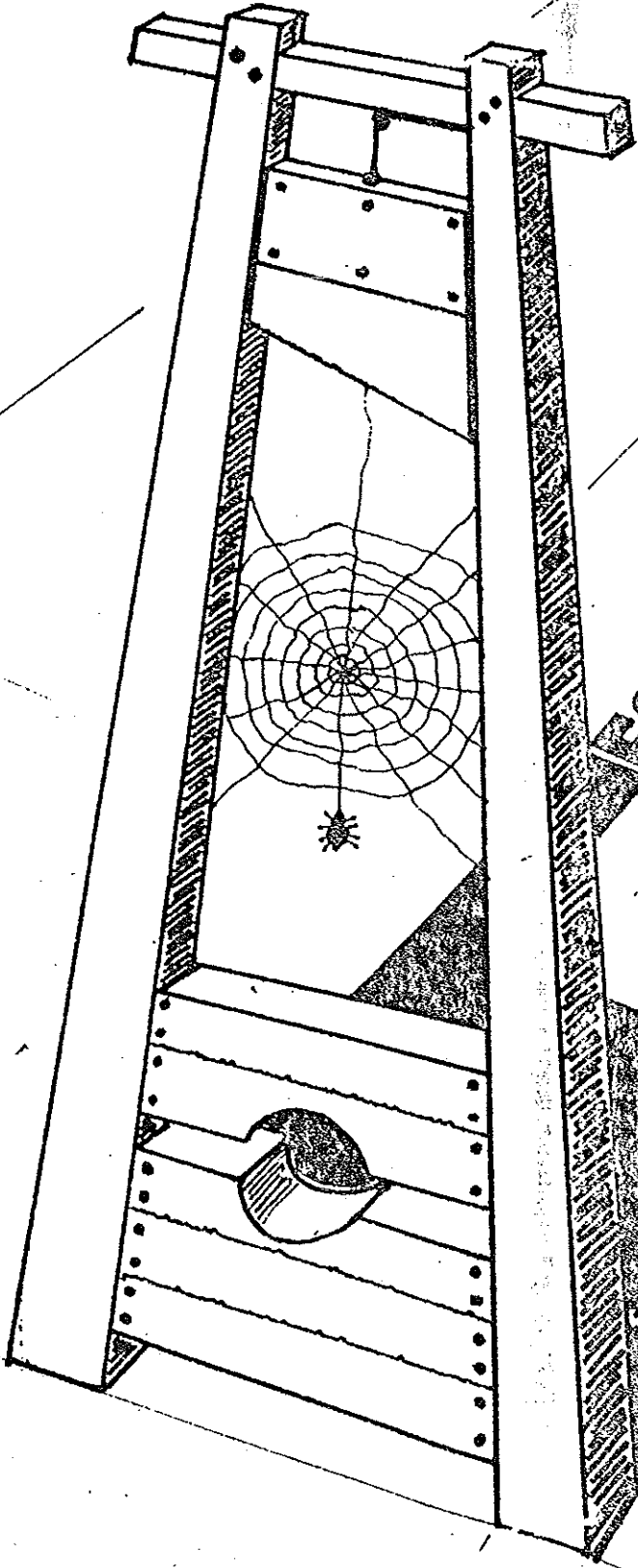


# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT

VOL. 5 No 2 APRIL - JUNE 1981



**FORGOTTEN 200**  
**VICTIM OF THE ARBITRARY POWERS**



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## To Our Readers

In the last issue of HRTR, we reported about the arrest of Mrs Wimon Piantamdee and mysterious disappearance of her son and nephew. Up to now there is no positive move on either case from the responsible officials. In the case of Mrs Wimon, a high-ranking police official said that the police will release her on condition that she plead guilty as a communist and enter the "democracy course" in the camp for a period (usually 2-4 months according to the regulation). In the case of her son and nephew, nobody can give clarification about their disappearance or whereabouts. However it should be noted that not long after these incidents, in May the same kind of incident happened to a young graduate of Ramkambheng University whose disappearance was followed by a letter sent to her parents by an anonymous writer claiming that she was detained and tortured, among many students, in the military camp of Pitsanulok Province, which is not far from Nakorn Sawan, the province where Wimon's son and nephew were last seen in front of the military camp. It seems to us that the disappearance happened systematically with a political purpose to many people in Bangkok and nearby provinces. More information of this phenomena is expected to be reported in the next issues of HRTR.

For those who are interested in the struggle of Rama IV community which is facing an eviction by a trade center construction company, we are glad to inform you that the eviction has been postponed for an limited period. Besides, during the last four months the civil court extended a reprieve on its eviction order against the community leader, Dr Somporn Surarit, three times. This is the consequence of a long and hard fight of the community and the full support of local and international individual and organizations. However, the struggle is not finished and unexpected obstacles are still going on. On May 19, the community was razed by a huge blaze which burnt down over 100 houses, leaving 1,000 people homeless. Moreover, a 72 year-old women was killed in the fire which was probably caused by arson. This blaze was the worst one among the six others during the past 15 years. Nevertheless this incident help strengthen the community and encourage the people for more unity and clearer understanding about the foreseen difficulties they will endure.

In the end, we would like to inform you that since March this year, we decide that the child labour problem will be one of our main areas of work which aims at urging the public and government to be seriously aware of this growing problem. We hope that our activity will be the one among several efforts to push for active measure to remedy and solve the child labour in the long run.

## The Human Rights Situation

The human rights of the Thai people, during the past three months, has been broadly affected by the government officials and Rangers, the special armed unit. Even though there have been campaigns to oppose such cruel behaviours - assassinations and threats of innocent people - by groups of people and various human rights organizations since last year, those rangers are still carrying out their arbitrary actions in rural areas. They committed not less than 12 cases in almost every region of the country. (pages 10-12) In Bangkok, an 11-year-old boy was killed by a ranger after he was abducted for a ransom expected to be spend on his planned marriage. In Phrom Kiri District, Nakorn Si Thammarat, the southern province, not less than 7 villagers were killed within 3 weeks by local rangers. In Na Sarn District, Surat Thani, one railway-policeman was shot dead by 5 rangers with war arms while they boarded a train for robbery. In Kalasin Province, a villager was threatened with death by a ranger because he was an eye-witness while the ranger robbed and killed another villager. In Sabayoi District, Yala, about 240 villagers were robbed by 60 rangers after they forced them to leave their houses by saying that they wanted to search for communist insurgents. There are other cases which need not be referred to such as the rape of a woman in Bangkok, a demand for money as a protection for the victim's business, etc. Although these issues were reported in newspapers throught out the country, it seems that there were not any reactions from the involved officials or the government to prevent or punish those rangers who made such cruel crimes. Lt.Gen. Chaun Wannarat, the 4th Region Army Commander, who commanded all ranger units in the South where the rangers made more illegal cases, said on June 16 to avoid responsibility that most of the cases were made by communist insurgents who were disguised as rangers so villagers would misunderstand and believe that they were rangers. It was noticed that in the case of the rangers who robbed a train at Surat Thani and hid themselves in their own unit, Lt. Gen. Chaun wanted to protect the rangers by refusing to return them to the police for investigation. He said that it was not sure whether the rangers in his command were really robbers. If they were, he would punish them because it was not suitable for the other units to punish those who were in his command.

Besides, some labour leaders also have had the same fate as those unlucky villagers. On April 10, Mr. Vichien Prangthong, formerly president of Komolkit Rice Mill's labour union, was shot dead while he was resting at his house. (page 16 ) He once led a strike and was one of the worker delegates to negotiate with the employer. Later on March 7, he was dismissed without any compensation. Before he was assassinated, his appeal for compensation in Labour Court was in process.

Meanwhile, about 3 reporters of 3 newspapers in 3 provinces were assassinated and threatened. (page 13 ) On April 17, Mr. Sakol Dounkaew, a reporter in Saraburi Province, was shot and badly hurt. On June 9, Mr. Pisit Soituram, a reporter in Nakorn Prathom Province, was threatened by a strange man while he was teaching. On June 10,

Mr. Montri Pattarawat, a reporter in Nakorn-sawan Province, was shot dead. The three cases so far, the police could not arrest any suspect. It was strange that in the case of Mr. Montri the police could capture a suspect who was the police in that area, but 3 hours after the arrest, suspect could escape from the police station where he was held.

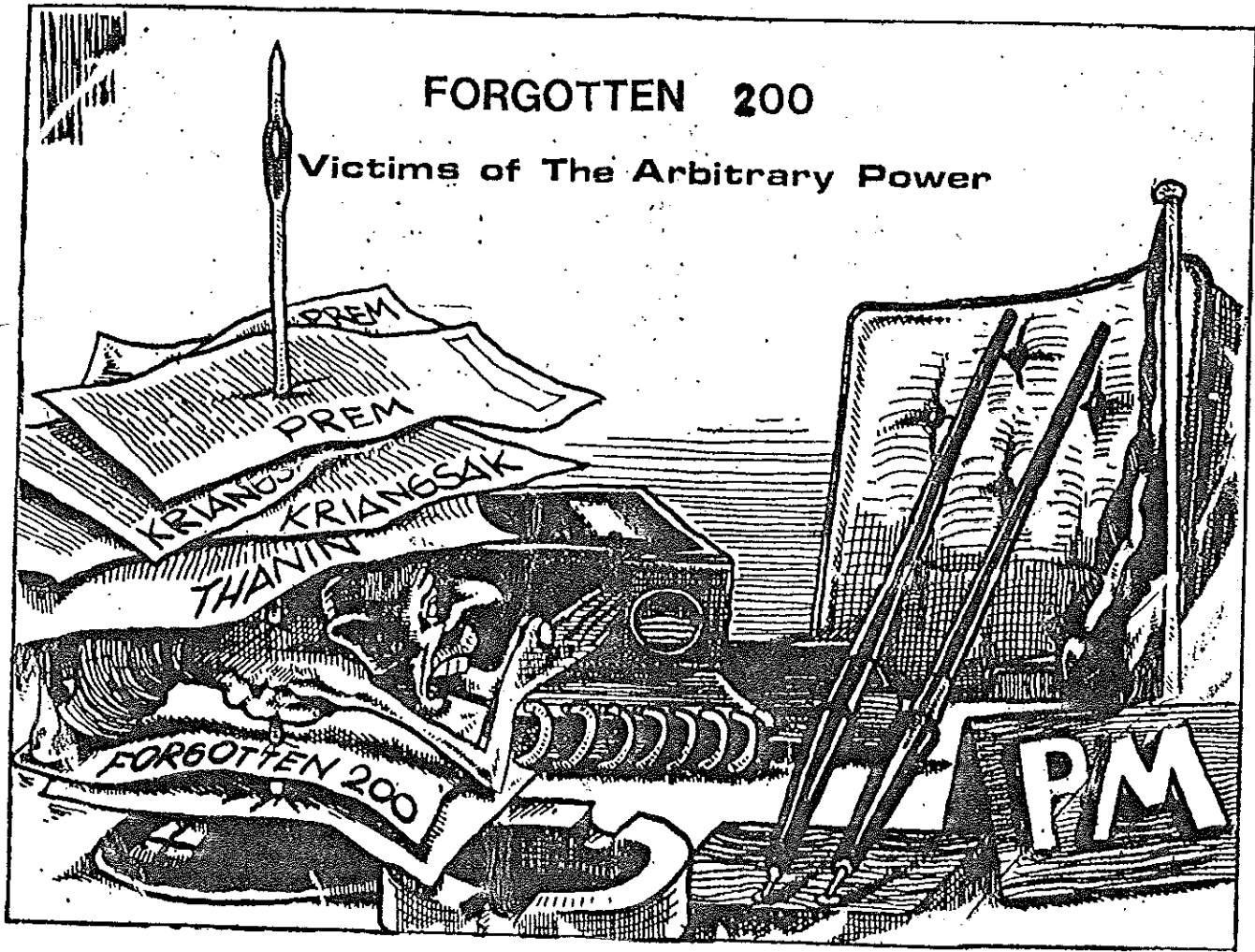
Apart from this, the government has controlled over freedom of the press and other mass media as a result of the abortive coup d'etat during April 1-3 which caused the good image of the government to fall. On May 22, two daily newspapers - Chao Thai and Naew Na- and a weekly magazine, Soo Anokote, were warned by the police not to report "secret memo" of Col. Mannon Roopkachorn, one leader of the April coup. On June 10, the government ordered all radio stations in the country not to monitor any news or articles from newspapers by giving reason that there were many news and articles against the government which destroyed the government's prestige. The government will close any radio station in case of violating this order.

As to students and voluntary organizations, they have been more carefully watched by the government and military offices since there have been many students and people defecting from the Communist Party of Thailand. Some government officials believe that the defections are not caused by ideological conflict, but are CPT's new policy to increase the urban struggle which was the result of the successful revolution in Nicaragua. Therefore, those who were from the jungle seemed to have, in the eyes of the government, the target to build the CPT's front in the urban stronger.

On June 7, a daily newspapers, Matipoom, printed an article on CPT's situation during March - April by the Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC) whose main role is to suppress communist insurgency. ISOC pointed out that the extreme leftists have increased their role among the student movement. The 19 Unions of Students were believed to be under the control of CPT. Moreover, it said that the Campaign Group for Amendment to the Constitution was an open organization under the control of the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces (CCPDF) which was a close ally of CPT. Though it did not refer to other people's organizations, it reflected the government's view very clearly that it is the antagonist against organizations which call and fight for true democracy and justice in the society.

However, even if the human rights of Thai people in general seems to be worse, some good signs still occurred during April-June. The struggle for the people's rights has been expanded to people in various professions at large apart from students and intellectuals. On May 14, hundreds of farmers staged a rally in front of the Parliament during the session asking for the policy to solve the problem of tapioca's price which had lowered very quickly. During June 8-11, 130 farmers from Pitsanulok Province staged sit-in at Government House to ask the government to stop the construction of a college which encroached their land. (page 16) At the same time, villagers from a suburb of Bangkok organized on May 4 demonstration against the misuse of the police's authority. Besides, various labour unions have risen to ask for more rights from their employers.

The more interesting case of people's struggle was the campaign of relatives of the convicts who have been detained without trial, but with special order of the Prime Minister during 1976-1978. Eventhough the Premier has been changed ; cabinet has been reshuffled, and Farliament has been established, those 204 convicts have been ignored during the past three years. Anyway, after the continucus struggle of the relatives and many human rights organizations, Gen. Prem, the Premier, made the first announcement on June 16 that the government would review these cases to give justice towards those convicts. Such good signal appeared from the hard struggle of the people for more than a year which finally draw attention of the government and the Farliament. (See details of the case in pages 4-9 ) Nevertheless, we should realise that it is only one good sign to appear in an atmosphere which has a tendency to become continuously worse and deteriorated in this country.



After the bloody coup d'etat of 6th-October 1976, Mr. Thanin Kraivichien stepped up to be Prime Minister and announced his policy to rule the country by using absolute authority. His government announced the use of many laws which violate the human rights principles, martial law, including the Constitution 1976 in which the administrators had much more authority. Particularly, article no. 21 gave the PM "authority to order or to do anything" with the approvement of the cabinet and Advisory Council of the PM, in order to "prevent, restrain, or suppress any action which endangers the security of the nation, the throne, economy; or any action ~~make~~ threatens to peace, stability, or the moral of the people ; or any action which destroys the national resources or interrupts the health of the people - if these actions happen either before or after the day the Constitution becomes valid and either inside or outside the country". In other words, this article meant that the PM. had full authority to try any case and give punishment to prisoners, even sentence to death, without having the normal court process which is open and fair. Moreover, a suspect could not have any rights to appeal - never.



### Result of Arbitrary Power

Since the Constitution was made valid, 38 persons were sentenced by the PM. according to article No.21, charged with rape and murder, forgery of government document, trade in explosion materials, and drug traffic. About 10 persons or 1/4 of them were sentenced to death and the rest were kept in prisons from 10 years to life. They had no chance or no rights to put up a plea or to prove their innocence.

Although Thanin was thrown out in October 1977 and Gen. Kriangsak became the PM. instead, such absolute authority still existed in the new Constitution of 1977 which was changed from article No.21 to No.27. Due to this article, about 141 persons were punished, 7 of whom were sentenced to death. In 1978, the new Constitution was created in which the PM. still had absolute authority by article No.200 as a temporary provision. There were 25 more persons whom Gen.Kriangsak used his absolute authority on and 8 of them were sentenced to death.

The authority to try and punish those who were suspected without having the normal court process was strongly opposed by international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and many local human rights organizations. Such broad opposition caused article No.200 to be dissolved.

### Fate of the Forgotten 200

At present such authority is not used anymore, but a total of 204 persons are still kept as victims of arbitrary power of the PM. and the government. The public and the Parliament, including the Court, have not paid any attention to them, they are thus known as the "Forgotten 200".

The detainees now number only 179 and the missing 25 were sentenced to death during 1976-1978. Among those alive, 28 were sentenced to life imprisonment, 26 were to be imprisoned ranging from 3-20 years. They have been kept in Lard Yao Prison, Bangkok Prison, Bangkwang Prison, charged with forging government documents, destruction of the forests, smuggling illegal minerals, violent activities, drug trafficking, rape and murder, and the abduction and killing hostages. None of them had opportunity to go to court. Almost all of them were accused as guilty by the police. Many of them said that they were innocent and were threatened to accept such false accusation by the police after they had been arrested. Particularly, many innocent persons, during Thanin's period, were victims of such arbitrary power.

The following are examples of those who were detained and charged as criminals who seriously endangered the society. They were sentenced by the PM. due to his absolute authority, tried from evidence which the police had made without listening to the suspect's plea or even seeing their faces.

The Case of Fongpan Supparasmi

Fongpan, 31, is now serving a life sentence in Lardyao Irison after police found him guilty of drug trafficking in 1978. After being locked up incommunicado for one month on charge of "endangering the society" he was sentenced to life imprisonment by then Gen. Kriangsak who was exercising his absolute power under article No. 27.

In a letter he wrote to CGRS, he claimed that he and many other 200 convicts were merely innocent victims of the abuse of power by police during the autocratic rule of Thanin and Gen. Kriangsak. This is how the former teacher recalled the incident that landed him into jail for life:\*

My name is Fongpan, a teacher at Talard Irem School in Chachoengsao. I received a telegram from my girl-friend, Miss Poonsuk Pattayawat, who asked me to immediately go to Bangkok to visit her mother who was falling ill. I received the telegram on the night of April 25, 1978 and I caught a bus to Bangkok the next morning. After meeting my girlfriend, we both proceeded to Chulalongkorn Hospital on Rama IV Road where her mother was receiving medical treatment. Leaving the hospital at around 7.00 pm the same day, we two strolled across the street toward Dusit Thani Hotel to look for something to eat for dinner. As soon as we reached the parking lot of the hotel, a group of men, numbering nine to ten, emerged from nowhere. They overpowered me, hit me several times at my abdomen and face. I felt pains and dizzy. One of them shouted at me and asked "Are you Seri Chaiyanuwat?". They kept repeating the question several times because I was too stunned to say anything. I heard my girl-friend scream for help but some of the men ordered her to keep quiet or she would receive the same treatment. She was frightened that she ran away.

They half carried me into a sedan. One of the men kicked me into the car. "Are you Seri Chaiyanuwat?" One of the men asked me the same question again. He then asked me another strange question: "Where is the heroin?" I told them I was not Seri Chaiyanuwat and I knew nothing about heroin they mentioned. They were so furious and one of them slapped me in my face while roaring: "You will get what you ask for." After a while the car came to a halt at the headquarters of the Crime Suppression Division at Samyod. It was only then I realized these men were in fact crime suppression policemen. They took me into a room where a policeman with the rank of colonel was present. They seated me and handcuffed me to the chair. Then the colonel asked me something about the heroin again. I gave him the same answer I did before and the colonel, apparently angry at my answer, kicked me onto the floor. A few minutes later they put me next to two other men who also had their hands handcuffed. We were standing in front of a white plastic bag. One of the policemen ordered me to point my finger at the bag, saying it was a bag of heroin seized from me. Pictures were taken while I did what I was told to do.

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\* English version of the letter first published in the Nation Review April 30, 1981

After some interrogations they pushed me and the other two men into a cell. I asked my cell-mates what they were doing there and was told they had no idea what they did wrong. I later learnt their names were Pichit Tuekpoh and Prachuab Fetchkul. And at around midnight, the policemen sent in another fellow who was later identified as Sgt. Maj Sonthaya Vivattavanich, a special branch policeman.

The next morning I was taken out of the cell to be fingerprinted. To my amazement, a duty officer wrote down in the police blotter that my name was Seri Chaiyanuwat and I was arrested on charge of heroin trafficking. I told him what my name was and he wrote down my name next to that of Seri Chaiyanuwat as an alias. I refused to sign my name to acknowledge the charge and this time I was seriously beaten up. I lost consciousness after taking punches and kicks. The policemen then slapped me with the endangering society charge and put me in detention for one month. During the detention I was repeatedly interrogated but whatever I said would never convince them of my innocence. I was held incommunicado and from time to time got beaten up when they got angry with me. After one month, they took me to Lardyao Prison. It was at this point that I was allowed to have visits from my relatives. I was praying that I would be given a chance to defend myself in court but my hope was shattered when on August 12, 1978, Premier Kriangsak Chomanan, exercising his power under Article 27, sentenced me to life imprisonment. I was shocked since during the whole course of my detention and interrogations I never made a confession. Police fabricated all the evidences to incriminate me.

I am nobody now. I have no one to turn to except the human rights groups. Please beg for justice for me.

#### The Case of Sitthipong Sae Tae and Brother

Sitthipong Sae Tae took his three sons out for a supper one night in February 1978 without knowing that he would be arrested with drug trafficking charge and sent to jail for life along with his brother.

In his petition to CGRS, Sitthipong related the events leading to an end of his freedom:\*

It was on the night of February 26, 1978 when I drove out with my three sons and my brothers-in-law for supper at bangrak market. After the supper, we headed home. But as we reached Chan Road, a group of policemen stopped our car and demanded a search. They found nothing and without saying a word they took all of us to the Narcotics Suppression Centre. It was at the centre that I saw my brother, Sinchai, who was a taxi driver. My brother told me no charge was pressed against him. On the table was a paper box containing what I found out later to be heroin. The policemen accused me, my brother and my brother-in-law Chairat of possessing heroin for sales. But we all denied the charge.

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\* English version of the letter first appeared in the Nation Review May 2, 1981

It was at this stage that the policemen began maltreating us. They used kicks and fists to force me and my brothers to make confessions. After some interrogations, the policemen took my three sons into another room. They used threatening language to press my sons, aged 8, 13 and 14, to sign a sheet of blank paper. The policemen told my sons that if they refused to sign the paper, my life would be in danger. Out of fears, my sons signed their names on the paper without realizing that it was to be an incriminating evidence against me.

After some more interrogations, the policemen reported the case to the Crime Suppression Division which, however, suggested that we should be set free for lack of substantial evidences. But the anti-drug officers drafted another report on the case and forwarded it to then Premier Kriangsak Chomanan who subsequently exercised his absolute power under Article 27 of the constitution to sentence me, my brother and brother-in-law to jail for life.

I am absolutely confident that we are all innocent victims of the policemen who fabricated incriminating evidences against us. The policemen who arrested me claimed that they had been tracing us for sometime and that I had been carrying the box containing heroin that night. If what they said was true, why didn't they arrest me when I was carrying the box ?

Call for Justice

The above cases are examples which reflect that there are lot of innocent people who have been victims of absolute power of the police by using article No.21, No.27 and No.200. Moreover, these article even reflect the interference of the executive power over the jucicial power. It is also against international moral principles and the Declaration of Human Rights that requires a chance for a suspected to put up plea in accordance with due court process.

The articles No.21, No.27 and No.200 seem to be a balck point in the administrative system and the judicial system. Anyhow, the call of nearly 200 convicts and their relatives-towards political parties, the Parliament, and the government since last year has not gained any attention, eventhough what they want is justice in which they have their own human rights. They only want their cases to be reviewed and tried in the court.

Although the call has been ignored by the administrative and legislative, such call is going on until it could gain more attention this year. The outcome of the call appeared from the cooperation among the 'stainees' relatives and many human rights organizations in the country which have been trying to campaign as broadly as they could to call the government and the Parliament to pay attention to this problem. These organizations are Lawyers Association of Thailand, Union for Civil Liberty, Commission for Justice and Peace in Thailand, Thammasat University Law Knowledge Dissemination Project, Follow-Up Committee of Seminar of Civil Rights of Thai People, Campaign Group for Amendment to Constitution and Coordinating Group for Religion in Society.

On April 8, the representatives of the 7 organizations met the Minister of Justice asking him to introduce new legislation to enable the convicts to revive their cases so that they could be judged in fair and open trials to prove their innocence. On April 30, these representatives sent an open letter enclosed with convicts' petition to Parliament requesting them to notice the plight of these victims caused by the unjust law. On May 6, about 300 of convicts' relatives staged a rally in front of the Ministry of Justice and Government House. The demonstration could receive much attention from the Minister of Justice who said that he agreed with the call, but it might be difficult to introduce a Royal Bill because government consisted of various political parties which might have different attitudes. However, the demonstrators were asked to extend the campaign as broadly as possible to put pressure on the government's decision. Then, on June 5, big rally consisting of around 500 relatives was staged in front of Parliament urging it to consider and issue the Bill for convicts' sake.

After one year, on June 16, the Prime Minister presented his action for the first time on this problem to the public by ordering the Minister of Justice, of the Interior, and of the Government House Office to review the cases of those convicts who were imprisoned because of article No.21, No.27 and No.200. According to the official statement, there will be 3 ways of solution - to amend the Constitution, to issue an Amnesty Bill to every detainee, and to issue a bill giving general pardon to specific cases which are proven of innocent.

#### The Call Still Goes On

However, the struggle for justice of the Forgotten 200 has not yet finished. It has to continue to follow the implementation of the government so as to see that the PM's order is accurately implemented without spending too much time. The important problem which we should find an answer to is how much the government is concerned with the fate of almost 200 prisoners or is the government only trying to make public believe that it is really concerned. If the latter is true, it means that the government will take much time by using the complicated system of legal process and the inert system of bureaucracy. We always find the government doing this just to take time when it has to solve any problem which concerns to the people's suffering - the people who have no rights, no authority in the society.

## MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT POWER

### Rangers : Assassination and Illegal Behaviour

#### The Central Part

Bangkok : April 23, 1981 Deputy Chief Inspector Pol.Lt. Worachai Wanich-sathion of Special Branch Police, and about three rangers from Chantaburi Province identified as Santi Jampee, 29, Mana Chanprem, 27, and Chalocy Ghonsin, 28, invaded Narong Maneejam's house and gave rough treatment to him. It was because Narong's brother took around 1,400 Baht from Pol.Lt Worachai in order to pay for the motor cycle of his brother-in-law which was recently stolen. Then, it seemed that he disappeared with the money, so Pol. Lt Worachai and his men went to find him at his home and found only Narong who received a rough treatment instead. (Bangkok Post 24/4/81)

Bangkok : May 7, 1981 Pvt.Somsong Parkpoom, 23, a ranger in Nan Province abducted an 11-year-old boy on May 4 to demand a ransom of 10,000 Baht from his mother. Later he killed the boy for being thought that he was deceived by the boy's parents. He buried the boy's body under a tree in a road where he was waiting for the ransom. After he was arrested he said he wanted money to finance his planned wedding. (Thai Rath 9/5/81)

Bangkok : May 10, 1981 About fifteen men raped a jobless singer, 23, who had just come back from the South. One of them was later identified as a ranger from Prachin Buri Province who reportedly paid up 660 Baht for compensation to the woman. (Matichon 11/5/81)

#### The South

##### Nakorn Si Thammarat - Ta Sala District

The list of those who were assassinated by rangers and village defence volunteers.

(The date was unknown)

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Mr.Samreau Chansuwan   | 43 Moo 6, Tambon Kralor, Ta Sala  |
| 2. Mr.Muan Sompan         | 43/7 Moo 6, Tambon Kralor, Ta Sala  |
| 3. Mr.Frasert Thongtawat  | Moo 2, Tambon Napru, Muang District                                       |
| 4. Mr.Sutheep Petchprai   | 43 Moo 6, Kralor, Ta Sala   |
| 5. Mr.Phuong Fubphun      | 43 Moo 6, Kralor, Ta Sala   |
| 6. Mr.Chom Chuthong       | Moo 9, Kralor, Ta Sala  |
| 7. Mr.Wut Wonglao         | Moo 6, Kralor, Ta Sala  |
| 8. Mr.Flod Jamit          | Moo 9, Kralor, Ta Sala  |
| <u>November 15, 1980</u>  |   |
| 9. Mr.Somkon Numuang      | assassinated by a ranger at Ta Pud Base, Ta Sala                          |
| 10. Mr.Pheun Numuang      | the same as above   |
| <u>November 1980</u>      |   |
| 11. Mr.Thien Chanpoom     | shot dead by a village defence volunteer of Ban Don Ka Base, Ta Sala      |
| <u>December 17, 1980</u>  |   |
| 12. Mr.Pratheep Petchprai | shot dead by a ranger at Ban Ta Pud Base, Ta Sala                         |
| <u>March 11, 1981</u>     |   |
| 13. Mr.Sumnao Fornprasert | shot dead by a ranger at Ban Tung Chana School when he was back from work |

April 19, 1981

14. Mr. Choun Niamminee

shot dead on the way back from the coffee plant area, Phom Kiri District.

May 2, 1981

15. Mr. Pun Kongchaisi

shot dead at Samorsorn Temple by a ranger of Nai Tul Base

May 7, 1981

16. Mr. Chum Rongthong

shot dead by a ranger  
He was deputy village headman and local doctor at Ban Ta Wa, Ta Sala. Three months before his assassination, his two guns were taken by the ranger and only one was returned to him later, making him angry. He was shot while he was on the way home and his money also disappeared.

May 17, 1981

17. Mr. Klien (surname unknown)

shot dead at Ya Flong Temple

May 10, 1981

18. Mr. Win Rathchane  
(The date unknown)

shot dead at his house by a ranger.

19. Mr. Sommai (surname unknown)

shot dead by a village defence volunteer

Nakorn Si Thammarat - Chawang District

Six men believed to be rangers and defence volunteers invaded a man's house, Mr. Surin Chartpong (35) of Village Moo 2, Tambon Nawae. They robbed him of 20,000 Baht worth of tin and a motor-cycle on May 28, 1981. (Daily News 30/5/81)

Nakorn Si Thammarat - Phom Kiri District

On June 15, 1981 a ranger named Chui Kliewpai and two of his friends with war weapons threatened Mr. Sophon Futhtakun to give them 6,000 Baht as a protection fee for his business. They gave him two days to collect the money, but he could not. He thus move out with the family. (Chao Thai 18/6/81)

Surat Thani : April 28, 1981 The Thonburi-Sungai Kolok train was robbed by five rangers around 8 pm while stop at Ban Song Railway Station. One policeman was shot dead in the incident. It was identified later that five rangers worked in the 4151 Centre of Combined Forces in Tambon Prupi, in nearby Nasarn District. They were identified as Somsak (surname unknown), Chote (surname unknown), Fisut Vejsiri, Somporn Klinsa-ton and Chuang Suwannathop. Also there were two policemen attached to the police station of Viengsra District who were involved in the robbery. After the incident, the rangers fled to a military camp. When the police investigators asked the 4th Region Army Commander who was in charge of rangers in the South for permission to arrest the suspected, he refused to send the alleged rangers to police, claiming that if they committed crime, they should be punished by their commander, not the others. (Nation 1/5/81)

Yala : June 12, 1981 About 60 armed rangers forced 240 villagers out of Bahoe Village, Sabayoi District so as to search their houses which was claimed as communist-infiltrated area. Anyhow, when the villagers came back they found that their properties were stolen. They were also threatened not to report the incident to the police. (Nation 14/6/81)

Handcuffed Family Murdered in Field

Kamphaeng Phet : May 31, 1981 At 1 am, about 13 armed men dressed in uniform of the Special Action Force Police invaded Klong Sapan Village, Khanu Woraklaksaburi District, and dragged out of their home four members of a family consisting of Ramoon Riewthong, 51, his brother Saard, 39, and cousin Aem Poonperm, 32, and Eng, 34. They told the victims' wives before leaving not to worry about their husbands and they could visit them at District Police Station. The next morning the four bodies were found dumped in a rice field and were badly riddled with bullets. Each had their hands bound with handcuffs of the type widely used by law-enforcement officials. The cause of this cruel killing was suspected as revenge because a relative of one of the victims allegedly shot and wounded a man recently on an accusation that he did not campaign for him in a local election of a village headmen. (Daily News 2/6/81)

Villager Got Maltreatment from Police

Chiangrai : April 25, 1981 Around 10 am 50 policemen from the Provincial Constabulary Command and Provincial Revenue officers led by Pol. Captain Sayan Kacharask invaded San Tonkok Village, Fan District. They gave rough treatment to a civilian named Mr. Ta Kamphum. Meanwhile Mr. Boon Senawan saw this injustice behaviour and came to help his friend. Consequently, he also received the same rough treatment by the policemen. When both of them were brought into the police car to be taken away, it was lucky that the villagers came to interrupt the policemen since they were afraid that both would be taken away to be killed. This caused the policemen to release the two men and tried to pay 100 Baht in order to keep their mouths shut. However, the villagers did not accept the money. Later on May 10, the villagers made an appeal to the Governor to investigate and punish those officers. No result has come out so far. Then Mr. Somsath Ratanasat, Member of Parliament, led the villagers to appeal to the Press at the province two days later. (Matichon 19/5/81)



## NEWS FROM THAILAND

### On Press and Mass Media

#### 1. Reporters in Up-country Areas Threatened and Assassinated

Reporters of 3 newspapers in 3 provinces were threatened and some assassinated, because of their reporting the activities of some local influential people.

On April 17, Mr. Sakol Doungkaew, a reporter of the Daily News in Saraburi Province, was clandestinely shot. He was in a coma and his condition was very serious. Before the shooting, he had reported about an influential person in Lopburi Province who had killed villagers in order to capture a piece of land. This made the influential person resentful against him. Moreover, he also reported that an optical shop-owner had earlier been shot dead by a policeman in Saraburi.

On June 9, Mr. Pisith Soituram, a reporter of the Matichon in Nakorn Pathom Province, was threatened by a stranger while he was teaching in a school in the province. Before the incident, he had reported about the march of the people against the governor and Pol. Commander of the Provincial Constabulary on criminal suppression.

On June 10, Mr. Montri Patarawat, a reporter of the Thai Rath in Nakorn Sawan Province and an editor of a local newspaper, Seri Nakorn, was assassinated while he was walking home. The police believed that he was killed by a policeman who was dissatisfied with news reports about the illegal behaviour of that policeman. Before his assassination, he was threatened to stop such news report. The suspected policeman named Sgt. Pradit Hongsuwan was arrested 3 days later and was detained at the police station. Then 3 hours after the arrest in the middle of that night he escaped from the prison.

#### 2. Papers Warned of Report "Subversive" Memo

On May 22, the press officer of Special Branch Police summoned editors of two Thai daily newspapers, Chao Thai and Naew Na, and a weekly magazine, Soo Anakote, to sign the order that warned them against publishing the reports on a "secret memo" allegedly written by 1-3 April coup plotter Col. Manoon Roopakachorn.

The Naew Na and Soo Anakote representatives signed the order, but those of Chao Thai refused. Chao Thai insisted that it was exercising its basic rights in reporting what it said were fact to the public. They also said that they would fight to defend their basic rights and responsibility towards their readers.

#### 3. Government Urged to Revoke Order Restricting Press Freedom

On April 21, students of the Mass Communications Faculty of Thammasat University called on the government to abrogate the NARC decree no. 42 which restricted freedom of the press since 1976. The open letter was delivered to Interior Minister urging the government to declare its clear stand on the role of the Press.

The student also urged all the concerned press associations to seriously debate the problems and join in the move to rescind the order imposed since 6 October coup d'etat five years ago.

#### 4. Tough Order Imposed on All Radio Stations

On June 10, the government imposed a new order on all radio stations nationwide, banning them from airing reports and comments from newspapers.

The Government Spokesman said the order was approved by the Broadcasting Directing Board (BDB). "BDB ruled that the order had to be imposed because it has evidence to show that many radio commentators have used anti-government articles in newspapers in their campaign against the government" said him.

Describing the practices as "irresponsible acts," the government spokesman said the order also stated that all radio stations had to reveal the names of the writers of the reports or commentaries they broadcast. "The government might even close some radio stations which it considers will cause damage to the stability of the government because they are virtually owned by the government," said the government spokesman.

#### On Law and Administration

##### 1. Movement to Improve the Constitution

Groups of people and Members of the Parliament have proposed to improve the Constitution in order to create true democracy, but this was opposed by senators and ministers.

On May 25, the Campaigning Group for Amendment to the Constitution, consisting of delegates from groups of various professions, proposed to the Prime Minister and the Spokesman of the Parliament ways to improve the constitution. The proposal came from the findings of the People Assembly and from the survey of around 2,000 people who agreed on the improvements of the present constitution which was imposed in 1978. This constitution consists of many articles which are not appropriate to the democratic system and also do not support the people's participation on having self-administration.

Meanwhile, on May 27, a group of MP led by Sub.Lt.Chalad Worachad (Trad Province) and Mr.Piyanat Watcharaporn (Srisaket Province) proposed to the Parliament to give up the present constitution and to bring back the constitution of 1975 and the additional one in 1976 which was more democratic.

However, such proposals were refused by ministers and the Constitutional Amendment Committee appointed from the senators. Mr.Meechai Ruchupan, Minister attach to the Government Office and the Advisor of PM. On laws, said that the improvement of the constitution was not urgent because the democratic system does not mainly depend on the constitution but also on the people. He added that Thai people still had hope for a way out eventhough the constitution was condemned.

The Constitutional Amendment Committee of the Senate was also against such proposals for the reason that it should keep all articles of the constitution concerned with national security and political security. This contrasted to the resolution of the Lower House's Special Committee for Constitutional Amendment which agreed to amend about 33 clauses of the constitution. The proposal represented 3 important points. Firstly, the amount of senators reduced from 225 to not more than 150. Secondly, Premier must be Member of the Parliament and not less than half of cabinet come from Member of the Parliament. Thirdly, the amount of cabinet is not more than 29.

## 2. Thai Refugees Migrated into Malaysia

There were around 2,000 Thai people from the South who migrated into Malaysia after a rumour that the Malaysian Communist Movement would kill Thai Moslems in the South.

In the 3 Southern provinces.-Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani - which have many political problems such as the desire to create an independent state, the military actions of the Malaysian Communist Party on Thai territory, the exploitation by Thai government of local people who are mostly Moslem, the problem of kidnapping and the burning of schools and government offices.

During the last 3 months, a new problem has developed and involved around 2,000 Thai Moslem in the South, especially from Betong District, Yala, to migrate into Malaysia. Such migration has started since the end of March following the rumour that the Malaysian Communist Party would send its forces to kill Thai Moslems living in villages in Betong in order to get revenge because the villagers had given support to the Separatist Movement which became more influential than the Party.

If the villagers still had any confidence in Thai officials, the fear of the CPM would not cause them to migrate to Malaysia. However, the fact was that they had no confidence in the Thai government that it could protect their security. They even felt that the Thai officials back CPM. They thus sold their houses, land, domestic animals, etc, and moved to settle down in Malaysia with the belief that they would be safe under the protection of the Malaysian Government.

The Southern situation has not yet improved, although the Thai Government has promised that the Thai Moslems would receive full protection. Few have agreed to come back. On June 9, the Thai officials and Moslem leaders went to Malaysia to bring them back but only 4 of them agreed to return.

However, this problem was not only caused by the threat of danger from the CPM or by the lack of responsibility of the Thai officials, but also the policy of the Malaysian Government to use the problem of injustice towards the Thai Moslem people in the South to speak to international affairs, especially Moslem nations, for its own benefit.

## On Ordinary People

### 1. Children Forced to Beg

On April 29, police arrested a man in the downtown of Bangkok and charged him with kidnapping a six-year-old boy and a girl aged eight. According to the girl, the man had burnt her arms with a cigarette while she was held captive, and forced both children to beg in the streets.

Police said that on April 15 the alleged kidnapper named Wisant Sanguansri enticed the two children, who are cousins, away from their home by pretending he would take them to a movie. Instead he took them to his home and force them to go begging in various parts of the city. The man had beaten or even burn with a cigarette when they refused to do what he said. On the day of arrest, he travelled on a bus with the girl when a Royal Thai Navy Officer saw him slapping the girl. The officer asked the girl who the man was and she told him she had been kidnapped. Wasting no time, the officer dragged him from the bus and took him to the police station.

### 2. Union Member Shot Dead

A leading member of a rice mill labour union in Nonthaburi Province was shot dead while he was resting in front of his house. Wichien Frangthong, 50, the former president of the Komolkit Rice Mill's labour union was killed on April 10. He had been dismissed by his employer without severance pay since March 7 after workers at the rice mill staged a strike. which he was one of the six workers who made negotiations with the employer. Before the assassination, he filed a lawsuit against his employer at the Labour Court on March 16, demanding for compensation of the arbitrary dismissal.

### 3. Villagers in Land Row Stage Sit-In

130 villagers from Thung Talaykaew of Phitsanulok, the northern province, stage a sit-in outside the Government House during June 8-11 urging the government to intervene in a long-standing dispute with provincial authorities over their land. Joining them were about 50 students from Ramkhamhaeng, Mahidol and Thammasat universities.

The villagers said that government officials had forced them to leave an area of 3,300 rai of land (1320 acres) in Thung Talaykaew from which they had been earning a living for 60-70 years. Provincial officials want the site for a teacher's training college. The conflict, dates back to 1973 when provincial authorities installed pillar marker posts on what they claimed to be public land. However, the villagers insist they all have legal rights over the land, with most of them holding certificates of ownership. The villagers say no mention has been made of compensation or relocation. In 1979 the villagers complained to the government but so far no action has been taken. The protesters demanded government to stop the expansion of the college. If the government wants their land, it should pay them compensation and find other places for them to live. They also accused the government of using police force to confiscate their land, noting an incident when an armed police special task force and provincial authorities moved onto the land to make measurements, causing seven

villagers arrested after being assaulted by the police.

However, the government refused to pay attention to the protest, saying the controversial area was public land and only 14 of the protesting villagers were actually affected by the campus expansion.

The 4-day sit-in stopped after 2 Pitsanulok MPs pledged that they would solve their problems. They told the rally that they would lead the villagers back to Bangkok if they failed to solve the problem. Before leaving, a leader of the villagers said they would return to the city to dramatize their case again if the MPs failed to fulfill their pledge.

#### 4. Workers Dimissed with Injustice

During the early part of April, 18 workers of the Manorah Hotel in Bangkok were dismissed without any convincing reason. It was explained that they were all those who founded the labour union of hotel workers and also were members of that union which was just set up recently. However, the manager of the hotel issued an announcement denying that the dismissal of the 18 workers had anything to do with the labour union founding. He gave the reason that those 18 workers had violated the hotel's regulations and caused "serious damage to the hotel", but he did not elaborate. Anyhow, the hotel workers felt very much dissatisfied with the dismissal. On April 24, more than 100 of them from 7 labour unions staged a rally in front of the hotel to protest the manager.

On May 28, Thai-Swedish Assembly Company which produces cars-VOLVO dismissed 13 workers who were committee and members of the labour union by giving the reason that the company had to reduce the production capacity because of the reduced demand for cars. However, there were some workers who made a proposal to the company manager that they would resign instead of those dismissed workers. The proposal was rejected. In fact it was known that this kind of VOLVO was selling very well. Also the company celebrated the good market of new brand cars and distributed money as presents to workers 5 days before the dismissal.

#### 5. When A Prosecutor Went Wenching

On May 13, the policemen of Muang District of Surat Thanee Province, arrested more than 80 prostitutes from a hotel. Before the arrest the policemen were informed of this case by a prosecutor of the province.

However, the real cause that the prosecutor informed the police was that he was dissatisfied with the hotel officer who refused to give him privilege; that is, he and his friends went wenching at the hotel and refused to pay for the service but the hotel officer, who did not know who he was, continued insisting that they had to pay for the service. Consequently, because of anger, the prosecutor went to the police station and urge the police to raid the hotel and arrest the prostitutes.

## ACTIVITIES OF CGRS

The Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) is composed of priests, laymen and young activists from the Buddhists, the Catholic and the Protestant religions, who share a common belief in nonviolence, and feel that religion and spiritual value have a central role to play in development of Thai society. CGRS was founded early in 1976 but has become actively involved in human rights since the October 6, 1976 coup d'etat. For over three years CGRS has carried out its activities openly, inspite of repressive governments and Martial Law. During this period the activities of CGRS has expanded considerably from merely helping political prisoners and their families and others suffering from conflicts in the society, to exposing misuse of government power and campaigning victims, for the release of all political prisoners and for abolishment of unjust laws; helping form other groups prepared to struggle for justice and human rights; supporting indigenous rural development groups and coordinating religious organizations.

All the efforts of CGRS are directed at tackling the injustices and oppression that exist in society using religious principles and nonviolence as the basic method. In all these activities CGRS hopes to play a catalytic and coordination function rather than doing everything directly itself.

### Activities of CGRS During April - June 1981

#### I. Human Rights Activities

##### 1. Visiting, Helping Prisoners

During the past three months CGRS has continued with its regular work of visiting and helping political prisoners and prisoners facing injustices both in Bangkok and up-country. On its visits CGRS provided these prisoners with necessary assistance and also with moral support and encouragement. It also gave regular assistance to poor families of some prisoners.

##### 2. Providing Legal Aid

CGRS tries to ensure that political prisoners and prisoners facing injustices have legal protection, legal representation and, hopefully, a fair trial in just courts. CGRS has not only given direct assistance, such as finding experienced defence lawyers for the prisoners, helping raise and arrange bail, etc, but has also given assistance to lawyers defending political cases, organized campaigns for the release of prisoners and to encourage the changing of laws, and so on.

A case which CGRS has been concerned with during the past three months is the case of Mrs Wimon Piantamdee, a 52 year-old woman who is nearly blind because of serious diabetes. She has been held with a charge of being communist since January 10, being denied bail or visitors, while her son and nephew disappeared mysteriously on December 25 last year. (See last issue of HRTR page 3). Besides giving legal assistance by providing lawyers, CGRS also has brought her case into the limelight so that her plight for justice might be heard by the public and receive a response from the authorities.

Besides her case, CGRS is also trying to investigate the case of her son and her nephew, namely Kamon Piantamdee and Pongsak Theerapatpai boon, who reportedly disappeared in front of the military camp of Nakorn Sawan province. After receiving negative answers about their presence in the camps by the officials in charge of Nakorn Sawan camp and nearby Pitsanulok camp, we plan to meet the General Director of the Police Department to ask for official clarification of their disappearance.

### 3. Campaign for Justice of the "Forgotten 200"

During 1976-1978 more than 200 persons were sentenced, without trial, to prison for terms ranging from 3 years to life or have been executed by the order of the Prime Minister with the consent of the cabinet and Advisory Council. Though prime ministers who gave the orders have left office, those convicts are still ignored by the authorities and the public. In the beginning of this year, relatives of convicts and CGRS started a campaign for the justice of the "Forgotten 200". In April CGRS, together with 6 human rights organizations, met the Minister of Justice and sent open letters to Members of Parliament, asking the government and Parliament to introduce new legislation to enable the convicts to revive their cases. On May 6 and June 5 relatives of the convicts and CGRS staged rallies at the Ministry of Justice, Government House and Parliament urging them to be concerned about the injustice those convicts suffered. Finally, after repeated campaigns the government stated on June 16 that it will review the cases in order that their innocence will be proved again in a fair and just procedure. (See details pages 4-9)

### 4. Child Labour Activity

CGRS is extremely concerned about the situation of child labour whose number is growing considerably. In 1978, 44% of children age 11-14, which is schooling age, were employed in various sectors due to poverty and drought in rural areas. 200,000 of them migrated to Bangkok and worked in factories, many of which were so-called "slave" factories because of their bad and inhuman condition that make children suffer severely. In 1978, there was a case that two children died while another three were crippled after working for three months. This year CGRS decide to take child labour as one of our main activities. It is our attempt to urge various voluntary organizations, as well as government agencies, to be actively involved in solving this serious problem. On May 24, CGRS organized a meeting on "Child Labour and Its Remedy" whose participants were drawn from both governmental and non-governmental organizations that either already involved or might be involved in the issue. The meeting reached the conclusion that one effective remedy is launching a "Center for Child Labour Aid" functioning as a center for rescued children in "slave" factories and provide social service to them after the rescue. This center, which will be composed of many voluntary organizations, is supposed to start within a few months.

## II Religions Relations Activities

Though the vast majority of Thais actively profess adherence to one or other of the major world religions, in general, they and their religious leaders adhere more to the outward expression of their religions, rather than the content and the real meaning. If the conflicts in society

are to be reduced, and a widescale and violent civil war avoided, it is absolutely essential that religious groups and leaders become involved in really practising their principles, and take on a socially responsible role. They must really become involved in tackling, nonviolently, the evils of society.

On June 13, CGRS and Committee for Justice and Peace held an inter-religious activity to celebrate International Peace Day which is usually held on New Year's Day under the auspices of the Vatican. Besides film and music show for peace and justice, there was a panel discussion on "Social Transformation : Nonviolence or Revolution".

On June 14, CGRS help organize a panel discussion on the "Current Situation of the Thai Buddhist Monks" as a critical survey on the situation and direction of Thai Buddhist Monks in relevance with the present situation.

#### IV Micro Media Activities

The objectives of the micro media work of CGRS is to spread knowledge, science, information and understanding in different fields to the people in order to bring about understanding of basic problems and the way to the solutions to exchange ideas, news, and information of the way of life and cultures between cities and rural areas; improve the standard of living in rural areas while maintaining the good tradition and culture; and to cooperate with concerned organizations and interested groups in designing various forms of mass communications in order that the poor in rural areas and small towns are better served.

During April-June several micro-media activities were carried out as follows:

- Producing two slide sets on "How to Use Medicine" and the "Production of a Bamboo Rain-Water Tank" which help villagers to understand how to use basic medicines and how to build a simple and cheap rain-water tank out of local materials.
- Providing a puppet theatre, mask theatre and pantomime to children in National Books Exhibition sponsored by the Ministry of Education.
- Organizing a survey in villages of four provinces in the Northeast. The purpose of the survey was to seek information which would be appropriate to micro-media programmes aimed at providing education to these villagers and to encourage them to organize themselves in order to solve their problems. The information gathered from this survey will be used to prepare mobile education programmes in the rural areas, which will be set up in July and December this year.