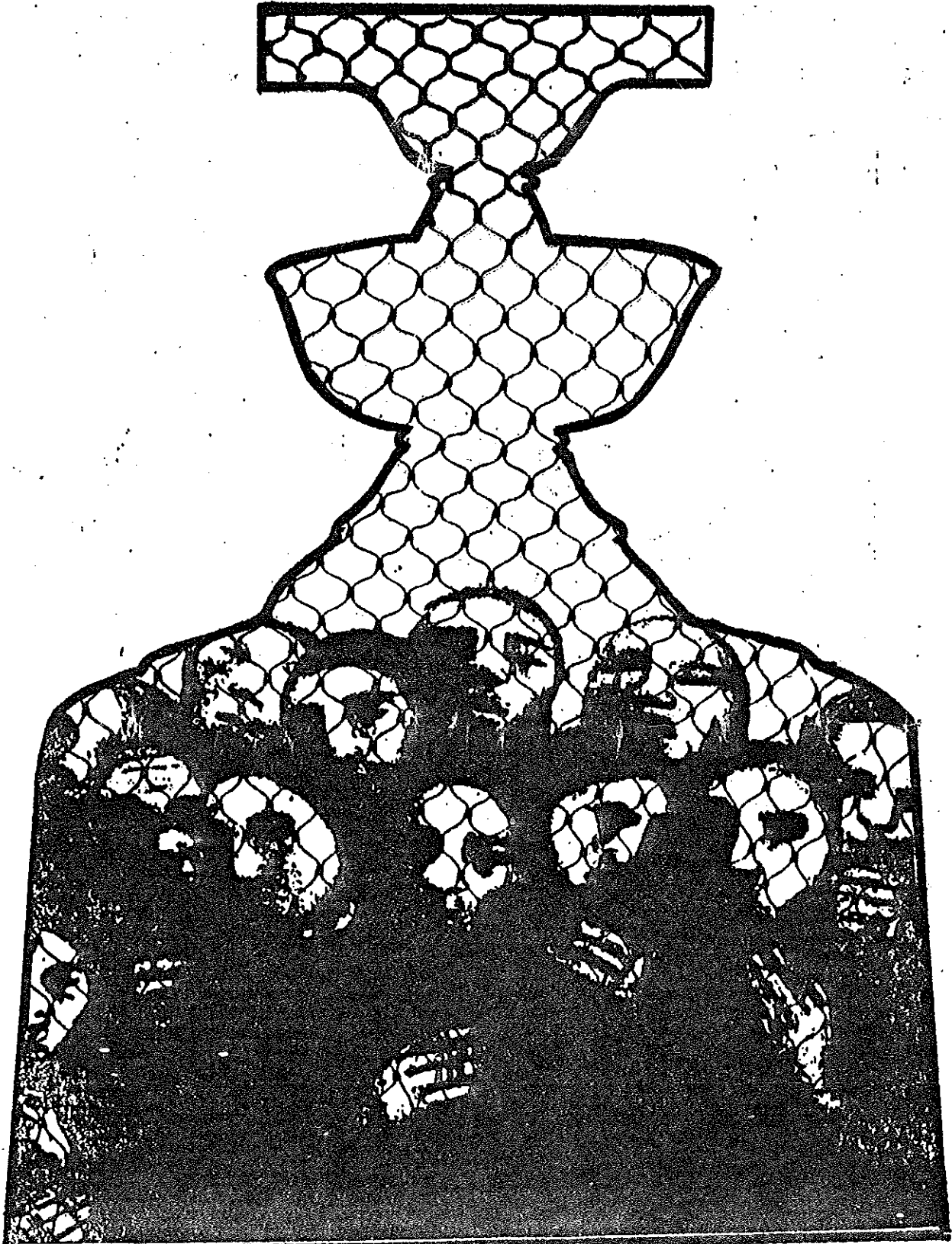


HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT

Vol.5 No1 January - March 1981



100

100

In This Issue

To Our Readers	
Human Rights Situation	1
4.5 Million Hungry Children - The Fate of Thai Children Today	4
Misuse of Government Power	9
News from Thailand	11
Activities of CGRS	15
Activity of Other Human Rights Group	19

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS)
59 Soi Sriswat, Pradipat Road, Bangkok 4, Thailand
Tel. 279-1609

To Our Readers

This is the first issue of HRTR this year. As you might know it is our intention to have this report reach you on time or at least not be too late. Though this issue comes out one month late, we are certain that the next one will not spend more time reaching you.

Up to now, you might know about the "disturbance" during April 1-3 in Thailand. Though the abortive coup d'etat pass without bloodshed, it was recorded as a significant event in our history which will have great impact on the political situation of this country in the near future. One month has passed and the suspicion and dissatisfaction among political and military circles has yet to fade away. It is uncertain to what extent it will affect the life of people who might be scapegoats of the next "disturbance".

We have included "News From Thailand" in HRTR starting from this issue. Its function is to present brief news of incidents which influence the human rights situation in a broad sense, not only political, but also in economic and social dimensions. We believe that this section will give you another aspect of Thailand where the main problems still are mixed in the life of ordinary people.

It is not late to hope that 1981 is the year that will tighten and deepen our solidarity and commitment for a peaceful and humane world. We also thank you in anticipation for your continued support for our nonviolent struggle for a more just society.

Thailand and abroad.

The changing of such tactics, because most political prisoners detained since 1975 were found to be without guilt, not only caused military and police officers of the government to lose face, but also emphasized the prisoners' stand that they were only involved in social activities in their local area rather than in Communist activities. However, even though they were released, it was difficult for them to return to their formal lives. Most of them had to move to new locations for fear that they would once again be threatened and arrested by local officials. One case is Pralom Kaewsuan who was killed in January 1980 (see details in HRTR November-December 1979)

Clearly, the urban population, especially the middle class and the intellectuals, feel more freedom and a sense of human rights and thus feel that there is a better democratic atmosphere now. However, in the rural areas, especially in the sensitive areas, people have to face more threats and violence to their human rights caused by the tricky policies of the government officials.

Despite the policy to build a good democratic image, the violation of human rights continues. Gen. Prem's government, despite its democratic image, has not been able to avoid the challenge from the people who have questioned his government's sincerity to the people and order of nation. This was accentuated recently when Gen. Prem issued the Pension Bill which extended the term of military officials and civil servants, but which mainly resulted in his being able to extend his own tenure as Army Commander-in-Chief so as to keep his military power which is an important factor for the PM portfolio.

Prem's government has also tried to control the progressive democratic movement in the country which has made the ruling elite feel somewhat uncomfortable. Last December the cabinet approved a resolution which would attempt to control private voluntary organizations, especially those which received financial support from abroad. This tends to weaken the democratic movement in the country as such organizations, play an important role in campaigning for democracy, rights and freedom. A further tactic was to spread rumors accusing these organizations of having cooperation with the CPT within the urban operations.

Another major issue was the appointment by Gen. Prem of Maj-Gen. Sudsai Husdin to be a minister of the PM's office so as to oppose the student and labor movements. Sudsai is the reputed "Godfather" of the armed Red Gaur movement, an illegal ultra-rightist armed movement. It was the armed Red Gaur movement, with cooperation from high-ranking government officials, which invaded Thammasat University on October 6, 1976 and massacred many students.

Maj-Gen Sudsai's appointment received much opposition from the public. In a recent press interview he stated that he has the privilege to go beyond law and order and to order his Red Gaur movement to take illegal action in order to protect the country. He also claimed that the invasion of Thammasat University was for the good of the country.

The fact that Gen. Prem appointed the so-called "Murderer of October 6, 1976" to a high ministerial position indicates how much sincerity he has for the democratic system and moral principles. It is clear that "democracy" he so often speaks about is simply his "tool" to fight the Communist insurgency and to create a good image for himself. If this "tool" suddenly loses its effectiveness, he is willing to use other "tools" even if they are dangerous to the people who call for their rights and freedom.

The coup d'etat on April 1-3, 1981 by a young military group called the "Young Turks" reflects their strong dissatisfaction towards Gen. Prem's administration. Although the coup did not bring about too much chaos, it was

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

Gen. Prem Tinsulanont, as an honest and liberal military officer, was able to gain enough support to become Prime Minister of Thailand. During the time he was the Commander of the 2nd Army Region, he had much success in his Communist suppression programme. He referred to the Communist insurgency as the country's number 1 enemy. His present policy is to fight the Communist insurgency in both the political and military arenas.

On April 23, 1980, only two months after he was appointed as Prime Minister, he issued order No.66/1980 on "The Policy to Fight and Defeat Communism". This order will guide the fight against Communism by all governmental organizations in both the rural and urban areas. The goal of the policy is to "stop the revolutionary warfare of the Communist Party of Thailand which is the most serious threat to the country's security" as quickly as possible.

The results of the policy are as follows:

1. Politics

The government has allowed, under the guise of democracy, a more relaxed political atmosphere, more intellectual freedom in universities, more freedom of the press (yet some newspapers have been closed down under National Administrative Reform Council decree no. 42 for criticizing the government too much. Siam Nikorn Weekly is an example), and has also withdrawn the labour act established under Thanin's rule which prohibited workers strikes. At the same time the government has offered amnesty to students and others who fled into the jungle to join the CPT. The Indochinese conflict and internal problems in the CPT have caused a large number of people to leave the CPT during Gen.Prem's time in office.

Furthermore, Prem's government has put much stress on rural development as a way of getting rid of poverty, and on suppression of corruption which has been a weak point in every government. However, it is not yet clear how much Prem's government really concentrates on these issues.

2. Military

The government's tactic for defeating the Communist insurgency has now become strategic warfare, which is the same tactic which the CPT uses.

The Rangers, a swift combat unit, have been increasingly used by Gen. Prem's government to wage war against suspected insurgents in sensitive areas in the Northeast and South of Thailand. They have been given authority to kill Communists, or suspected individuals. Even local police officials do not dare try to control the Rangers. Most of the Rangers are gangsters with few principles and little organization so they have had a very negative effect on innocent people in these areas. Villagers are often killed, threatened, robbed and the women raped by these Rangers. In response, many groups such as Members of Parliament, newsmen, lawyers, and Human Rights Groups have campaigned vigorously to the government to curb the powers of the Rangers, but these pleas have been ignored. (See details of Rangers' operation in HRTR Vol.4 No.1) Instead, the government increased the Rangers to 15 units (219 Rangers) in 1981, and ordered local police officials to give them assistance and accommodate them.

Along with the change to strategic warfare, a policy of arresting suspected Communist sympathizers has also been enacted. Since the middle of 1979, there is evidence that persons suspected of being Communists have secretly been taken away or have been killed (an example is village head Somchit Morasilp whose story is in HRTR May-June 1979, pp. 7-10). Another tactic which is often used is to send suspects to receive "training in Democracy" at Karunyathep Centre (Angle's Kindness) or at special centres in major urban areas such as Chiang Mai, Nakorn Sithammaraj or Bangkok. Those tactics make it appear to observers that there are very few political prisoners in Thailand, and helps maintain the government's "democratic" image both in

was unlikely that Gen. Prem took it as a lesson to improve his administration in a more democratic way. He still insists on policies which are used to threaten the people and to set back human rights in the country. The people continue to live in this frustrated situation.

* The example of such secret arrest are Mr. Kamon and Mrs. Wimon Piantamdee's cases

Mr. Kamon Piantamdee, age 25, is a student of the Bangkok Technological College. He left his home in Bangkok for Nakornsawan Province on December 1980, and told his mother, Mrs. Wimon (age 52) that he had to spend one day in that province. However, he failed to return home. Only his old mother was at home, and she was suffering from a diabetics disease and was nearly blind.

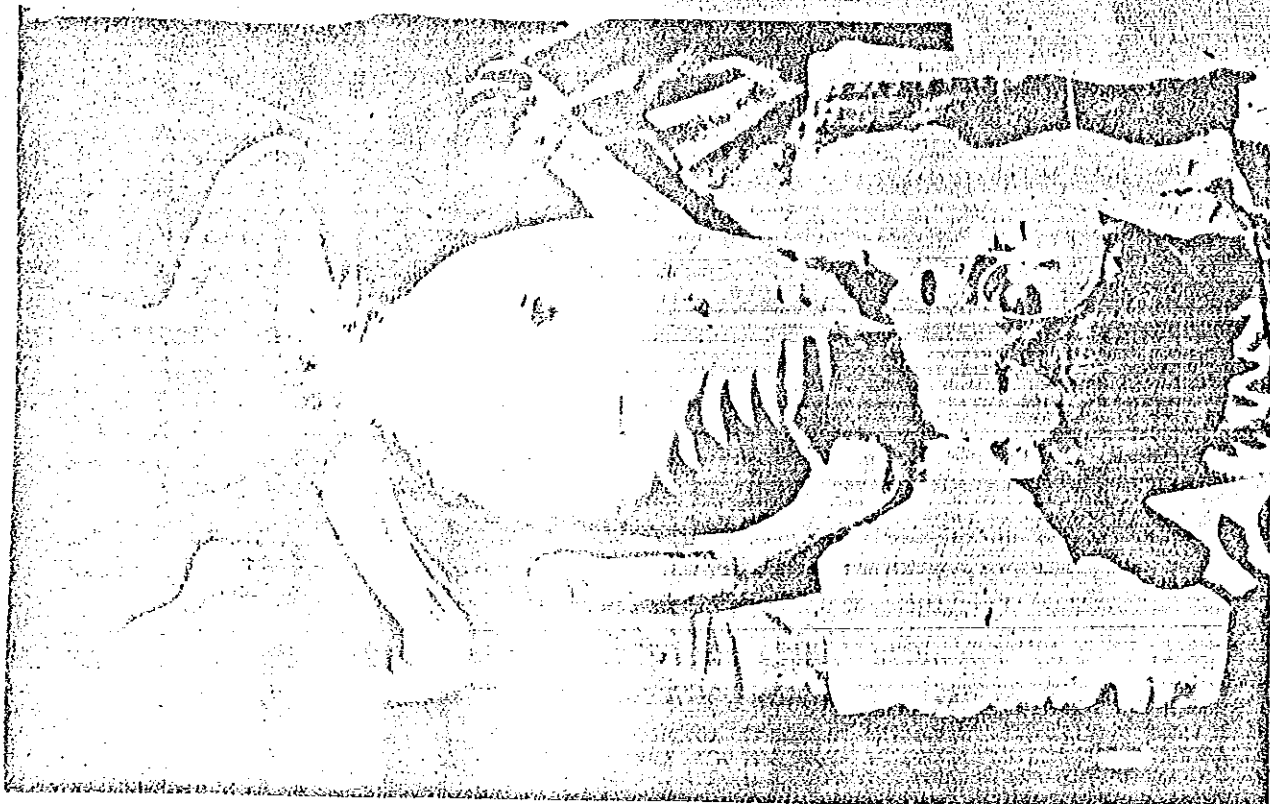
About two weeks later, on the early morning of January 10, 1981, policemen invaded the poor old woman's house. They loaded up her property in three trucks and sent her to the Sethsiri Inquiry Center for investigation. They told her that when the questioning was over she would be able to go home. However, she was not released but was detained at the Bangkok Temporary Prison on the same day. Because she did not have time to take her medicine with her, her illness became more and more serious.

The policemen told her that her son was now under detention somewhere up-country, but they would not tell her with what her son, was charged. They also tried to force her to write a letter to her son, but she refused. Finally, they recorded her voice and took photos of her, especially when she was crying and then locked her away as a Communist without bail or visitors. It should be noted that on the same day, 5 of her cousins' houses were also searched by policemen without showing any search warrant, but the owners of the houses were released after investigated at Sethsiri Inquiry Center.

Besides her, so far there are another 2 persons, named Mr. Chanchai Charnsaichonlathee (age 35) and Mr. Kriangdej Amornlertvimarn (age 33), secretly arrested and detained in Bangkok Temporary Prison with the same charge of her, without bail or visitors.

After four days, friends began looking for Kamon and his relative, Mr. Pongsak Thirapatpaiboon, who was supposed to go with him. They checked every police check-point between Bangkok and Nakornsawan to find any clue of his whereabouts. Finally, information was received from the check-point in front of Jiraprawat Military Camp that two young men fitting the description of Kamon and Pongsak had been arrested and detained in this camp. Further confirmation of this was gotten from a police colonel of the Sethsiri Inquiry Center, who said that the police only did what they were ordered to do by the Commander of the 1st Army Region. It has still not been possible for anyone to pay a visit to Kamon and Pongsak in this camp.

4.5 MILLION HUNGRY CHILDREN THE FATE OF THAI CHILDREN TODAY



"The greatest violence in this country is children dying of hunger in the midst of so much wealth. I think dying of hunger is a form of torture. They don't call it violence because it is not killing with guns or knives. For me, that's a lot of more violence than being shot. When you're shot, you die quickly but when a child dies of hunger, he dies slowly, under torture."

Dang's Life

Dang is a little three-year-old child. Her face looks innocent with her small pretty nose, but her eyes are a murky white. For nearly one year, Dang has lived in a world of darkness.

Dang's mother is an E-san (Northeastern) woman. She does not own any land so has to work as a wage labourer in the paddy fields, receiving little more than 10 baht (50 ¢) a day. With this small wage, there is only sufficient money to provide rice and salt for Dang to eat along with mother's milk which Dang has drunk since she was born.

A district development official took Dang and her mother to a hospital when Dang's eyes began to turn cloudy and swell. However, the doctor

said it was already too late to help her. Dang was destined to live in a world without light for the rest of her life.

Had Dang's mother been able to provide her with more nutritious food, Dang would not have to face this miserable fate.

Today's Children

Thailand was once called the "Granary of the Golden Peninsula" or "The Eastern Heaven" where more than 3/4 of the population were farmers. Together they could produce a tremendous amount of agricultural products which made up half of the national income from exports. These exports included rice, maize, sugar, vegetables, fruits, etc. Today, Thailand continues to export large quantities of agricultural products. How then can we understand why millions of children must face the same fate as Dang, and thousands of others die each year because of malnutrition?

Nowadays, the problem of malnutrition among children is drastically increasing. Last June, the Ministry of Public Health disclosed that 56% of the Thai children of pre-school age (0-6 years) are malnourished. In other words, 4.5 million children⁽¹⁾ whose bodies and minds are facing the most rapid growth of their lives, are facing a crisis condition in which, because of lack of proper nutrition, their brain and body growth might suddenly stop, causing serious damage

Regions	Number of Preschool Children	Normal %	Nutritional Status		
			Malnutrition ¹ %	Malnutrition ² %	Malnutrition ³ %
North East (16 Provinces)	262,886	40.46	41.63	15.48	2.43
North (16 Provinces)	47,123	46.35	37.24	13.71	2.70
South (12 Provinces)	35,170	48.45	37.05	12.59	1.87
Central (16 Provinces)	24,035	59.60	31.32	7.86	1.22
East (8 Provinces)	19,910	57.70	31.60	9.00	1.70
Total (68 Provinces)	389,124	43.96%	39.54%	14.20%	2.39%

Nutrition Surveillance System Among Preschool Children in Thailand By June 1980
Nutrition Division, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health

(1) Office of the National Education Commission, "The conclusion of nutrition to set up policy and long term development program for children", 1979

This, however, is not as discouraging as to find that there are more than 50,000 child deaths each year caused by malnutrition and related disease. In 1974 there were 55,604 reported deaths from malnutrition which accounted for more than half of all child deaths in that year.

Most of these children live in rural areas, and their parents are involved in some type of agriculture. Despite this occupation, almost all of them could not take three meals each day, and many of them ate only one meal a day consisting of rice and a kind of food made from chili and fish sauce or salt.

Thai farmers can produce very large amounts of rice. For example, in 1979 16.7 million tons of paddy were produced. This is enough paddy to feed 87 million people, almost twice the present Thai population. At the same time Thailand exported nearly 2.7 million tons of rice, enough to feed not less than 21 million people.⁽²⁾ Why then are the children of the farmers malnourished?

Lack of knowledge of good nutrition is one reason for this problem. Many old attitudes about child feeding continue. More than that, though, is the fact that many women, especially those living in urban slums, have to work and can not breast feed their infants. Instead, they feed them sweet, condensed milk which is cheaper than powdered milk. However, lack of good knowledge about nutrition is not nearly as much a problem as poverty and indebtedness.

The northeast of Thailand, where up to 2/3 of all malnourished children live, is also the poorest part of Thailand. The World Bank reports that the rural people there earn only about 241 baht a month which is about 3 times less than the national average. Unfortunately, their monthly expenses come to about 262 baht, meaning that their expenses are greater than their income.⁽³⁾ This creates a situation of serious poverty which is an obstacle to developing a healthy, nutritious lifestyle. A further obstacle is the break-down of the traditional self-sufficient system so that farmers must now depend on a marketing system which they can not control.

The Poverty -- From Where?

Since 1960, Thailand had been carrying out a "development decade" to build roads, water resources, electricity, etc. An economic development program has also been established. However, such development has not been equally distributed among the population. Its success is judged only by the increase of the GNP.

Although these programs do not directly state that they are designed to benefit the Capitalist Class, there is a clear bias in their favour and most of the financial benefits move into the hands of the Capitalist Class. Thus the national savings appears to be increasing since the rich are in a better financial position to save than the poor are. Such money is a financial resource for investment which is an important factor in developing the country. Consequently, when the population sets aside more money in savings, there is better opportunity for economic growth. The development tactics generally used emphasize unbalanced growth with more attention paid to the industrial sector than to the agriculture sector. The negative effects of this development will be felt by the people in the rural areas. For example, if a dam is constructed to provide electricity for the industrial areas, thousands of farmers will be driven off their ancestral farms by the flooding caused by the dam. Millions of acres of forests and rich farm land are also destroyed. The electricity from the dam is of little use to the farmers who have few if any electrical appliances, but is mainly provided for the urban areas, as well as the industrial, commerce and service sectors.

(2) Thai people need to consume rice on the average of 340-345 gms/day or 124-126 kgs/year.

(3) Advisory Board of Prime Minister, "Report on Rural Development Policy", 1981

It is necessary for Thailand to export much of their agricultural products in order to earn enough foreign exchange to pay for the oil supply imported into the country. However, only 6% of this oil is used in the agricultural sector. Hence, the situation indicates that the majority of the population has to produce commodities for the minority who are oppressive and can live extravagantly and luxuriously.

The results of this economic development is that 70% of the population-agriculturists and farmers- are abandoned and left to continue using out-dated farming methods and to depend only on natural rain fall for their water supply. About 85% of the arable land in the country does not receive any water through irrigation projects. Whenever there is not enough rainfall, or when floods damage the crops, the farmers must face debts. The problem seems to be increasing as local weather conditions have changed from previous years.

Farmers also face a market problem because they lack organization and the knowledge to understand economic and marketing systems. Furthermore, the government's policy to provide cheap rice to the urban population has forced farmers to sell their paddy at a very low price. They are also often exploited by local middlemen. Data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives indicates that farmers can only gain a little profit in a good year, but in some years they suffer a loss. For example, during 1977-1978, farmers lost almost 18.50 baht per rai (approximately \$2.25 an acre). Later, in 1978-1979, the price of rice was better and they made an average of 58 baht per rai (\$7.10 per acre).⁽⁴⁾ It is important to understand that 60% of the farmers farm no more than 30 rai each, so their profits are very small. It is doubtful whether or not this small profit is enough to provide the rural families with a proper living.

It is clearly seen that after 20 years of "development", the gap between the agricultural sector and other sectors has been greatly enlarged. In 1976, per capita income in the agricultural sector were 10 times less than industry, 6 times less than commerce, and 5 times less than in the service sector.⁽⁵⁾ While the rich capitalists become richer, the farmers have to face more bankruptcy, and the loss of more and more of their land which is absolutely necessary to their livelihood. In 1976 the number of farmers who do not own any land increased to almost 1 million, out of a total 4.4 million farm families.⁽⁶⁾ Their debts increased from 16,000 million baht in 1974 to 20,000 million baht in 1978; that is, an average debt of 4,550 baht for each farm family.

Present Government Approaches and Possible Solutions

Even though such government agencies as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health and the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority provide supplemental foods to malnourished children of both pre-school age and school age, only a small portion of these children are aided. Approximately only 1% of the malnourished children in the country receive this government supplemental feeding while the remaining 99% are still abandoned in the rural and urban slum areas.⁽⁷⁾ They are doomed to grow up emaciated, sluggish and dwarfish.

D

(4) Kosit Punpiamras, "The Poverty in E-san Rural Area", Rural in 1980. Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 1981.

(5) Per capita income of important careers:

Agriculture = 7,113 baht Service = 32,665 baht

Industry = 45,215 baht Commerce = 70,339 baht

From The Conclusion of 4th Program on National Economic and Social Development (1977-1981)

(6) Survey by Office of Agriculture Land Reform, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

(7) The lecture of Dr. Saisuree Jutikul, Deputy Secretary-General of Office of the National Education Commission, on "Child's Rights" at AUA Hall, Bangkok on December 8, 1980

Eventhough the 5th Program on Economic and Social Development (1981-1985) will stress the importance of the malnutrition problem, it is doubtful that much progress will be made since the present economic situation tends to exacerbate the problem. Thailand insists on having an export-oriented economic system in order to solve its trade deficit which was 47,055 million baht in 1979. This system causes agricultural commodities, especially human food supplies, to be sucked out of the rural areas and used for export. The main advantages of these exports is realized by the middle class and capitalist class. At the same time, the government has encouraged agri-business companies, especially those with connections with the internal subsidiary company, to become more and more involved in the agricultural sector. This has resulted in a marketing monopoly of agricultural products, and the accumulation of large tracts of land by these companies. The farmers, thus, have lost not only their land, but their participation in the marketing system as well, and have been forced to become farm labourers on the large plantations. This situation can easily be seen in the case of Doie Pineapple Company which has acquired 25,000 rai (1000 acres) of land and brought bankruptcy to many farmers in the surrounding area. (see HRTR Vol. 4 No.2)

To deal with the problem of malnutrition by simply providing a protein supplement, is simply to reduce an immediate problem. To solve the root of this problem, it will be necessary to make major changes in the structures of income distribution and control of production factors, especially agriculture land ownership. At the same time, means of increasing agriculture production must be found and a marketing system which benefits the farmers devised.

It is doubtful that these questions will find serious acceptance among those in power. Whenever farmers do start organizing together in order to improve their situation and have the power to bargain on prices for their produce, they immediately become suspected of being a threat to national security by local officials. Since 1975 all the farm leaders who helped organize the Farmers and Agriculturist Federation have been assassinated, and the police have been unable to find anyone responsible for the killings. The last leader of the Federation, Chamras Muangyam, was assassinated in 1979. Thus, the solution to the root causes of this problem seems rather hopeless.

Under these economic and political structures, it is not so difficult to guess what the future will be like. When the present young generation grows up, over half of the adults will be unhealthy, and stunted both physically and mentally. What kind of national future can that insure us?

MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT POWER

Seven People Were Killed And Cremated By Police

Lopburi; Feb. 4, 1981 On Saraburi-Lomsak Highway the local police and local administrative officials killed 7 villagers. They tied their hands behind with handcuffs and shot them in the head. They then hastily cremated the bodies. After that they reported to the district officer that seven robbers were killed during a shoot-out with the police when the robbers tried to rob a truck.

Anyhow the local villagers were dissatisfied with the police inhumanity because they found that those victims had no weapons or any equipment for robbery. One eye-witness said that there were guns and hand-grenades with them after they had been killed already.

It was not clear how the shooting started, and it was not understandable why the police hastily cremated all the 7 bodies without allowing relatives to identify them.

Later the relatives made an appeal to Members of Parliament which called the involved officials to investigate. But they were informed that the cremation had been done by the villagers. This seemed to be ridiculous and unreasonable why the villagers had to cremate the 7 bodies.

A Suspect Died In Prison

Bangkok; Dec 16, 1980 Mr. Chatchawal was arrested and charged with the running a thieves' den. Later he died during the detention in the prison of Tung Mahamek Police Station.

It was found from the investigation that his death was caused by too much rough treatment of the police so as to force him to accept his charge which he kept refusing.

Anyhow the other suspects, who were kept in the same prison and who saw the evidence, were threatened if they disclosed any details.

Policeman Killed A Man Caused By Personal Conflict

Bangkok; Feb 7, 1981 Mr. Mani Jitprawat (aged 18) was shot dead by a policeman of the Crime Suppression Division because of a personal conflict.

Eye-witnesses said that they saw Pol. Corporal Prawet walk back home and watched by Mr. Mani with whom he had a conflict, which made him very angry. Later he left his house and suddenly shot Mr. Mani. Although Mr. Mani pleaded for his life, he was shot 2 times more until he died. Then Pol. Corporal ran away.

At night neighbourhoods saw Pol. Corporal Prawet leave in a police car with some of his police friends. Later there were 3 policemen in full police uniform went there and announced to the people not to become involved in the case.

A Police Inspector Was Charged With Murdering A Newsmen

Krabi; Feb. 13, 1981 Mr. Suebsak Jaisamut, formerly a local newsmen, was killed because of his attack on the police's operations.

He was a candidate for Members of the Provincial Council. During his campaign, he attacked the police's operations on gambling and drug suppression. He said the policemen lacked the ability to suppress such problems. Later he was assassinated.

It was found from the investigation that Pol. Maj-Col. A-kadej and 3 lower-ranking policemen together shot Mr. Subesak. They all were arrested and the case now is in the court.

Two Teenager Were Killed By Police

Bangkok: Mar. 7, 1981 | During the police patrol of Tung Mahamek Police Station, the policemen found 3 teenagers standing in the dark. They started to investigate, but the 3 teenagers ran away. The policemen shot them killing 2 at once. The police claimed that the teenagers fired first.

However, the fact was that the teenagers held a .38 pistol, but never fired. Moreover, the policemen did not allow reporters to cover this news and did not disclose any details.

Prison Director Killed Two Prisoners And One Witness

Samut Sakorn: Feb. 23, 1981 Mr. Boonterm Chantamala, Director of Samut Sakorn Prison, was arrested on charge of murdering 2 prisoners and threatening other prisoners not to disclose the murder.

However, one prisoner guard, who saw his bad behaviour towards prisoners, could not stand such injustice. He wrote the details of persons involved in this case and also the bad behaviour of the Director of this prison. Then he gave it to his friend who was a Member of Parliament. Later he disappeared and it is suspected that he was killed in order that he would not disclose what had happened in the Samut Sakorn Prison anymore.

NEWS FROM THAILAND

On Administration And Law

1. "Godfather" Of The Red Gaur Become Minister

Maj-Gen. Sudsai Husdin, a retired military officer, who is called "Godfather" of the ultra-rightists Red Gaur was appointed last February to be a minister of the Prime Minister's Office of Gen. Prem's government. Anyway there was opposition from the public on this appointment. Recently he gave an interview to reporters in which he gave misleading informations about the 6 October situation and looked down upon students and the people.

His Red Gaur movement was an arm of a gangster group and had illegal operations in the city to oppose the democratic movement. The group consisted of those who used to be mercenaries, soldiers, and students from vocational schools. From 1975 until now whenever there was a movement to call for democracy, the Red Gaur would interfere and cause chaos until many innocent people were killed; for example, on March 20, 1976 they threw a bomb into the demonstration of students and people against US military bases. On August 21, 1975, they invaded Thammasat University to burn the building and on October 6, 1976 they killed lots of people in Thammasat.

During his interview he said he was above law and order because what he did was to serve the country, by making an example of the 6 October 1976 situation. He added that he would use the vocational students to control the student movement.

After that there was much opposition from many groups: students from 19 universities sent a letter to PM to control Sudsai's behaviour; discussion was set up to resist him; rector of Thammasat University gave an official letter refusing what Sudsai said.

However Sudsai's reaction was to say that he was misquoted by the press. He also made an appointment with students to get the tape recording of his interview. So far the students have not yet received it.

His accusation of the newspapers caused the feeling of dissatisfaction among reporters. When they asked him for his explanation, his secretary spoke impolitely to the reporters. Such impolite responses caused much more dissatisfaction among reporters and the Journalist Association of Thailand which afterwards issues protest letter to him.

2. Government Will Control Non-Governmental Organization

The cabinet last December approved the proposal to clamp control on organizations maintaining direct contacts with labourers, students and farmers so as to "prevent these most sensitive sectors of the masses from being subverted against national interests".

There are at least 16 organizations funded by private groups abroad and also by socialist governments or parties which are required to register with the Ministry of Interior. These organizations have to reveal their objectives, methods, names of officers and sources of funds. It is because

their activities - contacting labourers, students, and farmers; offering them grants, arranging seminars for them; sending them abroad for training and in some cases giving regular remunerations - have come under the suspicion of the authorities. However, the government has no idea about their activities which they have been conducting among the labourers, students and farmers.

Eventhough some officials of some of these organizations and diplomatic representatives of countries where the organizations have been set up protested this measure, it will be implemented soon for the reason that it needs to stop or prevent any action that could affect "Thailand's interest or security".

3. Proposed Death Sentence To Any Person Carrying A Pistol

Mr. Paitoon Makkamak, a Member of the House of Representatives, proposed a bill to the Parliament that to carry a pistol on any person was illegal; that is, the people who owned pistols or any kind of weapon had to give them back to the government within 90 days. If anyone still owned the weapon, he would be sentenced to death.

Later Pol. Lt-Gen. Narong Mahanont, Deputy Director-General of the Police Department, gave an interview about this bill saying that it should have strict measure to control all kinds of weapons and should have a strong punishment - the death sentence- because this was a main factor of crimes and necessary to the country's security.

However, Mr. Marut Boonnak, Minister of Justice, expressed his view that the police, now, did not have sufficient ability to protect the people's safety, so the people should have their own weapons to protect their property and their own security. He also did not agree with the proposal that anyone without permission to have a weapon would be sentenced to death. His reason was that such persons were not always criminals.

On Military

1. More US Military Aid For Thailand

A US State Department official said on March 23, 1981 that US President Ronald Reagan is seeking an increase in some foreign aid funds for Thailand.

He said increases for Thailand "are being sought" in recognition of the increased military threat from Vietnam. They would enable the Thai Government to equip more rifle companies in its marine corps, to buy US transport and patrol planes, helicopters and missiles and to improve its anti-tank and anti-aircraft system.

The \$80 million projected program for Thailand is \$30 million more than for the current year, the largest increase sought for any East Asia country.

2. High-Ranking Military Officer's Attitude on CPT's Front

On March 9, 1981 Gen. Saiyud Kerdpol, Chief of Supreme Command Staff, gave a speech to commission-level military officers during a seminar about the National Security Educational Project. He said that at this moment CPT's cooperative front has increased its operations both in the rural area

and in the city.

"The CPT's cooperative front group was an important movement standing behind all conflicts and chaos nowadays which we have to catch up with. There are many of them in Bangkok and also in the rural areas."

Gen. Saiyud insisted that people must not believe CPT's propaganda, and it was necessary to destroy Communist organizations including all of its members.

3. Attack On A Big Communist War Base

On Feb 25, 1981 the 3rd Army Region Troops started "Khao Kro Strategic Warfare" which is located among Pissuloke, Petchaboon and Loei province and was believed to be one of the most important war bases of the communist insurgency in the northern part. The war operation took 5 months, and especially during Feb.24-25. These was a very serious battle.

The report said that although the soldiers could capture many areas, they could not capture the communist insurgency's big base. Anyway both sides received lots of damage. The wounded soldiers were sent to hospitals in Petchaboon and Bangkok. Until Feb 24 there were 24 wounded soldiers in Petchaboon Hospital whose rankings were as private soldier up to Lieutenant.

Col. Bancha Thongloi, spokesman of Internal Security Operations Command, disclosed that the 3rd Army Region could effectively suppress communist insurgency and could capture all areas with few casualties. That is 10 soldiers died and 30 of them wounded, and 1 helicopter was shot down.

On Ordinary People

1. Textile Workers Staged A "Long March" Strike

On March 17, 1981 over 1,500 workers (most were female) of Num Chai Textile Factory staged a strike throughout the week after their demands for better wages and work welfare. were turned down by the executives of the factory.

The three main demands were the call for an increase by 5 baht in daily wage of workers who have worked for over 2 years, a 2 month bonus and a 400 baht monthly living allowance (they were being given 210 baht a month).

Then on March 23, they decided to launch a "long march" by marching from the factory to the Government House, covering a distance of 32 kms, to call for sympathy from the government.

Later the 4-day-old sit-in at the Government House ended peacefully when compromises were reached. The compromise was struck after the executives agreed to provide 3 meals of rice every day to replace the worker's demand for an increase of cost-of-living allowance from 210 baht to 400 baht a month.

The original 7 baht a day cost-of-living allowance would be incorporated in the wages. This represent a compromise over workers original demand that their wages be increased by 5 baht a day per person. That means that the lowest paid workers, who were getting 54 baht a day, would be getting 61 baht daily instead.

Regarding the demand to increase the annual bonus to 2 months (from 15 days) the executives agreed to consider the demand next year.

The factory open on April 1 finally,

2. Thai Girl's Fate

On Feb 9, 1981 at Suan Yai District, Nontaburi Province a 13 years old girl was abducted while she was having her dinner at home. There were 12 men who molested her in public, put her in a sack and ran away immediately by car.

Before that the girl was deceived and sold to a brothel in Khon Kaen Province 4 months ago. Then her parents had to pay 3,000 baht in order to bring her back. It was expected that she was again sold to a brothel.

3. 255 Girls Seized In Songkhla

A 100-strong police unit staged a surprise raid on the market at Padang Besar bordering Malaysia on Jan 28 and arrested 255 alleged prostitutes and 43 men.

Police said the people arrested were taken from 27 brothels in the market place. Some of the men were Malaysian criminals wanted in their own country who were hiding out over the border. Police said they found underground rooms at some of the brothels, used to imprison girls who refused to sleep with customers. Many girls rescued from the brothels said they had been lured into prostitution while others said they were forced into the business through narcotics addiction.

Police said that Padang Besar, in Songkhla, has developed a reputation as the narcotics capital of the South and a major centre for the sale of girls for prostitution.