the village is moved to is not fertile, and thus the villagers depend on charity. With corruption, and bureaucratic inefficiency this charity is rarely available in needed quantities.

- Normally several villages are moved to one "strategic" hamlet on the assumption that "big is controllable". This however tends to break up the traditional village structure, and because the strategic hamlet is "controllable", the villagers are less able to determine their own lives.

- Officials look down on the villagers and mistrust them.

- The villages are often too much like prisons.

Because of U.S. influence on the direction taken on communist insurgency suppression activities in Thailand, the forced relocation of villages has been taking place for many years now (particularly with hill tribes, where villagers from many different tribes have even been moved to the same village in the lowlands - e.g. in Nan Province). However since the Oct 6th 1976 coup, the forced relocation of villages, the creation of free fire zones, and the construction of "strategic" hamlets has been taking place on a larger scale than ever before. These policies lead to very great suffering of villagers; great loss of income; and also, often when villagers do not understand why they should be relocated and thus return to their original villages, great loss of life too (see Human Rights in Thailand, April 1977, where details of a massacre of villagers in Trang Province is outlined).

The policy of forced relocation of villages has, over the last year or so, been taking place in all parts of the country, but particularly in the N.E. and South. For example:-

October 1976 Ban Wang Lung Village in Nakorn Sri Thammarat was ordered closed, and the people moved to the Wat and the cinema in Ban Don Ka. Many villagers were forced to join the VDV's.

April 1977 Villagers from villages 4 & 5 in Tambon Nopitam, Tasala district, in Nakorn Sri Thammaraj were forced to leave their villages. In order to prevent them from returning, the villages were entirely burnt except for the schools and the temples.

May 1977 By order of the Second Army Commander (Gen Prem Tinsulanant) villagers were prohibited from living in or even entering into certain areas in six N.E. provinces. In Korat alone villagers from 12 villages in Korn Buri District, and Lerng Sarug sub-district were ordered to move from their villages.

August 1977 Vast areas in a further seven N.E. provinces (including parts of 28 districts) were closed, and villages ordered to move out. How many villages and villagers were effected by this order we are not clear. This order was made by P.M. Thanin, using his power under the anti-communist act, and decree 25 of NARC.

Sep 1977 200 families from villages 1 and 3 of Samnakteaw Sub-district, Sadao-district, Songkla province were ordered out of their villages by the commander of the fourth army. No assistance was provided for the villagers, and no schools for their children. The villagers estimated that they were loosing 40,000-50,000 Baht per day from not being able to tap their rubber trees. They petitioned the government to be able to return, but with no success.

Dec. 1977 2,500 villagers in Satun in the far South of Thailand, were ordered out of their villages, to be temporarily housed in the district town.

Dec. 1977 At least 600 villagers were ordered to leave four villages in Korat, and move to a new "strategic hamlet" - Mu Baan Thai Samnaki (Thai Unity Village) (See below).

Feb. 1978 The supreme command headquarters announced that 4,000 "strategic hamlets" would be rapidly created by the government in sensitive areas all over the country. Considering that each hamlet might have villagers from 2-3 villages, this will cover a very significant proportion of the 52,000 villages in Thailand (almost 20%)

April 1978 P.M. Kriengsak announced in a press conference, that villages on the Thai-Kampuchea border would be regrouped into larger villages and moved back 1-2 kms from the border.

As can be seen from the above examples, it is very much the policy of both the central government, and local military officials to push out or relocate villagers whenever and wherever they think necessary. Though all this pushing around of villagers takes place as a part of the governments communist suppression strategies, there seem to be three immediate reasons why it takes place:-

- To help strengthen border defences.
- To allow anything that moves in areas where communist terrorists are active, to be shot.
- To prevent the spread of communist influence.

A description of one relocation might help our readers to understand the inhumanity with which such forced moves takeplace, and the suffering caused to villagers.

On 25th December more than 600 villagers from four villages in Korat (Moon Long, Moon Sam Ngam, Khay Ta Lai, and Khay Ta Dum villages) were informed by officials that they would have to leave their villages,

to move to a strategic hamlet (Thai Unity Village, 80 kms. from Korat City in Pak Thongchai District) on 28th December. The villagers were only given three days to prepare for the move so as not to attract the attention of the communists.

The villagers were forced to leave their crops (mainly maize) standing in the fields unharvested. They were forced to leave fertile, well watered forest land, for a drought ridden sandy plain that no one had ever bothered to cultivate, the land being so poor. They were forced to leave behind years of investment (buying and improving their land) with little chance of any compensation, as they had no legal title deeds for the land they had lived on and cultivated for at least 10 or 15 years (most peasants in Thailand do not have title deeds, since everyone knows who each piece of land belongs to). Some of the more wealthy villagers claim to have lost 60,000-100,000 baht in the move. They were forced to move out of a place where there was a school for their children, to one where there is none. They were forced to move from a place where they could obtain credit (albeit at 50% interest for six months) to one where credit was no longer possible as they had no land as security. They were forced to dismantle their houses and rebuild them again with no help (except in terms of transportation) from the government. As a final straw, in the new village each household was asked to provide one male to be trained as a Village Defence Volunteer (VDV).

This move took place not because of anything that the villagers had done, but merely because their original villages were situated in a communist infested area. According to the villagers communists used to frequently visit them, and talk and joke with them like "ordinary people". They were not harassed or taxed by the communists, and only one villager was ever killed by the communists "he was a messenger for the communists and probably double crossed them". During the past year the problems of the villagers had been increasing, because the Border Patrol Police (BPP) came through the villages from time to time to fight the communists, which made the people afraid, because the BPP. wanted the support of the villagers, but never stayed for long to provide the protection this support would necessitate. The villagers did not have complaints about the behaviour of the Border Patrol Police, who behaved well when in their villages.

The villagers now seem to be living a miserable existence in the new village, which is infertile and dry (very effected by the present drought). They have constructed shacks, but there are no trees to provide the necessary shade. They have not yet been allocated land to cultivate, and are not sure that anything will grow on the land in any case. They claim only to receive 5 litres of rice per fortnight per family which is clearly insufficient. They are forced to train as VDV's to defend something which they do not understand, and which has only brought them suffering. And finally all efforts of any "good" officials involved in the mov., who want to provide much greater assistance, and compensation "to win the hearts of the people" are hampered by bureaucratic red tape.

All in all the villagers only want to move back to their old villages, and if this is not possible, try to go to live with relatives anywhere else except in "strategic hamlets" such as Thai Samaki (Thai unity).

The suffering that is being caused by inhumane uprooting of villagers for strategic reasons, will certainly go far towards loosing the "hearts and minds of the people." The idea that human beings can be treated as meaningless pawns in strategic games, is one that has been proved false over and over again. The villagers are wiser than the

government, for they realise that their only way out is to be friendly with communists and government military alike, (for both sides "are Thais"), for only then are they able to live their lives in peace. Unfortunately the government cannot accept this peasant wisdom, but want everyone to join their violent struggle against their enemies.

The suffering already caused by village relocation is already immense. If the governments goes ahead with its plan to create 4,000 such "strategic" villages, it will succeed in alienating a very large segment of the whole population. Lets hope that peasant wisdom and humanity will prevail over the military strategies of urban based, western trained officials.

B) Other Misuses of Government Power

1. Murder of Mr. Samien Klaipol by a policeman

On February 10 th, 1978, at 10 p.m., while Mr. Samien Klaipol aged 21, and Mr. Ko Chiemsat, aged 35, two workers of Thai Seree Mill at Moo 1, Tambol Klongklung, Klongklung District, Kampaengpet Province were walking the 1 km. from their home to the factory, they saw staff Sergeant Churng Chomdej standing beside his motorcycle. The policeman told them to push his motorcycle to the petrol station which was about 1km. from the place. The two workers refused to do so, saying that they were hurrying to get to work in time. Suddenly, that policeman (who was somewhat drunk at the time) shot fifteen shot at the two with his gun and fled away.

A passerby brought the poor workers to the hospital. They were both severely injured, and Mr. Samien died the next morning.

Staff Sergeant Churng Chomdej was arrested but was released on bail. Later, on March 1 st, 1978, the brother of Mr. Ko Chiemsat appealed to Pol. Maj. Gen. Sa-nguan Klongchai, as he feared that there would be injustices or irregularities in the prosecution of the case. It is indeed strange that someone accused of murder should so rapidly be released on bail just because he is a policeman.

2. Murder of Mr. Sanae Rungrungrong in jail

Mr. Sanae Rungrungrong was arrested on April 24 th 1978 under the charge of being a drug peddler and also the charge of endangering society. He was detained at Bang-yi-kan police station and later was moved to Bangplad police station. On May 6 th, he died in jail. The policemen made an autopsy and reported that he had committed suicide by hanging himself.

However when his relatives saw Sanae's dead body,

they felt that he had not died of hanging, because his body was bruised all over, and at his neck there was no mark of rope. The relatives also found in his pocket a letter written by the dead man.

Sanae said in this letter that on April 29 th, 1978 at 2 am, the jail guard was drunk and had fallen asleep, forgetting to lock the cell therefore Sanae fled out from the jail. He had not gone very far when the policemen caught him again. He was severely tortured twice and was moved from Bang-yi-kan to Bangplad police station.

His relative there petitioned to many newspaper for justice, as they felt that Sanae had not committed suicide as appeared in the police report, but had died of torture and mistreatment.

3. Mistreatment of a student by policemen—

On April 9th, 1978, while Mr. Anan Cheinmitwatana,, (a student of Rapid Results College in England,, who had returned on holiday to visit his family) was travelling by a mini-bus in the Central District of Chiang-mai, a policeman forced the bus to stop and dragged him out, pressing a gun to his head, pushing him down on the road and calling other policemen to kick and hit him. That policeman also hit his head with the gun until it bled. A lot of people gathered around but nobody dared to help him.

After that Anan went to the police station to complain about the incident, but a sergeant there threatened that he would be detained if he lodged an official complaint about that incident. Therefore he left the police station, still not knowing why he had been treated like that.

Later, he informed a police lieutenant about the incident, but nothing has been done either to explain why he was beaten up, or to punish the policemen involved.

4. Quarrel between soldiers and village defence volunteers caused 7 deaths

On January 31st, 1978, at 10 pm., a group of soldiers had a quarrel with a group of village defence volunteers at a village fair at Moo 6, Tambon La-ei, Chawang District, Nakornsri Thammarat Province, because they wanted to dance with the same hired partness. Their quarrel led to a fighting and shooting. Both sides used M. 16 and pistols. The fighting ended with the death of 7 people; most of them are common villagers. Thirty persons were injured, 7 of whom were severely injured.

2) Detention Centres, Arrests, and Releases

1. Detention Centres

CGRS visits all political prisoners detained in Bangkok prisons on a regular basis. Since it is felt that very little is known about the conditions of these prisoners (except perhaps of the Bangkok 19, which can, in terms of detention conditions, be considered as fortunate "victims"). CGRS plans to publish a book on the life of political prisoners inside prison. However we feel that it might be interesting for our readers to have a brief general idea of what conditions are like for the political prisoners held in Bangkok. Nevertheless it should be noted that bad as these conditions are, they are very much better than those in many up-country jails.

It should also be emphasised that most of the prisoners visited are still in the process of being tried (such as the Bangkok 19, Udom Pka Krong's group, Supap Pasa-ongs group), and as unconvicted prisoners have many 'rights', and are supposed to be allowed to wear their own clothes, have any food brought into the jail, have unlimited access to legally printed materials, have visits from their relatives at anytime during official hours, and never be put in chains, as if they were already convicted.

As can be seen from the following story, prisoners unconvicted or otherwise do not have these rights.

The Life of a Political Prisoner

In the hot season, like the one we are experiencing now, where temperatures rise as far as 38°C people complain loudly that the weather makes one sweat profusely. They become run down and are generally not in good spirits. The situation seems particularly unbearable when one is caught in heavy traffic and unable to move around easily. Many people deal with the situation by fleeing to cooler up-country provinces to rest. Others, unable to join in the exodus for one reason or another, do the best they can to find some relief given their limitations. But, there is one group of people confronting a situation much worse than any of those referred to above. For these people there is no respite from the suffering heat. For these people their only option is to endure....

In a 24 hour day these people are allowed outside the confines of their quarters for only eight hours, and, then, they are restricted to a clearly defined area. (The situation of prisoners scheduled for execution is even worse since they are only allowed to leave their cells to wash their clothes for half an hour each morning.) For normal prisoners during the remaining 16 hours --- the time seems so very long and the spirit suffers so very much during the wait--they must cope with the tepid, stifling conditions of their overcrowded cells. The situation is particularly intolerable in the Special Prison/Bangkok where the cells are poorly ventilated and the space clearly inadequate for the thousands of prisoners held there. Here, the prisoners must sleep in tightly packed rows on the floor. One can not turn over without bumping into someone else. The pure numbers coupled with the lack of ventilation increases manyfold the heat's oppressiveness. Such conditions wreak havoc with the inmates' health. In prison, then, people do not talk about getting out to the seashore or to some waterfall in the foothills to enjoy the air. Here, the hope is simply to get out of the cell to feel the breeze against one's face and look at the moon and the stars. But, this hope, too, is denied as the following passage from a prisoner's letter to a friend indicates.

"....Have you ever thought what it would be like if a person has not been able to see the stars in the evening sky for a long, long time? How do you think that person would feel? Well, I'm such a person. Me and the others here.... we're never able to see such things. Each day around 4 or 5 in the afternoon we are herded back into our cells like so many cattle and water buffalo. They clank the heavy door shut on us in that cramped cell and we remain in the dark, heavy air the whole night.

Only at dawn is the door opened. ~~It's like~~ this every day. There's never a change. So, those of us here never have a chance to see the stars. Sometimes, though, with a little luck we might catch a glimpse of the moon through the bars of the small window high up in the cell. ~~But this happens~~ only on certain nights when the moon takes a particular path. Most often, we see nothing. Because I have this burning desire to feel the wind against my face, I often stand on top of the toilet and stretch my body up to the bars in the window. Then, I extend my arm out the window as far as possible and try to scoop the soft breeze to my face...aah....it cools my heart..."

For people in jail the ultimate wish is to get out beyond the walls ...to go places and do things freely like those on the outside. But, since this is not possible, they come to hope only to know what is happening on the outside. In this way they can have some connection with the freedom they have been denied. It helps them to know that they have not been removed from life altogether. Visits from relatives, friends, and individuals interested in their plight are, therefore, anticipated with lively enthusiasm. But even this small pleasure is severely limited. At the Special Prison of Bangkok, for example, visits are restricted to 10 minutes (even for unconvicted prisoners) and each person can receive only one visitor on the designated day. If a second relative or friend should happen to show up, the prisoner will be denied permission to receive him. When a prisoner at the Special Prison of Bangkok receives his visitor in the room set aside for such purposes, he must sit on a long bench set next to the bars. He sits in a row, among the other prisoners receiving their visitors. Between the prisoner and his visitor there is a triple layer of screening. This plus the general noisy atmosphere makes it very difficult to hear anything. If anyone, in order to hear better stands up to press his face against the screening, he will be warned immediately by the guards to sit down. The latter use different techniques to convey their warning. Some are quite heavy-handed and harsh. Others more gentle. It depends on the guard. If a prisoner loosens the top button of his shirt, the guard will order him to button it up. Even though the intense heat causes one to sweat profusely, it is important to look neat. The prison officials are very strict about little things like that. But, with regard to those few rights prisoners may have, the attitude of these same people is quite lax. For example, when the prisoners are called to meet their visitors, the officials often do not read all the names. The prisoners expecting visitors and not hearing their name read out must then request to have the announcement made again. The time for the visit, already minimal, is consequently reduced even more. Moreover, some prisoners are closely watched when they talk with their visitors. This is often done by other prisoners who have been asked by the officials to carry out such an assignment and report back to them on the details of the conversation. In this and other ways the few rights prisoners do enjoy are infringed upon, if not totally disregarded.

The situation with respect to prison diet is very clear. There is little question that the fare does not meet the basic nutritional needs of the inmates. The prevailing view is that it is not necessary to be concerned

in any way about the living conditions and health of prisoners. Quite frankly, it appears as if the authorities have forgotten that the prisoners are, indeed, human beings who have needs with respect to food and health that do not differ in any considerable degree to those of the authorities themselves. Those of us on the outside, except, perhaps, the really poor among us, would turn away at the sight of the food served in prisons. Certainly, we would not let any of it touch our lips. For example, there is often rice gruel with salted fish that smells as though it is spoiled. If meat curry is served, it is rather difficult to locate the meat. There is plenty of diluted curry sauce however. When one does manage to find a piece of meat, it is difficult to believe the tough substance one is chewing is really meat. Perhaps that's why the prisoners call it "rubber tire" curry. Dogs whose owners treat them well certainly eat meat that is much better than that fed to the prisoners. For these reasons, then, the food that is brought by visitors becomes an important element in the diet of the prisoners. But even in this respect, there are many restrictions governing what can and can not be brought in. Those restrictions seem to have little justification except to add to the suffering of the prisoners. For example, at the ~~Wangpa's~~ ~~Watan~~ ~~Prison~~ ~~Center~~ (Lad Yao), the restrictions include bananas, fish sauce, chili peppers, sugar, sticky rice, stuffed foods and a host of other items. At the Special Prison of Bangkok the restrictions are similar. On many occasions I have seen a truck load of vegetables being brought into the prisons. Each time these trucks are carrying the same Kwantung greens so withered and stale one might think they were to be boiled and feed to some pigs. Squash is another prison staple. Such foods do little for the health of the inmates. With such a diet and the unsanitary living conditions which prevail, prisoners whose resistance is low often get sick and develop skin diseases. The situation is particularly severe for women who are caring for their young in the jails. In general women inmates have a particularly difficult time fending for themselves in the jails. With a child under their care the situation becomes even worse. There is little chance these children will receive the foods needed to supplement the milk they get from their mothers and even canned milk is often refused entry. Again, those children who have not yet built up natural immunities to disease have an extremely difficult time. Moreover, when a child gets sick, it is not possible to take it to the prison doctor if the guards do not feel the disease is very serious. How these guards can be allowed to make such decisions is difficult to understand? It is not difficult to understand, however, how a mother, even if she may be a prisoner, would feel in a situation like this with no one to turn to for help.

The close control over prisoners in the jails themselves is maintained when they are taken to court. Accompanied by armed guards, the prisoners are handcuffed and bound in shackles so heavy they have difficulty walking. A vicious animal would be treated no worse, but these are people who have not yet been found guilty of any crime.

Control extends also to the realm of ideas. There are regulations which prevent prisoners from receiving daily newspapers and listening to radio broadcasts. Some prisons allow no reading matter whatsoever except, on occasion, textbooks which may be permitted after special consideration.

The treatment of prisoners which is described above represents serious physical and spiritual deprivation. For a prisoner the prospects are only physical and spiritual deterioration.

The treatment of prisoners described above during the long years of their detention, either during their frequently postponed trials, or whilst waiting for the result of their appeal, or on conviction, quite

naturally leads to physical deterioration, and moral depression. Often the visits from outsiders provide them with their only ray of hope during the long years of their incarceration.

2) Endangering Society - The Use of Decree 22 of NARC By the Governor of NongKhai

Many people are not aware that after the overthrow of the Thanin Government on Oct. 20th 1977, all the decrees of NARC remained in force, including decree 22, which allowed people to be arrested as "endangering society" without specific charges, to be detained for 30 days in the first instance, and then for 60 days renewable /^{ad} infinitum in four special "vocational training centres" (Ayudhya, Korat, Songkhla, and Philsanalok). Those arrested theoretically have no legal rights, and are normally in no way involved in the considerations for their release. Though the majority of the 8,000 people who have been arrested under decree 22 have not been arrested for political reasons, their arrest and detention still involves a gross infringement of their basic human rights.

After the original burst of arrests in October-December 1976, in most parts of the country only a few people (of the order of 150 people per month) have been arrested under this charge, and as releases have been taking place every sixty days, the numbers still in detention have fallen to less than 1000 people. (Officially 532 only)

There is one exception however to this general pattern, and that is in Nong Khai (in the North East of the country on the Laotian border), where the provincial governor has been using decree 22 of NARC almost as a personal toy, which allows him to arrest whoever he wants to, whenever he wants to. He finds it the most convenient way of dealing with people he does not like, as, with decree 22 he does not have to bother about, finding any evidence. In our next report (May-June 1978) we intend to have an in-depth study of the Governor of Nong Khai's misuse of decree 22, and perhaps will try to use the evidence collected in a campaign to annul this decree. However we will provide our readers with some examples of the extent to which the governor has been using (or misusing) decree 22 to arrest whoever he wants to as "endangering society":-

- Nov. 1977 He personally led a midnight raiding party of 700 police, village scouts, and village defence volunteers to the largest refugee camp for Laotians in Thailand, and arrested 32 refugees as "endangering society". Two weeks later he led the same group on a midnight raid on two villages and arrested a further 8 people on the same charge.

- March 20th 1978 There was a protest of villages, who were being forced to leave their village. The governor ordered the arrest of 44 of the protesting villagers as "endangering society"

- April 16th 1978 During the Songkran (Thai New Year) festivities the governor ordered the arrest of 161 villagers who were playing cards, as "endangering society".

- April 22nd 1978 The governor ordered the arrest of 22 people as "endangering society" (including an Internal Security Operations Command official, Village Defence Volunteers, and refugees) as they were suspected of robbing a Laotian refugee.

The above cases do not include all arrests that have taken place in Nong Khai under decree 22 over the last few months, but only these cases where large groups of people have been arrested at one time, and had charges of endangering society slapped on them, as this allows their indefinite detention without the need for evidence. At the very least it allows people to be detained for 30 days, as opposed to the normal 7 days, before charges are officially placed.

Fortunately the power of the governor is being challenged by four people, arrested for a second time under decree 22. Details are included in the first part of the report.

3) Arrests and Releases

Releases: Endangering Society Charges

On May 5th, 1976, Thawee Chusap, Director General of the Corrections Department said that there were 532 endangering society charged detainees still held, but he did not know how many would be released, except for 15 out of the 22 in Bangkok. (which would be the ninth release.) In addition to those 532 there are probably another 300 being detained in police stations all over the country.

However, it seems that the official statistics about endangering society prisoners are always unreliable. On the 8th release on March 7th, 1978 the Corrections Department declared that after the release there were 699 still in detention. However, it seems very unusual that over 160 endangering society prisoners have been "secretly released". (For usually, in Thailand, people are secretly arrested and publicly released). Where these people are or whether the Corrections Department has underestimated the number of the prisoners, we do not know exactly.

Arrests:

3/3/78 A joint military and Border Patrol Police unit launched a raid on "Kao Soon", capturing two relatives of a notorious communist leader along with an assortment of weapons. Captured were Darb and Somboon Chongchit who, officials said, were close relatives of Chit Chongchit who was on the government's "most wanted" list.

20/3/78 Mr. Tawee Yindipot (37), a taxi driver, was arrested in Bangkok for distributing leaflets attacking government and charged with causing riot in the country and with endangering society. He is now detained at the Central Prison of Ayudhya Province.

20/3/78 44 villagers of Ban Kokwan, Central District, Nongkhai were arrested for trespassing and endangering society charges. Before the arrest, 300 villagers had petitioned to the Governor of Nongkhai Mr. Chamnan Potchna for the ownership of 1,077 Rai land, where the villagers had lived for over 5 years. The governor refused, saying that the land was a reserved forest. There followed some argument and finally the governor ordered the arrest of the villagers.

22/3/78 4 communist suspects were arrested in Bangkok. Policemen first arrested two persons for producing false 5 baht coins, and on searching one of the suspect's home, they found a lot of "communist books and documents" and so arrested another four persons staying there. The four persons, identified as Miss. Srisamorn "uenboonwong, Mr. Sutep Chotampai, Mr. Pa-yao Apaiwong and Mr. Montri Unrat, were charged with communist offences and at present are detained at Bangkok Temporary Prison.

One of the detainees, Miss. Srisamorn, a graduate teacher, told us that while she was detained at Bang-yi-ruee police station, a policeman took her to a hotel and told her that if she slept with him, he would help her with the case. But at the hotel, he saw a police officer who was his own boss, so he drove her back to the jail.

4/4/78 Talok Jator, aged 20, was arrested in Central District of Yala Province as a communist sympathiser.

7/4/78 Tho Tran Van, a Vietnamese and a salesman for Universal Electric Company, was arrested in Central District of Khankaen Province for giving supplies to communist guerrillas operating in Udom, Loci and Khonkaen. During the interrogation Tho Tran Van admitted that he had provided supplies, mainly food and medicine, to the communists three times a week for two consecutive years without being caught.

7/4/78 Sa Dikayan, a villager of Ban Pasak was arrested in Tha Bao District of Nongkhai for possession of illegal firearms. His accomplice, Bundit Mekchai, escaped before police raided Sa's house. Police said they uncovered six US. - made carbines and ammunition in the suspect's house. They believed the arms were smuggled in from Laos.

Police charged Sa with smuggling arms to aid communist insurgents in the Northeast.

11/4/78 Officials reports disclosed that 574 Buddhist and 9 Muslims officials and soldiers were killed in communist suppression activities during last year (1977)

12/4/78 Prime Minister Kriengsak Chamanan invoked the power invested in him by Article 27 of the interim Constitution for the first time to summarily sentence three persons to five-year's imprisonment each, after finding them guilty of log poaching. The Prime Minister also ordered the confiscation of 19,239 pieces of lumber and some 13 items of equipment used in wood processing. PM. Kriengsak announced that the three, identified as Mr. Prachak Ponglekhanon, Mr. Kovit Sarcemitr and Mr. Beklee Sae-ung, had jointly operated a saw mill at Tambon Tha Sailuad in Mae Sot District of Tak Province and were arrested on February 20th, 1978 with 19,239 pieces of processed wood.

16/4/78 161 card players were arrested for endangering society at Tambon Parkard, Phon Pidai District, Nongkhai.

15 (16)/4/78 Home Homsombat, aged 26, a communist insurgent was arrested in Bungkarn District in Nongkhai Province. Home was originally from Ban Nongcharn in Tambon Chompooporn which is a communist infested area. He had joined the communist guerrillas on Pu Sing mountain last year.

21/4/78 Suban Hathiyu, aged 23, was arrested in Central District of Nakornsrihammarat Province with communist documents. He is originally from Chawang District of the same province.

21/4/78 Som Faisong (40), a communist insurgent, give himself up to Bung Kau District of Nongkhai.

23/4/78 ISOC officials, VDV's, laotian and others (22 in all) were arrested for endangering society for robbing a refugee.

24/4/78 10 Vietnamese refugees fleeing from Vietnamese refugee camps in the N.E. to work in Konkhaen Province were arrested. One of them, Mrs. Wee Famati (45) had fled from the camp in Sakol Nakorn, and the other nine were from the camp in Udorn. They were fined of 500 baht and were all sent back to the camps.

Police had expected to arrest more people, but before the arrest, a woman riding a motorcycle, had gone through the town to tell the fleeing refugees about the arrest. Therefore most of the fleeing refugees had hid themselves before the police came.

24/4/78 An unidentified insurgent was arrested in Ban Huay Mak Bia, Ban Muang District in Sakol Nakorn a after 30 minute clash.

25/4/78 Official reports disclosed that during the last 10 months 321 communists were arrested and 485 surrendered.

3) Report from Up-Country

1) Report from the South

a) The condition of political prisoners detained in the south Thailand

Arrests of people suspected of being communists or of supporting the communists in the jungle sometimes take place without any apparent evidence although, it should be added, the number of arrests disappearance and incidents of torture appear to have reduced over recent months, although these still take place in some areas

Generally, the police at first hold suspects on two charges

- being a communist and
- endangering society (decree 22 of NARC)

The maximum punishment on the first charge is imprisonment for life or execution, whilst the second allows people to be detained indefinitely.

Detainees are not investigated before being accused and therefore the cause of arrest may simply be for personal reasons, such as revenge

Police have the right to hold detainees on the communist charge for 30 days on the authority of investigating officials and can also request the Director General of Police to allow them permission to hold detainees for a further 180 days. The investigating officials can then make further requests to the military court to hold the detainees for three further periods each of 90 days.

This means that the detainee may be held at the police station under investigation for 210 days and imprisoned at the Nakorn Srithammarat Maximum Security Prison (in the South there is only a military court in Nakorn Sri Thammarat) for 270 days making a total of 480 days. Most detainees are freed with all charges being dropped after being held for 480 days because of insufficient evidence. It seems quite wrong that people can be held in Jail for 480 days without there being only real evidence.

b) The situation in the Jail at Na-San Police Station

Both political and common prisoners are held in the same cell, which is 9/6 metres with a bathroom and toilet. The number of prisoners changes, sometimes there are as many as 24, sometimes as few as 19 since prisoners held on criminal charges are either bailed out or sent to court within 7 days

Only necessities are allowed in the cell; food given by relatives is not allowed.

Food There are two meals a day, breakfast and dinner. The prisoner receives 3 baht (15 cents) for each meal. This is not sufficient so prisoners are allowed to buy their own food. However, prisoners without money have to survive on the two meals at 3 baht each

Visiting Visiting times are 8.00-9.00 in the morning and 4.00-5.00 in the afternoon. Visitors have to wait in front of the police station and stand about 8-9 metres from the cells

During visiting time the visitors and their prisoners have to shout to each other since they are 8-9 metres apart, while everyone else is doing the same. The police always annoy or threaten those who come to visit the political prisoners in order to make them afraid so that they won't come again. Thus most political prisoners rarely have visitors.

c) Threats against prisoners while they are in the police station

New prisoners are threatened by those already in custody to give them any money or valuables they have on them. If the new prisoner doesn't hand these over he is beaten up: the police don't intervene while this is occurring.

When Chaiwat Yaowapongsiri was arrested the police told a prisoner who was being held for as endangering society to steal Chaiwat's money because they wanted to intimidate him. However, the prisoner refused to do this and instead came to Chaiwat and told him what he had been asked to do.

Sometimes, if for some reason the police are not satisfied with a particular prisoner, they will take him out of the cell and beat him up. This occurs to prisoners held on either political or criminal charges

d) The general situation in Nakorn Sri Thammaraj Maximum Security prison

The prison is crowded and political prisoners are held in the same cells as ^{those} detained on criminal charges. Conditions in the prison are bad. Water is not sufficient and is dirty. A prisoner is only allowed to wash for three minutes each day. Although in the jail (unlike at the police station) there is sufficient food (8 baht eq. 40 cents per day) it is of poor quality, since the good food is taken by the guards or by powerful prisoners.

Medical assistance is poor. There is only one nurse who is not interested in the prisoners

Because the prison is so crowded the prisoners have to sleep together, with scarcely enough space to turn over. There is a joke in the prison that when you go to the toilet in the night your sleeping place has disappeared by the time you come back.

Prisoners are always being threatened or annoyed by guards and the more powerful prisoners, and sometimes prisoners are punished by being whipped.

Most prisons in Thailand are like this which only increases the pressure on those who are arrested, even though they may be innocent.

e) Some details on people being held in Ban Na-Sarn Police Station Banleng Ancharoen (35 years old)

Arrested on 17 May, 1977 at Muai-Mud market, Amphur Na-Sarn, Surathani Province. He was in possession of medicine and was accused of:

- Bringing medicine into a controlled area without permission
- Being a communist
- Endangering society

After being detained at Ban Na-Sarn Police Station for 20 days, he was sent to the maximum security prison in Nakornsrithammarat, where he was tried in the military court, and was sentenced to 4 months.

After completing this 4 months sentence, he was returned to Ban Na-Sarn Police Station where he has been held on the second charge, of being a communist, since 20 September, 1977. He understands that he will be held at Ban Na-Sarn for the full 210 days, until April 1978, when he will then be imprisoned at Nakornsrithammarat maximum security prison for another 270 days.

Prasit Boonraksa (23 years old)

Arrested on 21 October, 1977 accused of:

- Being a communist
- Attempting to kill government officials
- Endangering society

Prasit and two friends saw soldiers enter Ban Knan-mang as a part of a suppression campaign, and so they ran away. The soldiers fired at them and Prasit was hit. His two friends escaped. The soldiers found one 8 mm bullet in him.

He will be held at Ban Na-Sarn Police Station for 120 days, until 13 May, 1978 when he will be sent to Nakornsri Thammaraj maximum security prison.

f) Torture and disappearance after arrest

Police and soldiers fighting against guerrillas may be extremely angry because their friends have been injured or killed in the fighting. They may thus seek revenge on those whom they capture either by beating them up, or by torturing or killing them.

Senior district officials sympathize with the policemen and soldiers, but the beating up, torturing, or killing of prisoners only occurs in some areas, such as in Amphur Phipoon where the amphur head and his assistant have a policy of using violence. They have tortured and killed prisoners, for example they killed three Buddhist monks in 1977, and a villager named Nai Dam. A soldier of the Eighth Coordinating Centre said that Nai Dam, a villager from Amphur Phipoon, came out of the jungle by himself to surrender to government officials, and was killed after one month. This is definitely against government policy which encourages communists to surrender, and thus the case is now being investigated by officials. The result of this investigation are not yet available.

When the army tells villagers that they must leave a certain area because of military operations, some villagers refuse to leave because their livelihood depends on the working in the area, for example by rubber tapping, or by working in mines. As a result if they are found by the soldiers they are accused of being communists, and may be killed unless they can escape.

The soldiers fighting against the guerrillas don't understand the language, culture or traditions in the villages in southern Thailand, since they come from the central and other parts of the country where the language, culture and traditions are different. When the villagers can't answer the soldiers' questions, or answer them in their own language, they are threatened. Sometimes, after capture, villagers are simply killed. A soldier stated that at the beginning of 1977 soldiers based in Petchaburi in the central part of Thailand were sent to carry out operations in Amphur Na-Sarn and Amphur Vieng-sa in Surrattani Province. They killed a large number of villagers before being sent back to Petchaburi where the Commander of the Fourth Army heard what was happening.

From official statistics, however, the ratio of deaths from the fighting appears to be one guerrilla for every two soldiers and three villagers. This means that it is the villagers who are suffering most as a consequence of the fighting, more than the soldiers, and much more than the communists who are killed at melting into the jungle.

2. Report from the North-East

Korat: Situation of Thais of Vietnamese Origin at Ladbuakau Detention Centre

At the present time there are 56 detainees in Ladbuakau, detention centre in Korat amongst who are 34 men and 22 women (one of whom is pregnant). There are also 7-8 children following their parents to be detained in the center. Mr. Suttipong Dang-wan, arrested over the Oct. 6th incident at Thammasat University was bailed out on April 25th. (in spite of the fact that his name had been on the release list).

On April 12th, 1978, two persons were sent to the detention center, one of whom was a 17 year-old girl named "Nang". Nang is a pretty girl, though absent-minded and very quiet. Before being arrested and sent to Lad Buakau, she had once been arrested because she had gone out of her restricted area of residence without permission. Being very poor, she and her family could not afford the fine (US \$ 25) and consequently she was detained at the immigration center at Nakorn Panom Province. One day a group of card-players were arrested and sent to the center; one man in the group learnt about her problem and offered to pay the fine. Finally, Nang's fine was paid by that man, who sold her to a brothel. Since then she became absent-minded. She also contacted syphilis. She was arrested again from the brothel and was sent to Lad Buakau Detention Centre. The only property she had was the clothes she was wearing and 10 baht.

At Lad Buakau she has been suffering from Syphilis. She is so weak that she cannot carry any heavy thing because it hurts her bones. Other detainees have to cook for her and take care of her. They have also donated 300 baht and asked the official to buy injections for her, because it takes such a long time before she can get permission to be cured in the hospital, as the officials have to ask for a permission from the authorities in Bangkok before allowing any detainees to be hospitalized. (except for some special urgent cases that the commander of the detention center may give the permission).

Korat: Arrest of 6 people from a printing house

We have been informed during our visit to Korat that 6 people were arrested two months ago from a printing house for printing the book "Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung". The 6 people were Mr. Van, the owner of the publishing house, and his wife, and four other type compositors. At present the 6 are still detained at the police station of Nakornraj-srima (Korat) Province.

4) Human Rights and Workers:
The Situation After Oct. 20th, 1977

1. The General Situation

Six months after the Oct 20th coup there has been some improvement in the situation of labourers and labour unions. For example, most of the workers who were arrested as "endangering society" were released; the new government allowed new labour unions to be registered and allowed labour unions to assemble and meet more freely; labour unions were permitted to form employees councils; and it was finally approved that the state enterprise workers would come under the same law as the private enterprise workers. However most of the released workers could not find any job because their names were on the "black-lists" distributed amongst employers; and meetings of labour unions were still being observed by police and Labour Department officials who had the right to stop the meeting if they were considered "political" or other prohibited subjects were being discussed.

Moreover the Labour ^{Department} still had the right to dismiss labour leaders, and turn down requests for the formation of new organizations if they felt these were involved in "politics". Also labour union leaders and workers were still threatened, harrassed, attempted to be killed, or killed. Finally, the basic right to strike is still prohibited under martial law.

2. The new government policies and the role of the Labour Department

In spite of emphasising the importance of labour unions, the revolutionary committee and the new government policies on labour has not changed very much. Prime Minister Kriengsak Chamanand, in receiving congratulations from all professionals after being appointed as PM, stated that "labour unions are necessary and labourers have an important part to play in promoting a democratic system". He continued to say that he didn't see why labour unions should not be allowed to be set up. At the same time however, he warned that he did not mean to encourage labour unions to do the wrong things and asked all labourers to cooperate for the sake of the country. He also stated his government's labour policy "was to promote understanding and harmony among employers and employees in both private and public enterprises. The government also aimed at improving the living standards of working people, "to upgrade the workers' education and technical skills and to maintain justice in matters relating to employee employer relations.

These beautiful statements are in contradiction with the way he as PM. and Minister of Interior, has dealt with all the labour problems that occurred in March this year. He did not show his strong feelings and sincerity for the workers when they asked for an increase in the minimum wages when the cost of living rose rapidly because of an increase in the taxes on 141 kinds of imported goods (including petrol) at the beginning of March. "It's difficult to be just everyone; the raising of taxes affected the poor very little, if they can endure, they should." he said shortly after the taxes were raised.

In dealing with the railway mechanics, drivers, and maintenance workers' problems, he was more gentle than when he dealt with provincial waterworks employees and the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly employees. He told these workers to "obey the law" and not to force or threaten" but to help in building the country's unity and progress. Although it is said that these state enterprise workers' problems had some political causes and motivations, we could hardly say that PM. Kriengsak proved that he really wanted to solve the labour problems rather than merely to make use of labour as a part of his power base. Since the country is still under Martial law i.e. workers basic rights to strike and to hold meeting disallowed, workers leaders are still being detained and many murderers of workers are ^{still} not detained or prosecuted.

Being aware of the potential power of the workers, one of his projects to gain more popularity among the workers was his setting up of the "Foundation for Thai Workers" to promote the education, bargaining, welfare, and occupations of workers and to be a middle force between employers and employees. However most of the committee members are militarymen and right wing labour leaders e.g. Thanong Laovanich and Sanan Vongsuthee, and this foundation has not yet done anything constructive in solving the labour conflicts.

As Minister of Interior, PM. Kriengsak called Vichit Seengthong the former Deputy Director General of Labour Department to be Director of the department in November 1977. He was very strict in carrying out his duties. For example he ordered the dismissal of two railway labour union leaders from their posts because they were involved in "politics" when they asked for Amnesty for "Thammasat 18" and all other political prisoners.

He turned down the first request for establishing the National Labour Council led by Paisal Thawatchainand because one of the objectives was to "promote democracy" thus involving "politics". Although the labour leaders asked several times for freedom of assembly to meet without being continuously observed by police and departmental officials, they did not get an answer. He also warned the workers recently that they would be liable to be arrested as "endangering society" if they dared to go on strike.

In April, he was strongly attacked by Paisal Thawatchainand on the grounds that he caused confusion about the place for a meeting which the National Labour Council (NCL) had called.

All in all Vichit has not been helping labourers, or labour unions solve their problems, but has frequently created more difficulties than already exist.

As for the role of ^{the} Labour Relations Committee, this committee seems to be more concerned with statistics than action and is satisfied with its figures of a reduction in the number of disputes. The committee tries to compromise in the interest of employers and thus the employees feel that it is not the impartial organisation it should be.

The tripartite board for labour development came into existence at the end of March (and held its first meeting in the middle of April) Former Police Chief Gen. Prasert Ruchirawongse was elected as chairman and the former chief of the Labour Department Tien Atchakul as deputy chairman.

This board is heavily biased towards employers since it only has five representatives from the workers, and 15 more concerned with the interests of the employers (5 from employers and 10 from government).

Another organization which is concerned with the labour movement is ISOC. This organization has tried to brainwash everyone, including the workers and keeps a close watch on progressive and leftist labour leaders.

In conclusion government policy does not help much in solving the labour problems or improve the human rights of workers, Paisal Thawatchainand said recently that the workers' situation during the Thanin's government was like that of a man who is hanging whilst with the present government the hangman has put a chair under his feet of the person being hanged.

It is in fact very difficult for Kriengsak to be really just with the workers, because his own power is based on various military groups, most of whom have business interests. Thus he cannot offend the big capitalists and employers. On the other hand he tries to give the impression that he is helping the labourers and labour unions, without giving them any real freedom to struggle themselves for their rights (as he has the power of martial law behind him as well as decree 22 of NARC). Basically he is trying to be recognised as the paternalistic patron of labour, whilst at the same time protecting the interests of the elite.

3) Employers' role and Policies

Most of the employers want "profit", so they look for influential group such as military, police and politicians to protect their interests, causing the violation of the basic rights of workers. Perhaps the biggest recent threat to employers was when the workers asked for an increase in the minimum wage from 28 to 45 or 50 baht. Employers, military men, politicians and blackleg workers claimed in union that the increase of minimum wage would cause inflation, destroy the "investment atmosphere", loose foreign exchange etc,

However even the present minimum wage is not payed. Damrong Sunthornsaratoon, Chairman of the wage Committee said that over 50% of the employers in Bangkok did not pay the minimum wage. Most of the textile factory's employers regard new workers as inexperienced, so that they can pay less than the minimum wage.

Employers, even those in state enterprise still threaten or dismiss workers who try to fight for their rights especially the union leaders. For example in March, 3, workers of Vivat Industry (which produces "Tip" vegetarian oil) were dismissed, accused of "behaving improperly". The real reasons was that they tried to ask for a cost of living allowance according to the law and permission to establish a labour union.

Another way employers use to destroy the unions is to buy or bribe the labour leaders to work for the employers' and the attack the other union leaders.

In addition any unionist who is arrested and released, cannot find a job because of the "black-lists!"

In order to gain more profit sometimes the employers transfer the workers from a skilled job sector to an unskilled one so that their wages can be reduced, or old workers are fired and new lower paid workers recruited. This happened in Phromphan Wood Industry in Aduddhaya. Another tactic used is for the employers to lay off as many workers as possible so that the workers have to reapply for the work, and their wages start at the bottom of the scale. This tactic has been used mostly in textile factories.

Workers' Rights Situation:

The first and important right of man is the rights to live. Talking about this right amongst the workers, it is suprising to discover that their right to live is not their own. For example in most of Textile Factories workers work in a loud noise with dust heat and poison chemicals all around. The workers are often killed or injured accidentally. Recently in February, 23 workers died and another 23 seriously injured in an explosion of a boiler in a Wood Factory. (According to Labour Department figures the number of injured workers increased by 8.3% and of killed workers increased by 29.5% during the last year).

As for the labour court, considering workers' representatives (both right wing) - Sanan Wongsuthi and Thanong Laovanich - and two employers' representatives: Ob Vasurat and the workers could not expect much of it.

At present, the labour unions face a serious problem of a splits. According to the order of the National Administrative Reform Council No. 46, at least 15 labour unions can form a labour council, thus apart from the National Labour Council which consist of 23 labour unions (NCL) under the leading Paisal Thawatchainand, there is another registered labour council named the Council of Labour Unions of Thailand (CLUT) under Thanong Laovanich. Another labour council which is not yet registered is the NCTL lead by Sanan Vongsuthee. The two latter labour councils sometimes cooperate with each other to attack the NLC over issues such as the celebration of the National Labour Day - May Day - and the increase of minimum wage proposed by the NLC.

This fighting amongst unions makes it rather hard to improve the workers' condition, besides the CLUT and NCLT usually try to obstruct any improvement in the workers' human rights as well, since these two councils have close connections with influential employers, thus they take the employers' side rather than those of the workers.

Unless unjust laws can be changed, employers forced to keep to new better laws, and workers given the right to strike and demonstrate when they feel their rights threatened, there can be no real justice for workers. It is thus essential that the workers organise and educate themselves so that they knew what their rights are, and how they should struggle for them.

5) Academic Freedom

Ramkamhaeng University

On March 30th, 1978, leaflets produced by students from 7 faculties of Ramkamhaeng University were distributed all over the campus. The leaflets protested against the University's proclamation dated March 25th, 1978 which allowed student representatives to take part in the drafting of the student union regulations. According to the leaflet, these regulations did not give the student representatives the right to oppose or change anything during the drafting, and their function was merely to give some opinion to the university committees. The students felt that this lack of any real power or responsibility was very unfair for them because the union regulations would affect the students directly.

Also, the students objected to the date set for the election of student representatives by the university, as the election day (April 5th) was during the summer vacation, therefore very few students would know about it. Moreover, the university authority fixed the date with a very short notice, consequently, it seemed that very few students would come to vote.

On April 4th, 1978, one day before the election, Mr. Kantorn Pantulap, rector of Ramkamhaeng University made a speech to the students in the university hall on the matter. He insisted that the students would certainly gain their rights, but not now. One student representative also made a speech and said that the university was not sincere about the student elections, and that it was intentionally violating academic freedom.

However, the chairman tried to close the meeting to stop the argument. Therefore, the students wached-out and gathered outside the hall. They made speeches/^{and} also performed a play satirizing the university administrators. There was also a music show.

The election on the next day turned out as anticipated by the students. There was an election only in the Faculty of Law. In other faculties there were not even enough candidates.

PART THREE
ACTIVITIES OF CGRS AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS

1) Activities of CGRS

In the past two months, CGRS/^{was} still confronted with at least two main problems occurring from outside the group. One was the problem of the arrest of two of our colleagues, Chaiwat and Sukhon, and the other was the problem of the legal registration of the group as an association. On this latter point there has been a strong indication that CGRS. would not be allowed to be registered as an association. However, these outside problems could not shatter the strength inside the group. On the contrary, they have proven to us the strength and unity of both the full-time workers and the committee members; since nobody was scared or withdrew. Furthermore, in such a time of danger, CGRS has gained 3 more full-time workers, so that the members have increased from 7 to 10.

Although during the past two months CGRS had to spend much time and effort in dealing with the problems confronting it, it still continued with all the basic regular activities such as visiting, helping prisoners and their families, listening to trials and so on. Also it has taken on some other special human rights activities, including organising a non-violent training programme, publishing a book on the Omnoi (Supap) case, supporting the establishment of cooperative in a labour union, supporting monks who are producing a journal directed at rural monks, and co-operating with the Amnesty International on its May campaign on Thailand.

A. Visiting, Helping Prisoners and their Families in Bangkok

CGRS has continued to visit political detainees in Bangkok at least once a week at every prison. The detainees we visited regularly are

1. The October 6th detainees at Bangkwang Central Prison, Bangkhen Temporary Prison and the Women's Detention Centre (Lad-Yao).
2. Mr. Udom Pkakrong and his friends (total of eleven persons) at the Special Prison of Bangkok.
3. The labour leader, Supap Pasa-ong and his friends (total of seven persons) at Klong Prem Central Prison (Lad-Yao).
4. The farmer, Mr. Somboon and his worker brother Mr. Vichai Banlusilp at Bangkhen Temporary Prison.
5. The labourer and member of the Socialist Party of Thailand, Mr. Surin Suanpan at the Special Prison of Bangkok.
6. The Thai American base guards Mr. Jai Noo-Yam and Mr. Vichai Chaemniyom at the Special Prison of Bangkok.
7. The three prisoners from Surin province sentenced to death for communist activities, Mr. Tongchan Srinual and Mr. Sao Sao-kaew at Bangkwang Central Prison and Mrs. Boonrurn Sri-udom at Women's Detention Centre (Lad-Yao).

8. The teacher newly arrested in Bangkok under communist charges, Miss. Srisamorn Suebboonwong at Bangkhen Temporary Prison.

In the visits CGRS has concentrated more on those prisoners who usually get very few visitors or none at all, like the prisoners sentenced to death from Surin Province and the Udom Pka-krong group. In part three of the last report, it was reported that the daughter of Boonrurn Sri-udom, who was a prisoner among the Surin province group, was ill and CGRS had tried in vain to bring the instant milk for her, both through normal visits and by post. Now Boonrurn has decided to send her daughter out of the prison, and for the time being the child is being taken care of by Boonrurn's mother. Now that her baby is away, Boonrurn had to move to another building which is much more restricted. Her husband, Mr. Tongchan

Srinual, who is detained in another prison, is still suffering from the tuberculosis.

Although these sentenced to death prisoners are appealing to the Appeal Court, they are hopeless and worried. One of the reasons for this also results from the fact that they have not seen their lawyer or even got any letter from him, since they paid him his fees. CGRS have tried to change the lawyer for them, but finally have been informed that this is not allowed until the Appeal Court makes a judgement, and the case goes to the Supreme Court.

Visiting in the provinces

On a less regular basis CGRS have visited political prisoners up-country particularly in the North-East of the country. For example, in the North-East Mr. Wirat Truen and other Vietnamese at Lad Bua Kaw Prison in Nakornrajsrima Province have been visited, Mr. Kasem Wongchanon and friends (arrested under endangering society charges) at Nongkhai Province, etc. In the south CGRS has momentarily stopped visiting the prisoners; however, it still gets in touch with the prisoners' relatives and the CGRS net-work there, and it was in such a way that essential information can still be obtained. At present some new tactics which are being planned would enable the work in the South to be continued during the next few months.

B. Listening to Trials

CGRS keep listening and noting down the proceedings of the trials of the following people:

1. October 6th detainees (Bangkok 18 and Boonchart Sathienthammani).
2. Udom Pka-krong and his friends.
3. Supap Pasa-ong and his friends.
4. Somboon and Vichai Banlusilp.
5. Nikom Pridakul.
6. Surin Suanpan.
7. Pimpan Puwapan.

As for some cases up-country, CGRS workers cannot attend the trials regularly; however, they kept following the cases by attending the trials from time to time, asking about the progress from the people themselves or from their lawyers. Examples of such cases are those of:-

1. Mr. Bamrung Charan-yanon
2. Mrs. Pimpan Puwapan
3. Mr. Kasem Wongchanon and friends (appeal for Habeas Corpus)

Besides listening and noting down the proceedings of the trial, CGRS also provides prisoners with legal aid, for example, for those who have no lawyer, a lawyer will be found for them, as in the case of Mr. Banlom Kaewsuan at Nakornsrithammarat province.

C. Other Human Rights Activities of CGRS.

Labour: In the past two months, two of CGRS full-time workers were concentrating on the problems facing a Textile labour union in the suburb of Bangkok. As a part of this effort CGRS has supported the establishment of a cooperative in the labour union with the hope that this cooperative will build up the unity and strength in the labour union and that it will help the labour union gain more popularity amongst the workers in the factory.

Regarding the education of workers, CGRS is publishing a book about the struggle of the workers at Omnoi. This struggle led to the arrest of Supap Pasa-ong and six other student and labour leaders in March 1976. The book, entitled "Om-noi Workers and Human Rights Problems", is designed, both in its content and format, for the workers. The book will appear on

the market on May. The purpose of this book is not only to educate the workers, but also to conscientize the people about the workers' human rights problems and about the Omnoi case. Any foreign friend who would like to purchase copies of this book, or sponsor its distribution to workers (10 baht a copy) should contact CGRS.

Non-violent Training: During the past four months, one full-time worker from CGRS has been working with two young people from ^{the} Ahimsa group in the preparation of a Non-violent Training Programme which is planned to take place on May 15-28, 1978 in Choburi Province. Forty-two activists will be attending the training, amongst whom are representatives from various religious activist groups, university and college activist groups, some full-time workers and volunteers from CGRS, local teachers and local activists and others. The last two days of the training will be a seminar on "Non-violence in Thailand", at which thirty more people, including university professors, religion leaders, writers, journalists, labour union leaders etc, will be attending.

It is hoped that this training will help promote non-violent action and strengthen the non-violent movement throughout Thailand, and to supply those who are already activists with details of the tactics and practise of non-violence.

Amnesty International Campaign on Thailand:

Though there is no official link between Amnesty International and CGRS, because of shared objectives, there has always been the closest possible cooperation between the two organisations on matters involving the Thai situation.

Thus when Amnesty International decided to have an international campaign to try to improve human rights in Thailand it was obvious that they would ask for suggestions about the topics and strategies for the campaign from CGRS. Five major campaign issues were suggested by CGRS as follows:-

- Victims of the Oct. 6th Coup.
- Misuse of Government Power.
- Misuse of the Communist Suppression Act.
- Political Trials. A Process of Delay and Injustice.
- Special Detention Camps.

For each of these five issues background information was provided, as well as suggestions as to what improvements the campaign should be demanding for each of these main issues.

For example on the fourth issue - "Political Trials" we suggested that the campaign should concentrate on the following points:-

- A speeding up of all political trials so that there are hearings at least once a week.
- Where processes seem likely to be long drawn out, an automatic granting of bail.
- Provision of adequate compensation of court appointed lawyers, particularly in up-country areas.

In this campaign we consider one point to be extremely important, and that is that people in Thailand are kept informed of the international initiatives that are taking place, so that suitable information can be leaked to the press here, and public opinion effected by the international concern. We therefore hope that our overseas friends will inform CGRS (or any other groups in Thailand) of the initiatives that they are taking, so that these can be used in Thailand to further the main objectives of the campaign - the improvement of the Human Rights situation throughout the country. If letters and telegrams are only sent to government

leaders, these can be quietly filed away and forgotten, but if they can be publicised here they are less easily forgotten.

2) Other Human Rights Groups

During the past two months there has been increasing cooperation between all groups involved in promoting human rights. For example Thailand sent a delegation to the Asian Human Rights Seminar in Hong Kong (April 23rd to 30th) made up of two full time workers of CGRS, one of the Oct 6th defence lawyers, and two members of the human rights research group. In addition CGRS has contracted some of the Oct 6th defence lawyers as their legal consultants, and has also helped arrange the lecture tour of Mr. Thongbai Thongpao. It is hoped that this cooperation between the different groups will continue to become increasingly close in future.

October 6th Defence Lawyers Group

This group of 44 lawyers, headed by Thongbai Thongpao (who himself was a political prisoner for 7 years, from 1958-1965) is becoming increasingly open to its activities. Thongbai himself will, as a part of the Amnesty Campaign, (at the initiative of overseas Thais not Amnesty) go on a lecture tour from 8th May to 15th June, and speak about the October 6th trial and other human rights issues. On this tour he will go to Tokyo, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Washington, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. Funding and detailed arrangements for his trip are being made by concerned Thais living abroad.

In addition the lawyer group is publishing a book on the October 6th case, dedicated "to those who lost their lives in the events of Oct 6th 1976 and Oct 14th 1973". This book, in Thai, will come out in about the middle of May, and will be divided into five sections as follows:-

- Legal Background, including the universal declaration of human rights, the constitution, the regulations of NSCT, and of the Labour Council of Thailand.
- The illegality of the Proceedings, including arguments on such topics as the retroactive use of laws, the NARC decrees etc.
- Profiles, photos, and personal histories of all 18 defendants, and the names of the defending lawyers.
- Proceedings in the court, for the first three witnesses.
- Some examples of the petitions for amnesty both from within and outside Thailand.

This book will certainly be a most useful historical document, and the lawyers hope to follow it up with further volumes as the trial proceeds.

Human Rights Research Group

A detailed research project proposal has now been finalised, and a \$100,000 research grant is being sought from the Ford Foundation and other agencies to finance this comprehensive research project.

The preliminary research project will last 18 months, and will involve meetings, conferences and seminars, as well as the issuing of a series of easily readable pamphlets on the major research findings throughout the life of the project.

The actual research, involving a large group of academics should start in a month or two.

PART FOUR
SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

1) The General Political Situation

The period covered by this report March-April 1978 can be divided into two distinct parts. The first period, covering the whole of March was one of increasing rumours, increasing strikes, increasing opposition in the press to P.M. Kriengsak and his government, and quite a high possibility that a coup might be forthcoming. However the Prime Minister and his government successfully weathered the storm, and it became clear during April that he had again managed to divide his opponents, and regain the upper hand. In March however things were not nearly so clear.

For example the controversy over the properties of Field Marshals Thannon and Prapass (\$19.3 million) continued, with the president of the supreme court saying (3/3/78) that Thannon had no legal rights to his properties any more. Similarly the conflict over whether the First Trust Company should be licensed as a bank or not continued, with Prapass joining hands with Sangad Chaloryu to try to get approval to register the new bank. This became such a controversial issue that everyone went out of their way to deny that they had anything to do with this issue (including Gen. Yos Tephadin, leader of the Prapass faction in the army, and advisor to the First Trust Company, who claimed to have nothing to do with the company).

One of the most significant successes of the P.M. during this period was to get control over the village scouts. On 3/3/78 Police Major General Charoenrij Chamrasomoran (leader of the village scouts) was transferred to an inactive post. Various factions in the village scouts tried to arrange a demonstration on behalf of Charoenrif (25/3/78) but these attempts were successfully thwarted. One of the first people sentenced under Article 27 for log poaching was a village scout leader (12/4/78) and the local village scouts protested, which resulted in a very strong reaction from the P.M., with the support of most of the press. Generally it was agreed that village scouts should not interfere in politics, nor in the administration of the country, and thus it was decided to set up a special centre to ensure more effective control of village scouts in all parts of the country. In many respects this victory in the village scouts issue can be seen as a victory of the P.M. over various 'Palace' factions.

The tax increases proposed by the government on March 7th (including an increase on gasoline tax) probably produced the most concerted and virulent attacks in the press that Kriengsak has ever had to suffer. Even high military officers such as General Pralong came out publicly against these tax increases (Dao Siam 17/3/78). The attacks in the press were mainly a middle class reaction to increases in duty on 141 luxury items, but nevertheless this violent reaction succeeded in further alienating large groups of the elite from their active support of the present government. However, despite the fact that the tax increase have produced an increase in the cost of living, most economists who understand the situation feel that these tax proposals do not go far enough either to significantly effect the balance of payments, or to have any real effect on the distribution of incomes.

One direct effect of these tax increases was to produce a new spate of strikes (and threats of strikes), as well as renewed interest in the power of labour unions. Strikes broke out in many organisations including a go slow in the State Railways of Thailand, a strike in the

Thai Tobacco Monopoly, a strike at the Bharat Bank, and threats of strikes or demonstrations by the Provincial Water Works workers, Mass Transport Organisation workers, Express Transport Organisation Workers, and even by the police (in this latter case a demonstration was called for 1/4/78 and then called off). It is significant that most of the strikes or threats occurred in state enterprises or government corporations. Basically the government backed down to the demands of the various protesting groups, and during the P.M.'s visit to China things quietened down.

However the growing power of labour, did encourage various right-wing groups to pursue their age old tactics of splitting the workers, so that now there are two National Labour Federations in addition to that of Paisal Thavatchainant and Sunthorn Kaewmet. This splitting of the labour movement was so successful, that no agreement could be reached even on the May Day celebrations, and only 500 workers turned up for the officially sponsored ceremonies. Since P.M. Kriengsak was the keynote speaker. It showed that his policy of building a power base amongst labour groups was not proving to be very successful.

The combination of the village scout issue, the wave of strikes, the problems over the First Trust Company and the Thannom and Prapass properties led to a wave of rumours that a coup was forthcoming. Most of these rumours centred around Admiral Sangad Chaloryu and his navy friends, and around Gen Yos Thephsadeen (Leader of the Prapass, Thannom faction in the army). The biggest conflicts seem to be between Admiral Sangad, and P.M. Kriengsak, these conflicts being caused by the fact that Sangad feels that he is gradually being eased out of any position of power. It seems however that for the time being Sangad has accepted defeat saying on March 6th that "Jaws will never land" (i.e. the Navy will not stage another coup). On the 18/4/78 Admiral Sangad went abroad to Europe on a prolonged (6 weeks) private trip, which suggests that for the present, he is prepared to drop out of the political arena. As usual, when P.M. Kriengsak went to China he took with him the two leaders of the main factions of the army, so that neither could have undue influence on General Serm Na Nakorn, the commander in chief, whose tacit support is needed for any coup attempt. These two, General Yos Thephasadin and General Irem Tinsamulanund always seem to be invited by P.M. Kriengsak when he takes overseas trips.

On further victory that the P.M. had in terms of his position in the army was to obtain the return of General Vitoon Yasawad from his semi-official exile in Japan (as student counsellor!). This will help restore his image in the pre-Chalard factions of the army.

The one day electricity blackout that effected almost the entire country on 18/3/78, not only shocked a large number of people (who realised that the whole industrial life of the country could be so easily paralysed), but also led to a spate of rumours of forthcoming sabotage, of communist infiltration in the capital, and so on.

Thus Police Director General Montchai Pankongchuen said (25/3/78) that the police were planning a large crack down on "communists" in the capital, with teachers, government officials, merchants, and journalists likely to be arrested. Though half a dozen suspected communists have been arrested the planned crackdown has not taken place. This is probably because Pol General Montchai's own position is not very secure, as he is very much a part of the "royal faction", is basically not in favour of Kriengsaks liberal approach, and was the only person dropped from NARC after the October 20th 1977 coup.

Thus basically, Kriengsak seems to be regaining an upper hand through a very skillfull use of the media, and through creating an image for himself as a liberal, but also a strong liberal who is prepared to do what is necessary. He has attempted to appear strong and firm, whilst at the same time avoiding to use the power he has, too directly and firmly. For example his use of article 27 for log poachers (11/4/78) and for tin smugglers appears liberal compared with ex P.M. Thanins use of his article 21, since there have been no executions, and since no key people are being summarily punished. His foreign trips also have done much to build up his media image.

His major strategy in dealing with his opponents has been to allow them freedom to plot, and to carryout their various schemes against him, whilst at the same time allowing the media to take up the issues, and by careful manipulation having the media discredit those who are against him. He has been very careful not to overact to any of the provocations that his opponents have made (particularly in terms of labour, village scouts, police, and border problems with Cambodia) and thus has provided them with no really strong issue around which they could attack him. Unless they can create an issue where the various elite groups (especially General Serm Na Nakorn) can agree that Kriengsak has taken a very wrong path, there is little chance of a coup. The closest his opponents came to such an issue was over the increase in taxes in early March, which effected the pockets of many of the elite, but their attempts to exploit the situation failed because some action against the huge balance of payments deficit obviously had to be taken, and because he cleared these increases with the King, and the National Policy Council before announcing them.

Thus all in all Kriengsak has emerged from this two month period much stronger than he entered it. Not stronger, because he has a wider power base (his base has probably shrunk even further), but stronger because all attempts of various right wing groups to create an explosive issue have managed to be defused.

He still however does not have the power to tackle any of the really pressing internal problems, because he fears that in so doing he will provide the "Prapess-Yoss", the "Sangad", and the "palace" groups with the issue around which they could agree to bury their disagreements, and remove Kriengsak. This is the dilemma he is in.

2) Current Activities of the Communist Party of Thailand

During summer of each year the activities of CPT., especially armed attacks are unfortunately at a higher level than at any other season, this year is no exception. Kriengsak's government realizes this point very well, ^{and} because of its power base, can do very little to reduce these conflicts by aiming at real reconciliation. Lieutenant Commander Prasong Sochniri who is Deputy Secretary of ISOC, gave an interview about security problems relating to communist guerrillas. He said that at present the CPT. has about 8,000 armed persons throughout the country. In Sakonbakhorn alone there are about 1,000 armed communists. After the Oct. 6th Coup, more than 2000 people had fled into the jungle to join the CPT. He pointed out that the CPT. always uses progaganda before military force, but will use force whenever the officials attempt supression campaigns. In answer to the question 'Will Thailand become a communist country or not?' Lt. Com. Prasong answered that it depended on the people and also the government, "how much trust and belief the government gives to the people". (Thai Nikorn, April 7, 1978)

About 3 months ago, the cabinet passed a resolution to give rewards to people who fought with the communists guerrillas. Sunthon Hongladarom, Deputy Prime Minister, was the person who issued the order from ^{the} Prime Minister Office giving rewards to people who help officials fight with the communists. The following rewards were proposed:-

- The first prize, a semi-automatic 5 bullet shotgun with 25 bullets and a certificate of appreciation. The winner would be the person who plans or gets news which enables communists to be trapped so that an important communist is killed, or dangerous weapons and crucial communication equipment is seized.

- The second prize, a special shotgun with 25 bullets and a certificate of appreciation given to a person who accidentally meets communist guerrillas and is able to kill them and seize their arms.

- The third prize, an ordinary shotgun with 25 bullets and a certificate of appreciation given to a person who is able to fight with and seize the arms of a communist guerrilla.

- The other prizes, for example, for seizing medical supplies and other things from the communists will be rewarded with 4,000 baht; whilst someone who persuades a communist guerrilla to surrender to officials will get not more than 3,000 baht.

We feel that this system of providing large rewards to people who kill or in other ways harass supposed "communists", is a very dangerous policy, that can lead to very great misuses of power by people who are not even government officials. It reminds one of the hated system of bounty hunters that existed in the USA 100 years ago. It is certainly not a policy that will lead to peace (particularly as rewards are often paid in weapons)

In dealing with the communist terrorist problem (which according to Athit has involved an expenditure of 300,000,000,000 Baht over the last 20 years) is extremely dependent on US support. Mr. Richard Holdbrook, the assistant Secretary of State for the East Asia and Pacific Region said in an interview that United States would continue to give the military assistance to Thai government, through the provision of \$31 million of military credits. He also said that U.S.A. believed that this assistance would help bring security both to Thailand and to her non-communist neighbours by preventing external attacks (Athit 28th March 1978)

Besides persuading ordinary people to help officials to fight the communists, the government also used a policy of large military suppression drives by soldiers. Many forests especially in the north-east have been closed to the public and made free fire zones by the order of the government. This policy has been introduced in order to make it difficult for communist to get food and medicine from friends in villages and towns. However, this policy also caused the people who lived in the villages in the forest area great troubles too. Their troubles stemmed mainly from the fact that the villagers used land in the forest to earn their living. For example, the people in the forest suffer very much from the policy of closing the forests because most of their para-rubber gardens were in the hills in the restricted forest areas.

Despite all the efforts of the government to crush the communist terrorists, these are only having limited success, with unfortunately more innocent villagers being killed in the armed struggle than either government officials or terrorists. For example during 1977, 583 officials were killed by terrorists, whilst at the same time only about 300 so called "communists" were killed, and almost a thousand

uninvolved villagers. As always happens in any armed struggle, it is the innocent who suffer most.

In addition to the terrorists killed over the last 10 months 321 "communists" were arrested, and a further 485 surrendered. There are of course no statistics of new recruits who joined the communist ranks.

We are convinced that the present method of dealing with the communists - through suppression is not succeeding, and is leading to unnecessary death, destruction, disunity, and suffering. We believe that only when everyone (on all sides) is prepared to work together can we hope to solve the problems of the country. As General Prem Tinsulanonda said (but the government did not hear) "communists are also patriots". If we can have a proper dialogue with them we can save a lot of lives.

3) Military co-operation between Thailand and Malaysia

In 1955-56 during the period of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysian Communist Party was suppressed very strongly and thus retreated into the area of Betong - Sadao in the South of Thailand. Since then they have grown more and more powerful, until near the end of the Krukrit government when they reached their highest strength. At that time the border patrol police in Betong said, "Betong is nearly completely Malaysian Communist. It only waits for the red flag to be pulled to the top of the flag pole".

The fear of communist influence makes the Thai officials worry very much about this situation, even though CPM has often announced that it won't spread its influence into Thailand (though as a result of the joint suppression campaigns last year there has been more cooperation between CPM and CPT than before). The Thai border patrol police know very well that CPM won't fight with them when they meet alone together, but when they go with Malaysian soldiers violent clashes occur.

However in the South of Thailand the government faces many problems including separatists, bandits, gangsters, Chinese Malaysian communists, and also Thai communists. Because of these problems the Thai leaders went to Malaysia in order to agree to co-operate to suppress communists and others with the Malaysian army.

The first co-operative military action took place in the period of Ex Prime Minister Thanin; and was called "Musna", this was followed by "Musna 2" and then by "Sahaya Bena". Now "Salam-Sawaddi" is being launched by the Kriengsak government. "Salam-Sawaddi" started on 10th March 1978 and lasted for 30 days.

Malaysian soldiers concentrate on suppressing the communists in the border area. These communists can be divided into 2 groups; the first is the group of La Suk Mi Jin who is a Marxist Leninist, and the other group is the group of Chin Peng who follows Mao Tse Tung. The group of Chin Peng operates in Malaysia and when necessary escapes into Thailand.

The problem is that this joint operation gave the Malaysian army the right to penetrate Thai Territory throughout the length of the border. During their campaign they killed many innocent Thai villagers. They operated as a joint Thai-Malaysian unit. Thai officers were in command and Malaysians were appointed as deputy commanders. The Malaysians refused to help suppress the Thai-Malay separatists.

Because of the violence of the suppression campaigns and the restrictions placed on villagers, Lt. Col. Mamud Snilman, the commander of the Malaysian Northern army was very angry and resigned quickly

after returning to Malaysian. He was not happy because the operation had killed a lot of innocent villagers both Thai-Buddhas and Thai-Muslims.

The military co-operation between Thailand and Malaysia have made Thai government become the enemy of the seperatists, the Chinese Malaysian communists and also the Thai communists (CPT) who have formed a united front, whilst, Malaysian still only has the CPM as its only enemy.

On March 19, 1978, Col. Somsak Intmpol, an official of the propaganda centre, together with Lt. Gen. Pin Kesorn, director of the general information office, spoke about the movements of the communists on the Thai-Malaysian border area. They claimed that the Chinese Malaysian communists offered to compromise with Thai officials, and sent their proposals to the officials at Na Thawee District, Songkla Province. They asked for 2 important concessions, namely:

- To get rid of check points.
- To stop the military co-operation between Thailand and

Malaysia.

In return they offered the following:-

- They would not continuously cross the border between Thailand and Malaysia.
- They would not interfere with supression campaigns carried out by Thai officials.

Unfortunately the Kriengsak government is not prepared to negotiate, or reach agreement with communists of any type in Thailand, and consequently a new joint supression campaign is now being mounted, where innocent villagers will again suffer, and increasing numbers of people be alienated from the government.

4) Labour

March 4, 1978 - Dao Siam

Mrs. Somsri Ganthamala, deputy director of the Labour Department told the journalists that there would be a project to change the minimum wage according to different kinds of industry and occupation. It was expected that the changing scales would be announced within this year. Mrs. Somsri said further that from March 1st, to April 30th, officers from the Labour Department would survey industries in Bangkok, Nontnari, Pratumthani and Samuthprakarn. This project would include every kind of industry except agriculture and government departments. The purpose of this project was to know facts about the location, the number of workers and the kinds of industries in order to see the trends in the location of industries and the labour market so that the labour Department could plan a development program and train the workers to meet the needs of labour market.

March 8th, 1978 - Bangkok Post, March 9 - The Nation and Matichon

Representatives of 22 labour unions, all of them under the private sector, met at the labour Department on March 7th to submit an application to form a new labour council called the "Council of Employees Associations Organization of Thailand."

The department accepted the application for consideration and has promised a reply within 7 days.

The council led by Mr. Precha Rodmanee of the Asian Relations Labour Union, and Mr. Thanong Laovanich, leader of Boonrawd Brewery Labour Union. This council included Thailand Textiles Labour Union, Tailoring Labour Union of Thailand, Bicycle Labour Union of Thailand etc. These labour unions gathered on March 5th, to select their president and other office bearers.

Preecha Rodmanee was elected as president, Chom Phum-Pradat as vice-president, Phallab Na-Ranong also as vice-president, and Anusak Bunyapranai as secretary.

Mr. Preecha contended that the new Employee Organization Council did not indicate a split amongst workers. "We merely want to act as a balancer for the benefit of the workers."

The aims of this council are similar to the first one, led by Paisal Thawatchainand, in that they both express a desire to promote employee welfare and security, provide employee with education, including skills development, improve and promote better relations between employers and employees and encourage a democratic form of government.

March 11th 1978 - Siam Rath

- Director general of the Labour Department said that if the government's raising of the tax on 141 kinds of goods, affected the price of goods and workers' cost of living, the department would help in improving the minimum wages in line with the cost of living. "But I don't know about the result yet, so I have to wait for a period of time", he said.

- Buptham Phatthrakam, Minister of Justice, said that his ministry was considering an act to establish a labour court and the method of considering cases in the court. He thought that if there were no problems with the cabinet or the National Assembly, the court could become operational during the life of this government.

March 11th, 1978 - The Nation

About 1,000 employees of the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly (TTM) on March 10th, protested against their management which announced a one-year retroactive collection of income tax from their cost of living allowance 450 baht.

The protesters most of them, wearing black, marched from the TTM factory to lay wreaths to the statue of the late Luang Chamman Yuthasilp, the founder of the TTM.

The TTM labour union leader Charn Klappasam said, the labour union had earlier requested the management to review the order about paying income taxes on the workers' cost of living allowance, but no reply was given.

March 12th, 1978 - Bangkok Post

The Metropolitan Electricity Workers Union, on March 11th unanimously elected Paisal Thawatchainand (42) to serve as president for the third time.

Thirty-five committee members elected by all the 3,328 members, voted in favour of Paisal as president and Veeravuth Boonmakhli as secretary-general of the union.

Setting up co-operative stores and housing projects as well as relations between workers and employers were the important issues that the union decided it should work on.

March 13th, 1978 - Siam Rath

P.M. Kriengsak Chamanand said when he went to Saraburi Province that to raise taxes were easy, but to find wages that were just for everyone - workers, farmers, government officers was an important issue. He stated further that raising taxes affected the poor very little. He asked the workers to bare the burden if they could.

Meanwhile Paisal Thawatchainand, president of the National Labour Council in an interview said that "the raising of the oil price would affect most of the people and said that a better way would be to be much stricter on the collection of existing taxes.

Too often businessmen avoided taxes and duties by making false accounts.

He emphasised that he and other labour leaders would shortly submit proposals to the government for the urgent consideration of government.

March 13th, 1978 - Matichon and the Nation

The National Labour Council held a conference at Narai Hotel on March 12th in order to select their representatives on the Labour Relations Committee of the Labour Department. 50 representatives from 23 labour unions participated in this conference which also considered the administrative problems of the council and the Labour Research Center project. During this conference police from Bangkok Police Station observed took notes, wrote down the names and photographed all the participants.

After the morning session Pol. Lieutenant Colonel Cherdchay Watanasin, the inspector of the Police Station, went to ask Aree Thaveephok, the secretary of the council, whether permission for this conference had been asked for or not. Aree indicated that this conference was to educate the members and select Labour Relations Committee members, thus did not involve in "politics". However, Pol. Lieut. Colonel Cheudchai told Paisal Thawatchainand, the president of this conference that without his permission the conference was held illegally, so it could not carry on. The afternoon session t about the increase in minimum wage was therefore cancelled since the main issues were already discussed.

March 14th, 1978 - The Nation, Bangkok Post

Paisal Thawatchainand, leading labour activist and assemblyman stated, that the National Labour Council would demand that the government increase the present minimum wage in Bangkok from 28 baht per day to 50 baht per day and also allow the right to strike. "The Government has always preached about democracy, thus it should allow us the right to strike and seek justice from our employers".

Siam Rath

Charn Manutham, legislative member and vice president of Employers Council of Thailand stated to "Siam Rath" that he was in favour of increasing the minimum wage based on a consideration of the consumer price indence or the cost of living index. In his opinion it was better to wait and see how much the import tax would affect the people who gained little income. He thought that it had little effected on workers. "To increase the minimum wage is not the problem, but if the minimum wage is raised, the price of goods would also increase. What should be done is that we should consult each other - employers, employees and government - to find a good compromist.

Sunthorn Kaew-Netr, committee member of National Labour Council, said to "Siam Rath" that the government raised the import tax. without preventing the raising of the price of goods. This affected workers whilst not giving them a ways out because they could not strike. They didn't have any power to bargain. In answering the question that if workers could strike, they would cause trouble, he said the cause of trouble was that the workers did not get enough wages, if they did, the troubles would never occur.

March 15th, 1978 - Matichon

Local Administration Director General Damrong Sunthornsaratoon who is chairman of the 12-man "minimum wage" committee said the committee would not intend to rapidly increase the minimum wage because he should wait for a period of time to see how much the price of goods increased.

March 16th, 1978 - Siam Rath

The Port Authority of Thailand Labour Union stated that 55 administrative personnel made use of PAT. employees to be their private "drivers". This caused PAT. to lose about 100,000 baht per month.

March 17, 1978 - Bangkok Post

Labour leaders would meet PM. Kriengsak Chamanand at the National Legislative Assembly today to submit a five-point proposal namely: that the Government allow labourers to call a strike, that the Government speed up the appointment of its representatives in the National Labour Development Council; that the minimum wage be increased to 50 baht per day for workers in Bangkok Metropolis and neighbouring provinces and reasonable adjustments made in other provinces; that the government should expand and impose proper control on the retail shops supervised by the Commerce Ministry, and that the Government must get rid of the middlemen.

These proposal was submitted officially on March 21 on behalf of the National Labour Council.

March 18th, 1978 - the Nation

Over 200 workers from Samutsakhon, Nakhonprathom, Samutprakarn and Prathumthani marched to the Revenue Department a Rajdamnern Road on March 12th to protest against the departments order to cut 20% of their salaries as "demitory rent" which they described as "unrealistic."

The workers said they actually stay as a group of 8 to 10 persons in one room, therefore each person should only have to pay about 20 baht to the Revenue Department.

The workers protested by presenting a black wreath to a Revenue Official and requested to see Revenue Director General Nukul Prachuatmoh, But this request was rejected. They proceeded to Government House where they met with Deputy Prime Minister Sunthorn Hongladaran, Finance Minister Suphat Suthatham and Mr. Nukul. They were satisfied with Mr. Nukul's explanation.

March 20th, 1978.- The Nation

Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee for Labour for Tavich Seniwage warned the labour leaders who demand to increase the minimum wage to be "reasonable".

Siam Rath

Suphat Suthatham, Minister of Finance, spoke against the demanded increase in the minimum wage claiming that it was, "too high" and would affect people's cost of living.

Ob Vasurat, president of the Employers' Council also criticized the proposed increase saying that the 3 groups (workers, employers and government) should consult each other before making proposals. He also claimed that an increase in the minimum wage might increase unemployment, especially of women and children.

March 19th 1978 - Tawan Siam

On March 19th, Thavat Ninsaeng, president of the Electricity Producers Workers Union said to the journalists that the causes of the great power failure on March 18th, did not come from the labour union. The real causes were technical reasons already described by the Director and Deputy Director of the Authority.

March 21st, 1978 - Bangkok Post

Mr. Pirun Avudhpetch an employee of the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) hung a wreath and a poster attacking the management onto the wall of a building in the Floenchit Road Headquarters of the TOT on March 20th.

The poster attacked among other things, the appointment to important positions under a patronagesystem, and the low bonus and inadequate welfare benefits for daily wage earners.

However, all these allegations were denied by the TOT. Deputy Director Col. Pak Pukkakuptor.

March 22nd, 1978 - Ban Muang

Paisal Thawatchainand, president of the Metropolitan Electricity Labour Union, gave an interview to Ban Muang's reporters that about the demand to increase the minimum the said wage. That he was in favour of it because the present minimum wage was very low. Most of the workers who earned only this amount could not afford the essentials for themselves let alone their families.

In answering the question about the forces pushing workers, Paisal said that in unelected government people felt more free i.e. they could gathering to protest in case of government's wrong doing or action against a law. But with the present government people had no freedom to do so because of martial law.

March 22nd, 1978 - The Nation

In a silent protest against the management of the State Railways of Thailand (SRT), railway mechanics, drivers and maintenance workers staged a massive slow-down strike on March 21st, causing delays to all trains departing and arriving at Hualampong and Bangkok Noi stations from 20 minutes to up to 5 hours.

Leaders of SRT Labour Union, Sawad Lookdode, said the "silent protest" was staged since Monday by a group of workers, and not by the labour union.

The group representing 1,780 mechanics, drivers and maintenance workers throughout the country had submitted their 7 point demand, mostly for better compensation and more security on duty, to the SRT management on Feb. 27. However, no reply or clarification to their demands had yet been given.

The protesting workers claimed that the go-slow was in line with the SRT regulations which state that the train will reach its destination late if the departure is delayed.

Amongst other things they were demanding an adjustment of the minimum wage of drivers from 1,650 baht to 3,025 baht and an additional cost of living allowance for all workers.

SRT, Governor Sa-nga Navicharoen, meanwhile, issued an announcement saying that the demands for wage increase and better working condition were being negotiated between the management and employees in accord with the 1975 Labour Relation.

Security measures are also being taken into consideration as well as the signal system as readjusted.

The announcement warned that a deliberate slow-down is illegal and in violation of the Labour Relations Act.

This dispute went to the Labour Department (The Nation 25/3/1978) since the negotiations between protesting workers and their management came to a deadlock. Because this announcement signed by SRT, Governor Sa-nga Navicharoen said that four of the seven workers demands were unacceptable. (The Nation 23/3/1978) The major point of the disagreement was the demand for wage increase for drivers from a monthly 1,650 baht to 3025 baht. The other points were about the signal lights.

After one full week of the go-slow strike, all trains arriving and leaving railway stations returned to normal in the afternoon were operated as normal of March 26th following the intervention of PM. Kriengsak Chamanand who told six representatives of the protesting workers that he would like to see "the country in order" before leaving on his one-week visit to China. (The Nation 27/3/78)

The railway workers' leader Chatchai Tosayanond accepted the agreement mediated by the Labour Department officials. Under this agreement, workers receiving less than 2,100 baht a month who have passed the train

drivers test will receive about 300 baht more salary. These earning between 2,100 baht to 2,520 baht will receive about 200 baht more, and those with a salary over 2,650 baht will have their income raised by about 100 baht.

March 23, 1978 - The Nation

The labour pressure for wage increases took a new twist when two major rival labour groups - namely The National Council of Thai Labour (NCTL) led by SananVongsuthee and the Council of Labour Unions of Thailand (CLUT) led by Thanang Laovanich with a combined membership of 41 labour unions refused to endorse the proposal submitted to the government on Monday by the National Labour Council (NLC) which was seeking, among other things, an increase in the minimum wage from 28 baht a day to 45 baht.

Sanan Vongsuthee, secretary general of NCTL said that his group considers NCL's proposal, especially the point concerning the wage increases as "excessive" and "inappropriate", is submitted at the "wrongtime" without endorsement from the majority of the Thai Labour.

CLUT executive member Tanong Laovanich charged that NLC leaders, Paisal Thawatchainand and Sunthorn Kaewmetr were "opportunists" trying to win favour of the workers. The NLC's move would kill all the investment and make many more workers jobless.

However, the two agreed that the present minimum wage was too low and the workers could hardly make a decent living out of their wages.

Sanan suggested that the best way out of the present situation was for the government to provide social welfare for the workers instead of wage increase.

Thanong, on the other hand, pointed out that any demand for wage increases should be directed to the existing tripartite committee on wages which was headed Mr. Damrag Sunthornsarathoon, director general of the Local Administration Department. He also suggested that the government should consider fixing varying rates of minimum wage for different industries.

March 23, 1978 - The Nation

After 18 months of delay, tripartite board for labour development has finally come in to official existence.

PM. Kriengsak in his capacity as Interior Minister, on Tuesday 22nd afternoon signed an order appointing 10 persons selected by the government, 5 labour representatives and 5 representatives from the private sector to the board.

Representing the government on the board are former Public Health Minister and police Director General - Prasert Rujirawong, former Public Welfare Director General Tien Atchakun, Deputy Rector of NIDA, Dr. Paijit Erthaweekun, educationist M.L. Tui Jumsai, former Vocational Education Director General Dr. Chai Muktaphan, Lawyer Mr. Thawee Lerkchamnang, factory safety expert Air Marshal Noi Vanikkabutr, Deputy Secretary General of NESDB Mr. Vira Osathanand, Deputy Secretary General of the Board of Investment Mr. Decha Boonchoochuay and Dr. Paisit Pipattareakeen a labour law expert from the Juridicial Council.

The National Administrative Reform Council stated in its 47th order dated Oct 21, 1976 that a tripartite board would be formed to handle labour problems, either those involving the labour and the business employers, or these between the labour and the government.

March 24, 1978 - Matichon

Vira Chitbanchong, Phollob Thongvijhit and Somkit Kitudom, representatives of workers from Vivat Industry Company, which produced vegetarian oil "Tip", went to complain to the Labour Relations Committee that they were dismissed by the manager Adul Adulvifit accused of badly behaving.

submitted demands which 180 other workers had signed their approval. Their demands were about the cost of living allowance and the payment of overtime when working on holidays. They also demanded for to establish a trade union.
March 25, 1978 - The Nation

1. About 5,000 employees of 179 provincial water works agencies throughout the country have threatened to cut off water supplies by March 28, if their demand to have the Provincial Water Works Authority raised to state enterprise status fails to be met.

2. The Finance Ministry has reportedly opposed the plan on the grounds that it would jack up expenses by more than 50 m. baht a year.

3. The cabinet, on March 21, who were informed in advance concluded that the plan was not practical. (The Nation 27/3/1978) The employees planned to walkout on Saturday April 7, 1978 if the government rejected their demands.

4. In the meantime, the PM. on March 27, summoned a meeting with Deputy Interior Ministers Prem Tinasulanond, Damri Noinanee, and Chomnang Dhephassadin Na Ayudhaya, under-secretary Winyu Angkanaraksa, Police Chief Montchai Pankongchuen and Labour Director-General Vichit Saengthong for a discussion of labour problems. PM. then issued a stern warning that the government will not back down to any unreasonable demands nor tolerate any violations of the law. (Bangkok Post 28/3/78)

5. Meanwhile, Public Works Department Director General Damrong Cholvicharn warned that employees will possibly face stern legal action if they stage a work stoppage as "the country is currently under martial law."

6. At last on March 29, the employers agreed with the government's decision to hand over the matter of changing its status to the National Institute for Development Administration (NIDA) to study over a period of 45 days. They also assured the police that during the period, there would be no disruption of services. (Bangkok Post 30/3/78)
March 27, 1978 - Bangkok Post

Newly - elected president of the State Railways of Thailand Workers' Union, Ahmad Khamthethay, on March 26, declared that his policy was to set up a federation of transport workers' unions during his two years tenure.

Ahmad replaced Sawasd Logdoo the former president. But the 40 - man Central Committee also picked Sawasd : vice president of the SRT Union.

March 28, 1978 - The Nation, Bangkok Post

Some 3,000 (8,000 - The Nation) Thailand Tobacco Monopoly workers who staged a one-day sit-in strike on March 27, reached an agreement the same evening after being promised that a salary scale adjustment would be considered by a joint meeting between TTM management and employees.

The demand to pay back-taxes on workers' cost of living allowance of 450 baht caused the strike.

In a joint announcement by workers, management and Finance Ministry representatives, the management agreed it would not take punitive action against the strikers. They also agreed to use money from the provident fund to pay back - taxes on workers' cost of living allowance but the workers had to repay the money to the fund once they get their new salary.

However, on March 28 and 29, some 500 employees of the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly (TTM) continued their work stoppage, demanding their management to speed up consideration of the adjustment of new wage scales within 30 days instead of 60 days.

In an announcement issued by Finance Undersecretary of State Charnchai Leethavorn he requested all employees to return to work on March 30, or "face dismissal" - "Failing to work today is a violation of discipline and entitles the management to terminate their employment." the order stated.

In the morning of March 29, Deputy Finance Minister, Chalang Pungtrakul told the workers that he would complete the consideration within 30 days as the employees demanded but he failed to persuade the workers to resume their work.

The Nation

52 employees of the Bharat Overseas Bank in Yaowaraj China Town staged a one - hour strike in the morning of March 27, demanding higher salary and 300 baht cost of living allowance.

March 29, 1978 - The Nation

Chairman of the tripartite wage committee Damrong Sunthornsaratoon, revealed on March 28 after the first wage committee meeting that over 50 percent of employers in Bangkok and outlying provinces are paying their workers salaries lower than the minimum wage scale of 28 baht a day as fixed by the government. He indicated that the price index increased by only 8.4 % from 1976-1977 which according to Mr. Damrong, is considered low and it does not effect the standard of living.

March 30, 1978 - Matichon

PM Kriengsak gave an interview about the internal situation and said that he was not worried because 80% TTM employees resumed their work, if the 20% left did not want to do their work, so let them resign. He said that they should bring the proposal to the labour advisory council. There was a right way to solve problems. He would not let the mob's law to be above the law. He said firmly that he could not allow disorder in the country since he wanted unity and progress.

March 29, 1978 - Matichon

On March 27, at Labour development Institute, three representatives and observers from 87 labour unions were selected to participate in the social welfare law and country development seminar which held by the Public Welfare Department during 17-28 April.

The three representatives were Sawasdi Loog-dod vice president of the State Railway of Thailand Labour Union, Aree Phokthavee of the Oil and Petroleum Products Labour Union and Piyacherd Klauw Klard of Kurusapha Business Organization Labour Union. The 6 observers were Vichai Thosuwatin, Somphorn Khajeeram, Narongrit Pancha, Manut Niyomsapmanee, Ms. Somsri Vanichanant and Sursapol Sithikorn.

April 1, 1978 - Bangkok Post

A. The state-run Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA) on March 31, temporarily suspended its new allowance scheme which was to go into effect today to avert a strike planned on April 1, by its busmen.

The announcement of the new allowance scheme, which caught the employees by surprise sparked off misunderstanding and dissension among the workers, particularly bus drivers and conductors, who felt their income would be reduced rather than increased as claimed by the management. The workers then threatened to hold a strike.

The basic change proposed by management was to reduce daily allowances and pay a commission on tickets sold instead. It was felt by many people that such a commission might make travelling by bus even more hazardous than it already is.

Siam Rath

Vichit Seengthong indicated that the announcement of BMTA, was against the Labour Law on the grounds that the announcement changed employment conditions. Thus the management should have first got the agreement of the labour union, If the labour union did not agree, the management had to inform the Labour Department within 24 hours. The department would arbitrate within 5 days and if agreement could still not be reached the matter would be transferred to the Labour Relations Committee within 30 days.

After failing to settle the pay dispute again on April 7, the workers presented a list of 51 demands to the management on April 12. The major demands were that a cost of living allowance of 300 baht per month be included in the salaries and a new cost of living allowance of 300 baht to be granted. (Bangkok Post 12/4/78). These demands were turned down by the management. So Fayom Boonprakong, president of the MTA asked for a 300 - baht "special living allowance" as well as abolition of the new hiring condition scheme in favour of the existing scheme. (Bangkok Post 13/4/78)

B. The Nation

Army Commander - in Chief Serm na Nakhon warned the workers particularly those responsible for public facilities that they should not walk out of their jobs as it will affect the public.

April 2, 1978 - Ban Muang

Pol. Lieutenant general Champol Lohasala, Deputy Director General of Police Department for special activities answered questions from journalists about the police's demand to adjust their salaries so that they would be equal to those of soldiers. He said that the rumours about a planned police demonstration at the police department the morning were not true. He had been to the department to look but nothing was happening there.

April 4, 1978 - Bangkok Post

A. The tripartite National Labour Development Advisory Board will be asked to consider a proposal to have all workers registered with labour unions, (as suggested by PM Kriengsak before leaving for China) Sunthorn Kaewmetr, a board member disclosed on April 3.

B. Deputy Prime Minister Sompob Hotrakit on April 3, told all state enterprises to give similar wages and welfare to their employees in a bid to reduce the differences among state workers.

"It is a Cabinet policy to ensure equal opportunity among all state employees", Dr. Sompob said to 60 executives of state-enterprise at Government House. He also announced the establishment of State Enterprise Centre as a organ to provide technical information and cooperation among state-enterprise.

C. Representatives of labour unions throughout the country will meet on Saturday 8 to hammer out a compromise minimum wage increase proposal, the preparations for the Labour Day celebrations on May 1, and the proposed amendments to the labour laws.

D. Nation - The NCTL (led by Sanan Vongsuthee) announced yesterday that it opposes the move of NLC in urging the government to consolidate labour unions into one labour council.

E. Bangkok Post - The Workers Union of the Water Works Authority of Thailand Saturday submitted to its management a seven demands, including a request for a pay boost and other fringe benefits.

Union president Chiap Riemdara, said that the management should pay its workers a minimum of 840 baht a month as promised earlier, and that the new salary scales should be retroactive from October last year.

F. The Express Transport Organization (ETO) Workers' Union on April 3, submitted a six-point demand to ETO Director Thomthawee Hatayodan.

The first point was to replace the ETO Director, whose management they alleged produced a split among senior and junior workers.

The second point asked the management to adjust the special allowance paid to drivers and boat operators, especially those working on round trips.

The others points included welfare, security of workers, against corruption and lastly improving the management.

Negotiations were set for April 10th but on that day, only the two first points were discussed, and no conclusion reached.

It was agreed that there would be no strikes or work stoppages and negotiations would take place within the framework of the law.

G. The Nation Employees and the management of the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) on April 3, held the first round of negotiations over the former's five-point demands submitted on March 27 for better welfare and compensation of which only 3 points have been agreed upon.

The management, after two days of negotiation agreed to most of the demands, including deducting union dues directly from salaries, providing two free uniforms to all low paid employees, using the standard salaries of other state enterprise workers as a yardstick, and paying some other special allowances. The point that could not be agreed was the payment of a 400 baht per month accommodation allowance. This disagreement was sent to the Labour Department for arbitration. (Siam Rath, 8/4/78)

It was agreed by the workers that there would be no strike, but there was a lunchtime show of unity by 200 workers at PAT (Matichon, 6/4/78)

The PAT claimed that it could not pay the accommodation allowance because its income was reducing. Nevertheless they said they would try to get the National Housing Authority to build the necessary accommodation. (Matichon, 8/4/78)

April 5, 1978 - Bangkok Post

A. A group of powerful labour unionists in the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) Ahmad Khamthethong and Sawasdi Lookdod, the union president and vice-president on April 4, made a plea to the government, their fellow workers and the general public to seek effective ways of solving the soaring cost of living.

B. May Day - Siam Rath

- Director General of the Labour Department, Vichit Saengthong said that this year May Day Celebration would not need permission from the department, but from the government officials.

- Paisal Thawatchainand revealed that on April 11, he and other 12 representatives went to submit a demand to PM. Kriengsak asking for permission to celebrate "May Day". In the celebration, they would include a parade and show by several labour unions at King Rama V's Statue, music, selling of commodities exhibitions and plays at Amporn Garden. He would ask the PM. to speak at the ceremony too. He also objected to the announcement about the May Day Celebration of NCLT led by Sanan. (Matichon, 12/4/78)

- The PM. gave permission to hold the celebration but "still had consider the content". (Bangkok Post, 13/4/78)

- The PM asked two rival labour groups namely NIC led by Paisal, and NCLT led by Sanan to celebrate May Day together at Amporn Gardens (Nation, 15/4/78)

- Paisal led 10 other representatives to seek for a 300,000 baht donation from the government for the May Day Celebration. (The Nation, 17/4/78)

- On April 17 there was a meeting of more than 100 workers from 4 separate labour organisation - NLT, led by Paisal, NCTL led by Sanan, CLUT led by Amusak Bunyapranai (or Thanong Laovanich) and the State Railways labour union led by Ahmad Kamthethong to prepare for the May Day celebrations. This meeting ended abruptly after half of the participants (led by Paisal) walked out following a heated exchange of words over a proposal to elect one chairman.

Finally, Vichit Saengthong was elected as the chairman of the organising committee on April 18, by only 10 labour representations who showed up for the election. Those who walked out of the meeting on April 17 did not attend (Nation, 19/4/78)

Paisal, however was appointed as vice chairman but he turned down the position. (Bangkok Post 20/4/78)

April 6, 1978 - Siam Rath

The conflict between Paisal's NLC, and Vichit Saengthong, continued over an argument about where a meeting to discuss the setting up of co-operatives for workers and other matters should be held, at the Labour Department or at the MEA labour union. Paisal feels that Vichit is trying to destroy the NLC.

April 8th, 1978 - Siam Rath

Damrong Sunthornsaratoon, Director General of the Department of Provincial Administration and Chairman of the minimum wage committee said that the minimum wage deliberations would be finished in the next meeting at the end of this month. The committee was surveying the price index consumer goods as well as figure about the workers' cost of living.

General Thavich Senivong Na Ayuddhaya, former Minister of Defense and former Chairman of Labour and Welfare Committee of NARC stated that he agreed with the adjustment of the minimum wage, but the government should settle the level of the wage in order not to cause inflation.

One of the Committee member's - Suphon Mungvicha - said the minimum wage should be considered according to the size and kinds of business. He felt that with the proposed new minimum wage of 40-45 baht small business would collapse. (Matichon, 15/4/78)

The Labour Department sent officials to survey the cost of living of poor people in slum areas, the results of which would be taken into consideration in determining the new minimum wage. (Siam Rath - 15/4/78)

On April 27, the wage committee consisting of 14 persons from four different groups, namely - employees, employers, the Labour Department and intellectuals met again. After the meeting the chairman informed the press that information on the workers' cost of living was still not complete; thus the committee had set up another sub-committee to search for more information before May 18. M.R. Sathinant Sawadikul, the employers representative said, the survey of incomes of people from slum areas showed an average income of 21.80 baht per day.

April 12, 1978 - The Nation

In an effort to prevent the widespread and simmering labour unrest from exploding, the National Security Council (NSC) on April 11, summoned senior labour (i.e. Vichit Saengthong) and military officials (i.e. Deputy Interior Undersecretary of State Pol. Maj. Gen. Srisak Thanmarak, Director of Central Intelligence Department Maj. Gen. Banpote Panichanpapol, high ranking representatives from the Internal Security Operation Command, etc) to an urgent meeting to jointly work out solutions and preventive measures to ease the situation.

April 18, 1978 - Bangkok Post

Former Police Chief Gen. Prasert Ruchirawangse who was elected Chairman of the National Labour Development Advisory Board during the NLDAB's first meeting on April 17, declared that he favoured the increase of welfare benefits for the workers over the proposed minimum wage adjustment.

It was decided to hold a meeting of the NCDAB twice a month and also that the former chief of the Labour Department, Mr. Tien Atchekul, would be deputy chairman of NLDAB.

April 23, 1978

Police helped free 63 North Eastern children aged 8-16 who were being forced to work in a silver and gold paper producing factory named "Seng Heng" at 339 Trok Tou Ngok, Suntiphab Rd. Pom-Prab District. The children were bought from their parents by 1,000 baht, and were forced to work from 6.00 am. to 8.00 pm. everyday without wages. Most of the children were never allowed out of the factory, and many were suffering from skin diseases. The owner of the factory (already released on bail) would be taken to court for employing underage children.

5) North-East

During the last two months, there was an increase of clashes between the communist insurgents and government authorities, especially in Ubon Ratchathani and Buri-rum provinces. Also, there were many mysterious cases in which villagers been kidnapped or disappeared. Like in the East, the Khmer Rouge was accused of being involved in many of the incidents that recently happened.

In the last report we included brief details of the attack on Pat Um village, and the abduction of about 250 villagers. This story continued to be widely discussed with many different explanation being given as to why the raid took place and by whom - Thai Communists, Free Khmer, or Khmer Rouge.

On this matter Prime Minister Kriengsak Chamanan announced that the forces which attacked Pat Um were Thai communist insurgents and not Khmer Rouge. (Bangkok Post 4-3-78) It should be noted however that the government at that time was trying to reestablish relationships with Cambodia.

There was a report saying that a Thai Communist movement called "Siem Organization" with sanctuaries inside Cambodia was the group that abducted villagers living in Buriram, Ubon Ratchathani and Chanta-buri (in southeast) recently. (Bangkok Post 10-3-78)

On 9th April, seventeen persons including five policemen were killed, and at least 20 others injured in an attack on a self-help settlement in Buri Ram's Bankruad District which was said to involve the heaviest government casualties in a single clash for quite some time (Bangkok Post 10-4-78)

The Prime Minister said that there was no definite proof that Khmer Rouge were involved in the raid. Chief-of-Staff of the Supreme Command, Gen. Charoen Pongpanich said the attack was aimed at securing supplies, abducting villagers as hostages and establishing an uninhabited zone along the border. (Bangkok Post 11-4-78)

Army Chief-of-Staff Gen. Sithi Jiraroj who was assigned by Gen. Serm Na Nakhon to investigate the incident said Khmer Rouge soldiers were responsible for the burning and killing at Ban Kruad. (Bangkok Post 14-4-78) But Gen. Prem Tinsulanonth pointed out that the attack was done by Thai Communist insurgents trained in Communist sanctuaries located in Cambodia and receiving help from the Khmer Rouge (Matichon 13-4-78) However, Gen. Chumpol Lohachala, deputy police chief told the press that no one in the government was yet certain who attacked Ban Kruad self-help settlement in Buri-rum (Siam Rath 15-4-78)

There were still many small cases in which a few policeman, soldiers have been killed and injured in various clashes with the insurgents in Buri-rum Province. The news always makes people confused about "who did it?" In most cases, Communist insurgents of the Cambodian-backed Siem Organization are accused i.e. the hit-and-run assault against three army outposts in Laharnsai District of Buri-rum (Bangkok Post 20-4-78)

In Loei Province, the main strategy of the Communist insurgents was to ambush the construction unit which had been constructing the strategic road from Dan Sai to Na Hael (Tawon Siam, Daily Time 12-3-78, Thai Niyom 15-3-78)

In Ubon Ratchathani, besides the Pat Um case, there were a few cases published in newspapers which gave the communist insurgents bad reputation, such as the burning of monk cells at Wet Ban Na Nhong Yai in Rai Si Suk District (Daily News 20-3-78), the bombing of local bridge at Ban Kok Noi-Kok Yai which resulted in the death and injuries of many villagers (Dao Siam 10-3-78). The major happenings in other provinces can be summarized as follows.

Si Sa Ket, Communist insurgents blew up a bridge in Kantharalak District cutting off hundreds of villagers from the outside world (Bangkok World 13-4-78) Nakhon Panom, the military road construction team assisting the provincial mobile development unit in building a road between Ban Nong Kan and Ban Piad in Dong Luang Sub-district was ambushed by communist insurgents who also, occasionally, harassed the road construction unit by distributing leaflets warning people against helping authorities in the project. (Nation 20-4-78)

Surin, six passengers were killed and many others injured when their bus struck a land-mine on a road in Karb-cherng sub-district (Bangkok Post 21-4-78) There were also a few cases in Kalasin and Nong Khai in which it was boasted that some communist leaders had either surrendered to or been arrested by the authorities. (Matichon 23-4-78), Nation 19-4-78) In Chaiyaphum, as an effort to cut down supplies to communists, the government had declared 32 villages in three districts as "off-limit" areas. All people, the order said, are banned from entering or staying in the prohibited areas except for receiving permission from the Anti-Communist Operations Director in the province. (Nation 2-3-78)

Loei Provincial Governor told the press that the closing of various forests improved the situation since this made the armed authorities much more effective in getting rid of the communist insurgents and cutting down their supplies from local supporters. (Siam Rath, Tawan Siam 4-4-78) No matter what happened, many forests must be closed since the government's priority concern is to suppress the Communist, dis-closed Major Gen. Arthit after a forestry meeting (Matichon 13-4-78) However, due to the limited budget, the authorities were unable to provide accommodation for the villagers who had been moved out from the forest areas; besides, the deforestation rate in the closed forests had been rising because local capitalists had supported villagers to cut down trees for selling illegally, especially in Ubon Ratchathani and Nakorn Panom. (Ban Muang 28-3-78)

In this north-eastern region, Vietnamese refugees are always in trouble. Recently, many had been arrested either for earning their living without the permission of the authorities or being suspected suppliers of logistic supplies to communist insurgents in Udorn, Loei and Khon Kaen (Bangkok World 8-4-78, Dao Siam 25-4-78) ^{thani}

An interesting recent item of news was that a high military officer disclosed that some 400 Thai people from the areas bordering Surin, Buri Ram and Ubon were detained by the Communist Party of Thailand and Khmer Rouge forces about 30 kilometers inside Cambodia; these Thai villagers came back as "spies" of communist insurgents and, if they did not carry out their spying, would have members of their families killed. (Bangkok World 20-4-78) But, how reliable is this news?

6) The East

The situation in this region is quite similar to that of the North-East, especially to that in the Southern provinces of the North-East -- Buri-Ram, Surin, Sri Sa-kes and Ubon Ratchathani.

On the fifth of March, nearly 300 villagers were abducted by a group of raiders at a border village in the sensitive district of Pong Nam Ron, Chanthaburi. The abduction was the third case of its kind at the sensitive Thai-Cambodian border in the past two months. The raid was similar in pattern to two incidents in Buriram and Ubon Ratchathani. (Nation 7-3-78) There were many conflicting reports as to who kidnapped the villagers. Earlier, a report to the Police Department said Khmer Rouge soldiers were responsible for the act. However, a subsequent report from the Chanthaburi provincial police said that the massive kidnapping might have been committed by local communist insurgents operating in the province. (Bangkok Post 7-3-78). Prime Minister Kriangsak told reporters, after the discussion with the National Security Council, that the intrusion was launched by Thai communist insurgents who have taken sanctuary inside Cambodia, and it did not involve the Cambodian Government. Assistant Governor of Chanthaburi also claimed that few students who had joined the communist insurgents were also seen among the raiders. (Nation 7-3-78) Some newspapers suggested to the public that the most effective solution to the problem is to launch full-scale operations against all terrorist elements -- be they Khmer Rouge, Khmer Seri, communist insurgents or the CPT (Nation 9-3-78 quoted from Tawan Siam)

On the 13th of March, four villages in Pong Nam Ron District were attacked again. Wanting to take revenge, the villagers armed themselves and set up a self-defence frontier with the help of the government; (Dao Siam, Sieng Puang Chon 15-3-78). Mr. Upadith, Foreign Minister, told the press that "Siem Organization", which he said was a group of Cambodians trying to overthrow the present Cambodian government, was behind the incident. (Daily Times 9-3-78) But, Prime Minister Kriangsak stressed that "Siem Organization" is a branch of the Thai Communist Party; and its main function is to train abducted villagers and left wing students to carry out subversion in Thailand. (Matichon 24 and 25-4-78)

On the 15th of April, a police superintendent of Trat Province a province well-known for its gem mining, was killed along with four others in an ambush; it was said to be the worst single terrorist attack in this province (Nation, Bangkok Post, Daily News, Thai Rath 16-4-78). It should be noted that there had never been a serious incident in this province before; and this incident occurred after the government announced certain areas to be sensitive areas and moved out the local villagers. (Daily News 17-4-78) The police chief and Trat Governor confirmed that the ambush was carried out by local terrorists "as there is no evidence indicating that the Khmer Rouge are responsible". (Bangkok Post 17-4-78)

Security measures were strengthened along the Thai-Cambodian border in the North-East and the East, an increased number of marine forces were despatched to help track down the intruders, and Border Patrol Police and Village Defence Volunteer will be built up to full-scale within a month, declared Prime Minister Kriangsak (Siam Rath, Matichon 25-4-78) And the National Security Council agreed to let the Army have full control over all the operations against communist insurgents in all regions. (Matichon 18-4-78)

Deputy Secretary General of the National Security Council stated that since the armed authorities carried out more severe suppression against the terrorists, the terrorists reacted much more violently than ever. (Matichon 17-4-78)

Secretary to the Royal Thai Army, Col Vichit Bunyawat, said in his summary report on the general situation in the Thai eastern border, especially in Aranyaprathet, that "Small groups of intruders from Cambodia continued to launch brief forays into Thai border areas, and to plant land-mines. The number of incidents of arbitrary shelling across the border by gunners on the Cambodian side was increasing". (Nation 16-4-78) A Series of mortar shells were directed into Aranyaprathet district town on the 1st, 17th and 29th of April. Many border villages were attacked as well. The road between Klong Luek and Aranyaprathet was reported closed to civilian traffic. In the latest incident of this kind, on 29th of April, a major rocket and grenade attack was launched against all Thai border villages in Aranyaprathet, and a barrage of rockets was also unleashed into the central township. The attack had forced all shops to close and sent hundreds of frightened inhabitants moving out to safer places in Watthana Nakhon District and even to Bangkok, 300 kilometres away.

7) The South (A)

Communist insurgents still hold "considerable influence" over the populace in six southern provinces Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Trang, Phattalung, Satun and part of Songkhla; they are extending their influence through political as well as military operations. Previously, the Communist strength in the South was estimated at 1,800 strong. Now the figure has risen to 2,000; not including some 500 students who abandoned their normal life to join the Communist movement after the Oct 6, 1976 incident, said Maj Gen Lerdchai Saksri, Chief-of-Staff of the Fourth Army Region. (Nation 16-4-78)

However, the situation in Surat Thani is improved. Gen. Pongsakdi said the rise in insurgency in the other provinces was the result of extensive suppression by Government troops in Surat Thani, the insurgents there fleeing to neighbouring provinces. (Bangkok World 14-4-78) Surat-thani: It was said that some communist insurgents had surrendered to the authority, and some even received gifts from the provincial governor (Daily News 5-4-78)

Petchaburi: There were also few cases of ambushes in this southern province which is very close to Bangkok. For example, on 11th of April, a band of heavily armed communist insurgents ambushed a police patrol unit in Nong-yaplong Sub-district killing a police officer and one village defence volunteer. (Dao Siam 13-4-78)

Nakhon Si Thammarat: (Ban Muang 2-3-78) The Fourth Army Region General disclosed that Communist insurgents and bandits operated most actively in Amphur Chawang, Amphur Tungyai and Amphur Na-bon since these areas are the border-land between Nakhon Si Thammarat and its neighbouring provinces Kra-bi and Surat Thani. Moreover, due to the mining business, "Kao Soen" in Amphur Chawang had become an outlawed area once again; whereas Amphur Tungyai is the area which had long been neglected by the Government. (Dao Siam, Sieng Puang Chon, Bangkok Post 5-3-78 and Seri Rars 10-3-78), on 4th of March, three marines were killed and six others seriously wounded when a band of 50 communist insurgents ambushed their two GMC trucks while they were on their way from Tha Sala District to bring rations to a marine unit at the foot of Kung Ching Mountain in Nopbitam Sub-district. (Ban Muang 11-3-78, Bangkok Post, Nation and Tawon Siam 9-3-78)

Returning from a patrol trip to Kung Ching Mountain in Tha Sala District on 8th of March, three marines were killed and 14 others wounded when their truck hit a land-mine planted by communist insurgents.

(Sieng Rars, Ban Muang 11-3-78) An unknown number of communist insurgents attacked a police kiosk in Tha Sala, a policeman was wounded and a communist insurgent killed.

(Sieng Puang Chon 12-3-78) Pradith Pun-saen who was said to be a communist leader, when arrested said that the present communist leader in Nakhon Si Thammarat is Mr. Smarn Leurd-wong-hud, ex-president of Thammasat Student Organization; he added that Smarn bought the local villagers to join the communist group at the price of 2,000 baht per family.

(Mati-chon 29-3-78) A seven hour curfew was imposed on villagers living in various tambons in Tha-sala, Lan-ska District and Phrom-kiri Sub-district.

(Bangkok Post 16-4-78) A former communist who had just been released to join his family over a week ago after completing a re-orientation course was shot dead in front of his wife and family members at their house in Tha Sala District.

(Bangkok World 18-4-78) Four village defence volunteers were shot dead, while a school teacher was spared his life by the communist insurgents when they recognised that he was not a defence volunteer.

Satun: A very big news in this southern province was that on the first of April, Colonel Saakoom Iemjaruen was killed by an unknown number of communist insurgents in "Kao-Darl" while he drove his car on the way to examine a dead body of an insurgent. (Siam Rath, Sieng Puang Chon, Matichon, Dao Siam, Thai-Rath 3-4-78)

A strong and aggressive measure in revenge of Colonel Sookoom's case will be taken by the Fourth Army Region (Thai Rath 4-4-78)

Krabi: (Daily Time 10-4-78) Three men were spared their lives by a group of communist insurgents after they were recognized as not being policemen. It was reported that the leader of the group cried in regret that his men injured these three men in mistake; he also asked the driver of a passing bus to take these injured to the hospital.

A reliable source reported that at present the communist insurgents under CPT. had spread widely their influence over the southern populace, covering almost all the southern provinces. Besides military and psychological operation, they had built up "liberation culture" which was said to be compatible with the culture of the southern populace.

The South (B)

The Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), a separatist movement established a few years ago, was said to be most active in Pattani, Yala, Nra-thiwat and Satun, especially along the seam of these four southern provinces. The PULO, obviously, operated much more aggressively after Thai and Malaysian governments agreed to have joint operations. It's main recent activities as known to the public are to continuously attempt various acts of sabotage, and to distribute anti-government leaflets.

On 10th of March, four people accused of planting bombs in a ceremony presided by the King in Yala were sent to court. (Daily Times 9-3-78)

On 31st of March, a bomb in a Bangkok - Haad Yai express train at the Hua Lum Pong Railway Station exploded; and four passengers were injured. A stack of anti-government leaflets, signed "Black December" was found; the leaflets demanded that 1) stop teaching Thai language in the southern primary schools 2) recognise Islamic religious teachers and preachers as government officials 3) employ only muslim civil servants in Pattani and recruit Muslim graduates to fill official positions in the southern provinces 4) provide employment to Muslim in Pattani 5) stop suppressing and using violence against people in Pattani. (Siam Rath 1-4-78)

On 11th of April, four persons were killed and 41 others were wounded when a hand grenade was hurled onto a "ramwong" stage at a fair attended by hundreds of people in Yarang District of Pattani. Police said that every time Thai-Muslim people co-organize a fair, they always received trouble. (Bangkok Post 12-4-78)

The authorities had launched a suppression operation called "Tan Yong" Plan, since mid-April, after realizing that more and more villagers had joined the southern guerrillas and separatists in Nra-thiwat. The plan was operated by a newly established unit comprising about 500 personnel from the Provincial Police Commission, the Special Operation Unit, the Marine Unit and volunteers. Sophisticated weapons including armoured personnel carriers had also been provided to the unit for suppression and launching psychological warfare. (Nation 21-4-78)

The South (C)

The Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM) had its base along the Thai-Malaysia border on the Thai side i.e. in Betong District of Yala, Waeng District of Nra-thiwat and Sa-dao District of Songkhla. However, the Foreign Committee of Thai Government used to say that CPM was not a threat to national security. CPM always tried to avoid clashing with Thai armed authorities; but whenever the Malaysian troops joined, severe clashes occurred. In the areas infested by Thai Communists, CPM were seldom found (Tawon Mai 21-4-78)

Due to the extreme right-wing policy, ex PM. Thanin Krai-vixien, however, had converted the image of the CPM and persuaded all ASEAN countries to help set up a joint military operation along the Thai-Malaysian border. (Matichon 17-3-78) The Central Information Unit of the Royal Thai Army informed the press that CPM had been very active in Yala and often harassed the officials working in the Electric Dam Unit in Ban Bang Lang of the province. Moreover, CPM also gave military training to Thai Communist insurgents in the region. (Dao Siam 15-4-78) The Governor of Trang Province had recently said in Penang that all Thai terrorists in the southern provinces received training from the CPM.

All the joint Thai-Malaysian operations, no matter whether they are Big Star - Musna 1 and 2, operation Sahayabena or the recent Salamud - Swardi, had compelled CPM to be more at enmity with Thai Government.

In March, a Thai-Malaysian joint exercise was launched on Thai territory to test logistics, communications and all operational procedures to be used later (Bangkok Post 4-3-78, 10-3-78) On April 27, the Thai-Malaysian Border Committee held a meeting in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the launching of another joint operation against communist remnants along the two countries' common border. Many southern local newspapers commented that the joint agreement was merely to "create new enemies and bring neighbours to kill fellow Thai people". (ie. Trai-Rong Local News 10-3-78) The Thai-Malay border cooperation agreement permits soldiers of either side to enter the other's territory in hot pursuit up to five miles only. However, Malay soldiers apparently did not stop at the five-mile limit; Malay soldiers have been seen every where in Surat-thani; and recently a group of Malay soldiers was sighted in Phitsanulok Province in the North of Thailand. (Nation 17-4-78 quoted from Tawon Mai)

8) The North

The attacks in this region mostly came from the communist insurgents' opposition to the road construction. Since January-February last year there had nearly 80 attacks by the insurgents; during January-February this year alone, the road construction units were attacked over 40 times. Almost all contractors of the road construction in Chieng-rai, Pa-yao, Nan, Phetchaboon, Luei and Tak Province were private companies (Matichon 17-3-78)

It was said that at least 42 persons of the road construction unit have been killed since the Last January. (Thai Rath 23-3-78, Nati on 7-3-78)

On March 6th, a combined force of Border Patrol Police, military and special action forces (Red Gaur and Thai defence volunteers) were ambushed by a band of communist insurgents at kilometre no. 58 on the Mae Sod - Umpang Road in Tak Province while they were returning from providing security for construction workers (Bangkok Post 9-3-78)

Over twenty died in fierce gunbattles, during the first week of April, between the government forces and the communist insurgents in the mountainous area of Bann Song Kaew in Wang Pa District of Chieng Rai. The CPT insurgents blew up several vehicles of the road construction company, and also killed workers and security guards. (Bangkok World 13-4-78)

Three communist insurgents were killed in a clash between a Special Action Force Unit and an unknown number of communist insurgents in Mae Charin, (Bangkok Post 17-4-78)

Sevengovernment and village defence troopers were seriously wounded in two separate communist attacks in Phetchaboon (Bangkok Post 9-4-78)

At present the ISOC has a policy to employ hill-tribesmen to protect the road construction units in replacement of the protection units currently employed. (Daily Times 5-3-78)

Six hill-tribesmen in Phetchaboon were killed by communist insurgents. (Dao Siam 9-3-78)

Several villagers in Kumpaengpech Province were killed and injured by Meo hill-tribesmen who were accused of being a group linked with Thai communist insurgents (Siam Rath 28-3-78)

Five policemen were killed in an ambush by over 50 communist insurgents, while they were on their way to follow 2 trucks carrying rations and 12 misled students into the communist infested area of Phetchaboon Province (Dao Siam 5-4-78)

The government will send planes over jungles of the border region of Loei-Phetchaboon - Phitsanulok provinces to drop "safe conduct" passes to some 100 misled students who fled into the jungle after the October 6, 1976 bloody coup. (Bangkok Post 2-3-78)

9) The Central

Though there was only a small piece of news concerning the attack of the communist insurgents, it was of great importance since the incident was the Uthai-thani, a province which is only 307 km. from Bangkok.

On March 24, a police base at Ban Mai Village in Klong Wa, Bann Rai District of the province was attacked by a group of 20-odd communist insurgents. Two policemen and a young man were killed, two drivers injured. (Thai Rath, Tawon Siam 25-3-78)