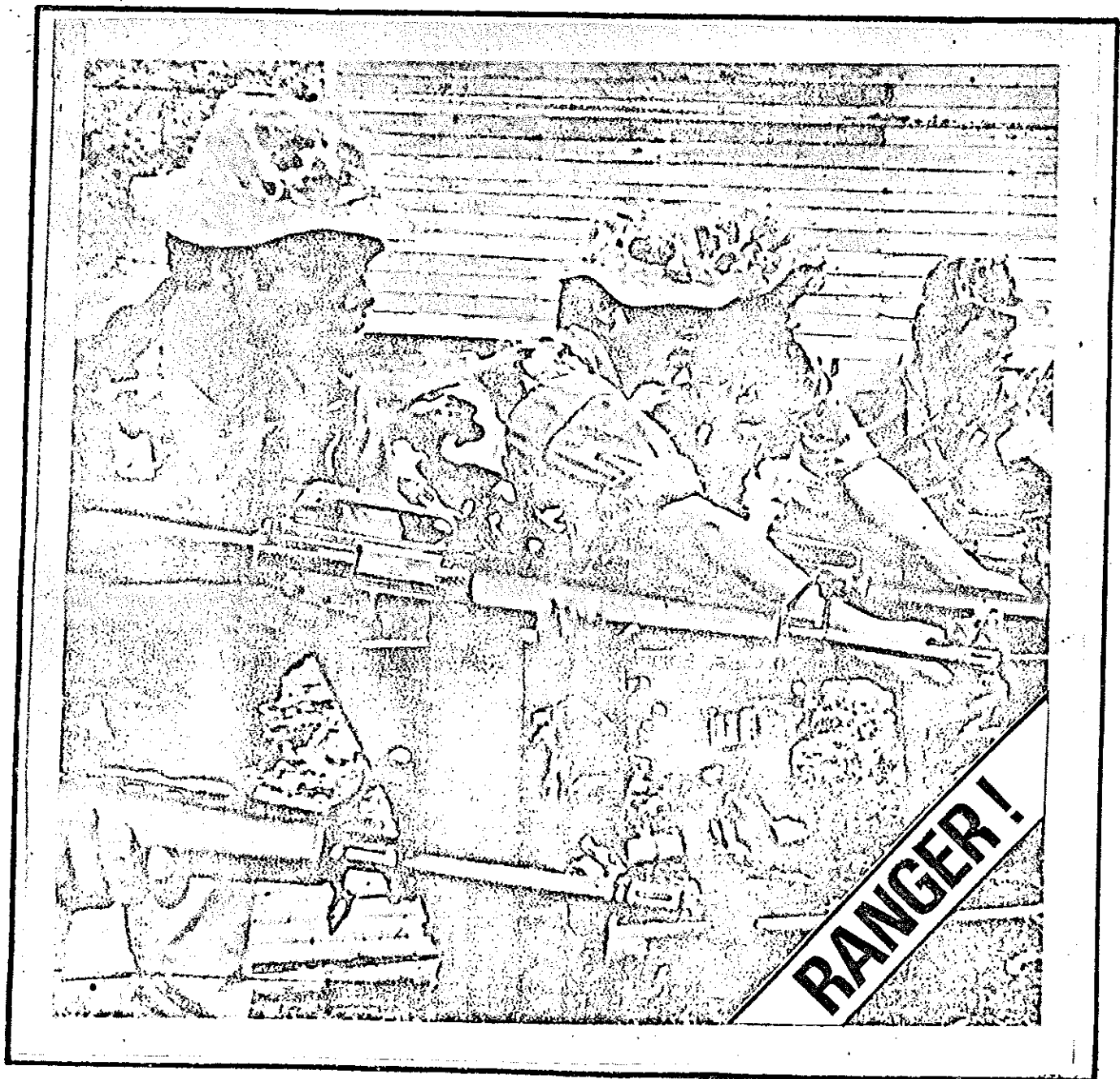


*Labor p. 12*

# **HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT**

**Vol. 5 No. 4 OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1981**

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### To Our Readers

Violent misconduct of the Rangers became the focus of the press this October when 14 Rangers in Trat Province raided the police station and freed one Ranger from a detention cell followed with a clash with policemen, resulting in the death of an ex-military official. This incident is quite significant since the victim of their outrage this time was not ordinary people as usual but the policemen of an entire station. Though the misconduct of the Rangers has been reported on many occasions in HRTR we consider it interesting to present in this issue "Rangers; the Death Squad" for a clearer picture of this paramilitary force.

For those who are interested in the struggle for justice of almost 200 detainees who were jailed without trial by the former primer ministers (see HRTR Vol 5 No 2) we are pleased to inform you that the government's committee responsible for the case decided to grant mass pardon under the Royal Decree which will enable many of them to be released immediately and the rest will have their jail term cut drastically. The mass pardon is not the best measure to guarantee the fairness of detainees but the one that is most beneficial to all of them. This positive response from the government is by all means the outcome of joint action of all parties inside and outside Thailand who long for the justice of those detainees.

This is the last issue of HRTR published this year. We are happy to receive any comments and suggestions for the issues to be published next year. Any comment will considerably help us to improve HRTR to be more informative to our readers.

Thank you for all of your support and concern which enables us to carry out our activities in solidarity with people's movement for peace and justice throughout the passing year of 1981.

### The Human Rights Situation

The labour situation became increasingly tense in October when three labour union leaders of the Sahafarm Liangkai (Poultry) Company were attacked by two unknown gunmen. Two of them were shot dead and the third seriously wounded. The incident took place on October 15 when the three were waiting for a bus to go home after a meeting in Bangkok. The two shot dead were Mr Samrong Napachot and Mr Son Kijjawat, respectively, the acting president and treasurer of the Company's labour union. According to Mr Somsakdi Boonsompong, the labour union's registrar, who escaped death, two unknown persons on motorcycle came close to them standing at the bus stop, shooting him in the left shoulder and killed the other two.

Before the incident, the three labour union leaders had actively campaigned for better working condition at their factory. The campaign was successful and the employer very much displeased. Later, their attempt to establish a labour union was systematically obstructed by the employer. Finally, the latter suspended their job on the ground that the three had incited trouble among the workers. Slightly before they were shot they had planned to take a legal action against the employer's suspension of their work.

In the meantime, on October 22, a police force arrived the Burapa Steel Wires Factory and arrested a group of 54 striking workers who gathered in front of the factory after the negotiations with the employer over their demands for pay rise and bonus payment ended in deadlock. Their gathering was legal but the police accused them of gathering with more than 5 persons to intimidate and deprive the liberty of others.

The two incidents occurred almost the same time had nearly squeezed the labour situation into crisis. Before these incidents, the workers had already faced a strong pressure from the employers not to demand any pay rise, whereas the official circles in general had become suspicious of the labour movement. The number of workers laid off, dismissed, of petitions and labour disputes has been high throughout the year. According to data collected by the Labour Congress of Thailand, from the end of 1980 to September this year the number of 61 labour unions' members, committee members who were laid off, arrested, injured and assassinated was estimated at 7,989, excluding those who were not affiliated with any labour union. These conflicts were not merely the result of economic depression but also the mistrust of labour union by employers as a whole. Mr Ekkachai Ekhanakamon, an executive member of the Labour Congress of Thailand, opined that "the employers tend to lay off those who are labour union members and committee members since they reject the notion of labour union altogether and want to destroy the labour movement as a whole". This remark has been confirmed not only by workers but also by the authorities. Deputy Director-General of Labour Department, Mr Charoen Siripant maintained that "90% of employers have not accepted trade-unionism". It is thus not surprising that most of the employers have tried by all means to eliminate trade-unionism and have gone so far as to form themselves into an informal solidarity group, exchanging among

themselves, for instance, the blacklists of dismissed workers no longer to be employed by any of the group's factories.

Misconception about the labour movement and trade-unionism is widespread not only among employers but also among the government and army circles. The labour movement striving for its legitimate rights is perceived to be a political instrument of certain political quarters such as politicians who have lost their interests, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), to overthrow the government. These political quarters are viewed by the authorities to infiltrate the labour movement. Each worker's move thus meets with a strong reaction from the government.

Assassination and arrests of protesting workers created an explosive labour situation, even though this situation was defused on time when the police later arrested one of the two gunmen and 54 workers were released on bail four days after. The generally tense labour situation will last, however, as long as various labour problems remain unresolved and the workers' strife for legitimate rights still meets with misunderstanding. So long as workers have no chance to express, free from threats, their cumulative problems, the labour situation will remain worrisome in the days to come. Mr Sunthorn Kaewmetr, another executive member of the Labour Congress of Thailand, gave a warning "we have reached an impasse, and we ask the employers and the government to make room for us. If we were cornered, we would be capable of the worst. Buddhist as we are, we might as well, if the situation became unbearable, rob the passing monks of their food". Mr Phan Wongdee, a maritime transport labour union leader went so far as to say "The labour situation is at present explosive. If no solutions are found by early 1982, it will explode". He added "if the government were indifferent, the 'an eye-for-an eye and a tooth-for-a tooth' solution would be inevitable in early next year".

The above-quoted prophetic statements can not be overlooked, even the Army officials have reached similar conclusion. The Army analysts believed that under the depressed situation the conflicts and tensions among such important social forces as workers, political parties, students, certain military factions, business groups, or even CPT will be exploded in 1982-1983 in form of sabotage, revolts and uprisings in some spots of urban areas especially Bangkok. To cope with this situation, the military establishment has started setting up some special units, one of which is the Special Long-Distance Patrol and Combat Unit No 1, specially designed to launch rapid attacks. Being equipped with high-speed motorcycle, the unit will perform many functions one of which is to crush urban revolts. That is why it is also called an urban assassination or hunting unit. This unit is under the command of the First Division which attached to the First Region Army of which Gen Arthit Kamlang-ek, the Assistant Army Commander-in-Chief, is acting Commander.

Apart from making military preparations in urban areas, the Army is also concerned with organizing slum dwellers in Bangkok as well as implementing physical development projects with an aim to prevent communist

infiltration believed by the military to intensify in the near future. (See details in News from Thailand) This military thinking is noteworthy since it may hinder the implementation of many slum development projects being carried out by an increasing number of private volunteer organizations. Whether young volunteers working with people for the betterment of slum's conditions will be accused of being or suspected to be "communist agents", remains problematic. Saddening it will be if these young people's well-intentioned activities are indiscriminately obstructed or forbidden. Should that be the case, it will undoubtedly mean that the people are being denied their basic rights- the rights for development.

The last point to be mentioned here is the mysterious disappearance of some urban residents which tend to be an outstanding phenomenon as far as human rights is concerned. The latest reported case is the disappearance in last July of Mr Silpasert Phothikaew, 30, former Deputy Secretary-General of the now defunct National Student Center of Thailand, after he visited his friends at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. In the wake of the 6th October 1976 bloody incident, he went to join with CPT and five years after, like many other student activists, left the jungle. Covered by the Amnesty Bill, he thus applied for his M.A. studies at Srinakarinwirot University, Bangkok. The fact that he had not reported himself to the authorities, might arouse the latter's suspicion about his position and lead to his disappearance without any trace. His father had kept it secret for three months, fearing that a leak in the press would put his son's life in jeopardy, and he so believed Mr Silpasert had been detained by the authorities. Many others are supposed to disappear in the same way but the reason why their cases have not been reported in the press is most probably because their relatives bear the same fear as Mr Silpasert's father. Some have hypothetically linked this new phenomenon with precautionary measures taken by the Army against the alleged communist urban activities being carried out by student activists who have left the jungles to work for CPT in urban areas. This may be unfounded, but people's disappearance without any trace or any official explanation is clearly indicative of the insecurity of Thai people and the deteriorated state of Thai law.

## RANGERS :

### THE DEATH SQUAD



On April 23, 1980 Premier Gen Prem Tinsulanonda issued an order No 66/1980 on the policy to combat communism which would serve as a master guideline for the government agencies' anti-communist operations. This order has resulted in many tactical adjustments. Militarily, more importance has ever since been given to small para-military armed units to be served as spearheads in assailing the communist strongholds. This is how the improvement of the Rangers force, a mobile armed unit, has been brought to the attention of the government and the Army. The number of Rangers has risen quickly from a few hundreds, when the unit was first set up in south Eastern part in July 1978, to some ten thousands in 1981. They have been stationed in every region of the country, especially in communist-infested areas, and have enjoyed even much wider authority than local officials, the police or the Border Patrol Police. This explains why recently there have been a lot of petitions and press reports about the Rangers' abuse of authority ranging from robberies, rapes, assaults to assassinations of innocent people and even of policemen. The responsible army officials have pledged to exercise a stricter control of the Rangers' activities, but their misbehaviour still has been as widely reported as the news about their successful operations against the armed force and strongholds of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). The quickly increasing number of Rangers is now 24 battalions and will be 32 battalions, 8 for each region, or an equivalent of 4 regiments in 1982.



### The Rangers' Qualification

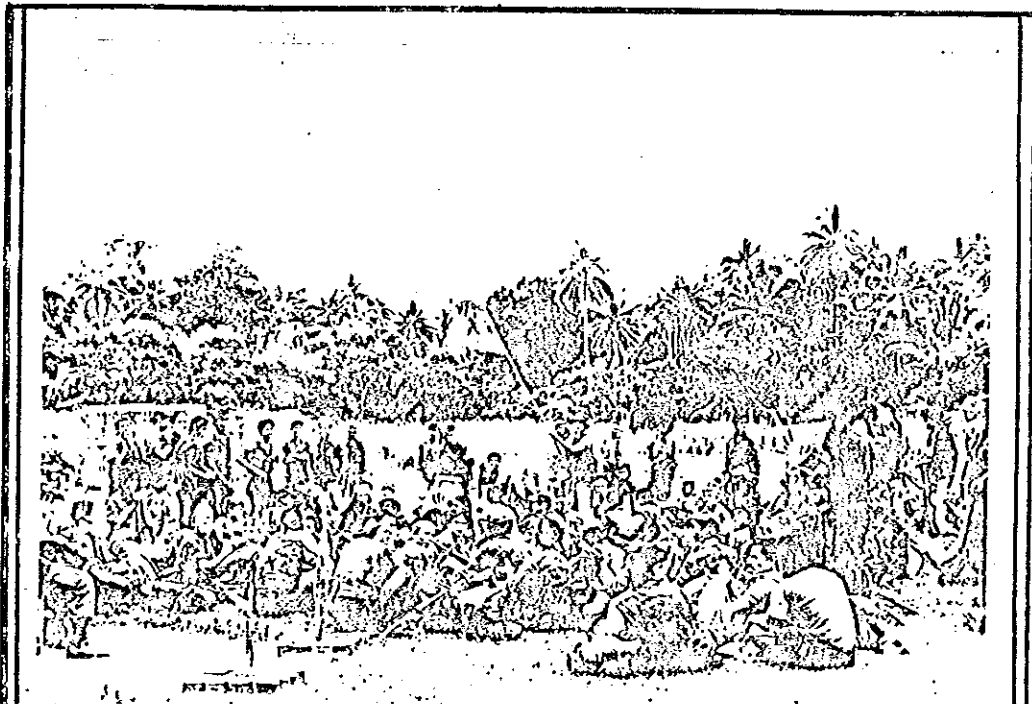
The Ranger force is specially established to suppress, ambush communist forces and to gather intelligence of the latter's movements. Rangers operate like guerrilla forces, or in the same manner as the communist insurgents. The basic principle is to attain victory over the communists by using superior guerrilla tactics, namely by using bandits to suppress bandits- or guerilla warfare to counter dissident guerrilla warfare.

For anybody to become a Ranger, although there exist no specific criteria for the selection, the following rough qualifications must be met:

- Poor and unemployed
- Aged 18-60
- Patriotic
- Of any educational background or any sex

Any prospective Ranger must contact his village headman or district officer. For those who are veterans, or threatened by the communists or living in communist-infested areas, their case will be specially considered by the authorities.

Before being stationed anywhere, Rangers must undergo an armed training for a period of one to three months, learning how to use weapons, to form columns, to know offensive and defensive tactics and to gather intelligence. After the training, each Ranger will be given a war weapon, e.g. HK33, M16, M79 rifles, and will be sent for guerrilla operations in various communist-infested areas for one or two months, depending on the situation. After each operation, the Rangers return to their base, give back their weapons, go back to visit their families in their village from which they are instructed, after a seven-day leave, to return with any intelligence they may acquire of any activities or movement in the village. The reports about all happenings in the village will serve as a basis for any eventual operation in the future.



Each Ranger is furnished with food, a mosquito net, a hammock and other necessary supplies, and is sent on mission in deep jungles or high mountains. The number of each Ranger unit will not exceed 20, but each time only a group of 3-5 Rangers will operate outside their base which is not permanent and shifting. They are trained to live in the jungles with only few belongings and deprived of any comfort in the ordinary sense of the word. A Ranger unit is a unit trained to endure all hardships, to "kill secretly"; their weapons are mostly useful for "close encounter" with the enemy.



Their mission is to search for and destroy the CPT forces by launching offensive attacks. They often shift their base to avoid any surprise attack by the communist insurgents. Their principle tactic is that of extreme mobility, they are divided into small operating groups that fight and withdraw quickly, avoid any big scale encounter, especially when the insurgents are much stronger in number.

Besides, their duty is to work with villagers in the village they enter, by giving various forms of assistance with an aim to establish mutual trust and a good relationship between Rangers and villagers. Every Ranger repeatedly has to perform this function until he is recalled, resigns or dies. When he dies on duty, his family will get a compensatory sum of about 47,000 baht from the Army and other private organizations, as well as a "Tree Men Protection Medal".

#### The Rangers' Authority

Normally, Rangers live together without any specific regulations. Therefore, they live and perform their duty very freely. They may move around, armed with war weapons, any time in any place (except in urban areas). When they meet communists or villagers believed to be "agents" or "organized persons" of the CPT, or if they simply suspect anybody of being a "village core" who provides the communists with arms, logistics and intelligence of government officials' activities - they are authorized as communist suppression officers, under the communist activities prevention acts of 1952, 1969 and 1978, to arrest and make a search of anybody in communist-infested areas without any arrest or search warrant, and even to kill those persons without autopsy. They are fully legally covered in these actions, nobody can take any legal action against them.

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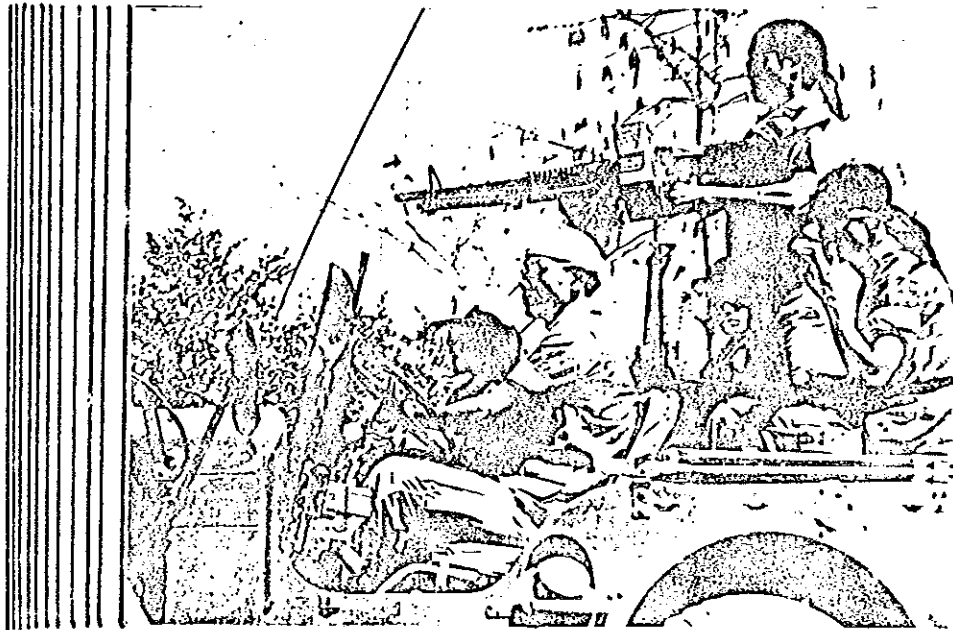
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Aside from their daily allowance of 45 baht (US\$ 2) plus their food expense of 6 baht (25 cents) per day, they will specially rewarded with 10,000 baht (US\$440) on a body-count basis for each communist insurgent killed. This has resulted in strengthening the Rangers' propensity to kill and behead as many communists they believed to be so or communist sympathizers as they can. More often than not, many innocent people are killed for a prize of 10,000 baht by the Rangers who will simply report back to their company chiefs or superiors that the dead people are communists.



Administratively, a Ranger company commanded by a company chief is responsible to the Army Operations Center of which the Army Commander-in-Chief is Director, or to Region Army Commander to whom the Army Operations Center delegates power. It is clear that compared to other armed forces such as regular forces or police forces, the Ranger force's line of command is less hierarchical, highly flexible and almost independent -so much that sometimes it is difficult to control the Rangers' activities. Provincial governors, district officers, village headmen or even the police are by no means authorized to exert any control over the Rangers.

#### The Ranger Misconception

To a certain extent, the Rangers have succeeded in suppressing communists militarily and in supporting regular forces to destroy the communist strongholds, but they have failed to win the hearts and minds of local populations because of their misbehaviour which has seriously impaired the latter's morale.

Eventhough the Prime Minister's order No 66/1980 stresses the prevalence of political over military means to win support from the people and, consequently, to defeat communist insurgency, it is rarely known or recognized as such by the Rangers. Their training lasts only one to three months, consists mainly in strengthening combat capability and in learning how to use weapons, not in helping villagers properly. Their main achieve-



ments have been short-term military victories, and by no means long-term political ones.

Another aspect of the Ranger misconception stems from lack of specific criteria for selection of prospective Rangers whose qualifications have only been roughly required. Nothing prevents misuse of authority. Persons who misbehave such as village hoodlums, can easily become Rangers. In principle, it is required that any Ranger candidate must contact and be screened by his district officer or his village headman, but in practice, the latter rarely does so .

Moreover, a quasi-unlimited power accorded by the law, a loosely-structured line of command resulting in alienating the superiors from subordinates, a low daily allowance plus a substantial money reward for each insurgent killed—these factors put together have generated the Rangers' widely reported misbehaviour throughout the country since their force came into existence. There seemingly has been no attempt on the part of the

government to evaluate the Rangers' activities with respect to establishing a good relationship with the villagers. Only communist suppression operation have been assessed. A close look at this limited and most talked-of "success" reveals, however, that in the long run these operations are likely to culminate in the communist insurgents gaining more support from the villagers, who increasingly bear grudge against the Rangers.

#### The Rangers' Misconduct

Since 1970 the Rangers have reportedly been involved in a series of crimes : killings, robberies, rapes, abductions, assaults on police stations, etc. There have been at least 126 of such cases found throughout the country, 84 of which concern killings of about 132 innocent people ranging from children, women, village, policemen, etc.

The following are some examples of the Rangers' brutal operations, other than those reported in HRTR Vol 4 No 1 and Vol 5 No 2-3.

#### 1. A coffee-planter killed

Mr Kasem Phinyo, 35, a native from Suratthani Province, had settled down since 1977 in the Village Group 2, Tambon Klengthom , Klengthom District, Krabi Province. He established his coffee plantation in one of the fertile forestry reserves of Krabi, ten kilometres from the village. There were 30-40 coffee-planting families from Suratthani province living in the same

area in which later the authorities planned to set up a new village. However, in 1981, the area was declared "communist-infested"; Mr Kasem and other villagers were ordered to move out. On February 13, fearing that the plantations would be damaged for lack of care, Mr Kasem and two other planters - Mr Chuan Erisuk, Mr Klong Maikaew - asked the Rangers to let them into the planting areas. Their request was, however, turned down. On their way back on a motorcycle, Mr Kasem and Mr Chuan were stopped on route by a group of Rangers who asked Mr Kasem to follow them to their base, and let Mr Chuan go home. Arriving at the base, Mr Kasem was ordered to dig a hole and detained until dawn. Two Rangers, Mr Nok and Mr Phom (family names unknown) took Mr Kasem to the hole, beat him up, cut his throat, put his body in the hole and filled it up. That hole was only one kilometre from the house of the village headman of the Village Group 2. On February 15, Mr Chit Phinyo, Mr Kasem's elder brother, came to the base and asked after him. The Rangers denied having detained Mr Kasem and maintained that he had gone back home in a log-transporting truck since early morning. However some villagers had seen Mr Kasem killed by the Rangers.

People speculated that for the Rangers Mr Kasem was understood to provide supplies to the communist insurgents since his house was situated deep in the jungle and his plantation established in a communist-infested area. The Rangers had once patrolled in that planting area and had fired a RPG rocket on his house. Mr Kasem was not present when the incident took place since he had moved out as ordered by the authorities.

## 2. A village headman killed

Mr Nom Khruthamatr, 32, living in the Village Group 7, Tambon Tha-ngiew, City District of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, was beloved by the villagers who asked him to be their headman since he had been generous in assisting his fellow villagers in their village development work, such as laying drainage pipes between the fields.

On May 23, 1981, a group of Rangers armed with M16 rifles entered the village and started firing at random. Nobody was hurt but the villagers were frightened. Mr Nom thus went to appeal to the provincial governor for an assistance. Four days after, on May 27 he was shot dead by a Ranger called Mr Kant (family name unknown).

## 3. An assault on a police station and an ex-soldier

On October 22, 1981 at 10 pm policemen of the City District of Chantaburi Province arrested Mr Snam Kongchinda, 23, Ranger of the Marine Unit in Dan Pongnamron, Chantaburi Province, and charged him with illegal possession of war weapons. On October 23, at 11.20 pm, a group of 13 Rangers raided the City District Police Station and freed Mr Snam. Before leaving the scene, they fired many shots in the sky causing panic among the people living nearby. They then seized a truck, forced the owner, Mr Chingchai Swasdimongkhon, a retired army sergeant, to drive them back to their camp. They later clashed on the way with a police force and ordered Mr Chingchai to drive across a barred road. The latter refused and was shot dead. The Rangers seized another truck and fled to their camp.

## Misuse of Government Power

### Three soldiers shot dead a policeman

Trang, November 28, 1981

Three soldiers and Rangers of Lampura Sub-District Camp, Huey Yod District shot dead the headpolice of City District, Lieutenant Colonel Thanomsak Phuthachat and injured another policeman during the retrieval of a saw machine costing 10,000 baht which the three soldiers robbed from Mr Chote Kongcham, a wood manager, in the forest of City District. The policemen reported the event to the Fourth Army Commander and received a permission from the governor to arrest them. (Matiphum 30/11/81)

### Five policemen arrested of murdering informers

Nakhon Sawan ; November 28, 1981

Five police officers based in NakhonSawan province were arrested on charge of taking 50,000 baht bribes from an illegal drug manufacturer and two unlicensed gun-dealers who wanted to halt the police investigations, and murdering three police informers who knew the activities and refused to join them. The three policemen murdered late October were identified as Sompong Pimpa, Samart Kaewdee and Sommai Soobliang. (Bangkok Post 28/11/81)

### Village defend volunteers robbed the passengers

Nakhon Srithammarat, December 4, 1981

Seven heavily-armed village defence volunteers set up a check-point and robbed the passengers of their valuable things in 7 vehicles on southern highways in Tha-Keun Sub-District, Thasala District. One day after, a village defence volunteer at Thasala Suppression Volunteer Center was arrested and later another five suspected volunteers were also arrested. It was known that several village defence volunteers in this group had bad records of crimes especially Mr Seng Sawadee who had committed serious crimes and had been sentenced to 40 years imprisonment, and later had his penalty reduced and had been released for 3 years ago before he became a village defence volunteer in Thasala District. (Thai Rath 6/12/81)

### A sub-district headman threatened by police

Surat Thani, November 20, 1981

Mr Suthep Sangong-sitthi- the headman of a sub-district in Karnchanadit District, Surat Thani Province filed a complaint with Interior Minister Gen Sitthi Jirarote and Pol Gen Suraphol Julaphram the Director General of the Police Department that he was threatened by the Karnchanadit district policemen so much that he could not stay at his hometown since he tried to control outlawed gambling and lottery. But several high ranking policemen on the contrary supported starting the gambling again. He also charged the policemen of supporting outlawed wood supply and helping the wrong doers in their crimes. (Matichon 1/12/81)



and Khao Pu between Lomsak District in Petchabun and Wang Thong in Pitsanulok. The government force managed to take over the headquarters, burnt down 300 insurgents houses, 10 barns and 600 pails of rice. A lot of weapons, documents and equipment were found. One of the combined force was killed and two wounded. Many blood trails were found indicating that a large number of insurgents were killed.

4. Military involved in slum development

Military sources revealed on December 13 that soldiers are involved in development programmes for slum dwellers in an effort to hinder the infiltration by communist insurgents who are believed to operate their activities in the urban areas after facing the defeat in rural areas. Military are now engaged in Bangsue and Makkasan slums in physical development as well as people organizing for patriotism.

5. Death penalty for possession of war weapons proposed

The Police Department proposed on December 15 the death penalty for people found guilty of using war weapons in robberies or murder in order to stop the proliferation of war weapons which is blamed for the rising crime rate in the country.

According to Deputy Police Director General Pol Lt Gen Narong Mahanond most of the war weapons were owned by influential people and those who wanted to return them must be made immune to punishment during the specified period.

6. Rapist sentenced to death

On December 4 the provincial court sentenced to death a 19-year old youth who was found guilty of raping and murdering his 17-year-old cousin.

Sayant Yadee was arrested last August one day after the half-naked body of his cousin, Miss Kaeota Yadee, was found on a mountain in Tambon Kamala of Kratu District. The death sentence was confirmed although he pleaded guilty.

7. Social Democrat Party's hyde-park was banned on Constitutional Day

The Director General of Police Department passed an order to the Special Security Police Section to ban the Social Democrat Party's hyde-park to be held at Sanam Luang on December 10 - the National Constitutional Day and the Day of International Human Rights.

The hyde-park entitled "Democratic Revolution in Thailand" was banned on the ground that it would obstruct the restoration of the place which will be used for the celebration of "Bangkok Bicentennial" next year. Another reason was added that the police was afraid of the interference by the "third party" which planned to incite trouble and disturbance in the country.

8. The progress of the "Forgotten 200" case

Minister of Justice, Mr Marut Bunnag, who is the chairman of the 33-man committee to review the cases of the "Forgotten 200" said that the committee has completed its work and its findings will be soon forwarded to the prime minister and to the cabinet for final endorsement.

The committee comprised of representatives from many other government agencies including Ministry of Interior and Ministry of the Prime Minister's Office was set up last June to review the 53 cases of the 204 prisoners who received summary punishment without trial under Article 21,27 and 200 of the interim constitutions between 1976 and 1979. They were imprisoned on wide-ranging charges including drug trafficking and destruction of forest reserves by the Thanin and Kriangsak regimes. The move followed complaints to the Prime Minister from the prisoners' relatives and several human rights organizations including CGRS.

After the review of the cases, the committee arrived the conclusion that the mass pardon is the quickest way to settle the much publicized case. The two other options - the general amnesty and the review of individual case by court-were considered by the committee as time-consuming measures. The grant pardon will cover prisoners of all charges including those who ran away after being sentenced under the two former prime ministers' orders but surrender themselves to the authorities before the royal decree is effected.

## 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 five 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 for its 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 injustice 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 October-December 1981

#### I Human rights activities

##### 1 Helping prisoners

During the past three months CGRS has continued with its regular work of helping prisoners facing injustice both in Bangkok and up-country. In addition to providing these prisoners with necessary assistance, 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 encouraged the changing of laws, and so on.

During the last three months of 1981, two prisoners were released namely

Mr Ging Phatkhun and Mr Chuk Phatkhun were set free on October 20. The two farmer brothers of City District, Nonthaburi Province were arrested on March 15, 1979 when ten policemen

attacked and surrounded their house misunderstanding that both were robbers who killed many persons including Mr Chong Chanrungruang. There was an exchange of gunfire in which one policeman was shot dead and Mrs. Duang, the two defendants' mother, was seriously injured and died later. After the incident they were charge of fighting against the arrest and trying to kill the authorities.

CGRS was interested in this case and provided legal aid for the two defendants from the beginning since there was evidence that both were innocent by the following reasons:

First the policemen raided the house without showing the warrant (the two defendants were summonsed to sign their names on the warrant after they had been arrested) and the policemen who showed themselves at the door asking to enter the house did not wear uniforms. People in the house therefore misunderstood the policemen as thieves and exchange the fire for self defence after the police start firing into the house which caused their mother to be seriously injured.

Second they were confirmed of their presence by the villagers who witnessed them cultivating their land on the day that a man was killed by a robber.

Both were in the state of disable persons when they were released since they were injured during the incident. They were also in debt for a large sum of money which they borrowed for cultivation and could not return due to the two years and a half of imprisonment.

### 3 Campaign for the justice of the forgotten 200

Following the statement of the government in June to review the case of almost 200 prisoners detained without trial during Thanin and Kriangsak regimes (See HRTR Vol 5 No 2), CGRS has followed its measure of implementation to keep the public informed of what has been done for the prisoners. On October 19 and 20 relatives of the prisoners and CGRS handed a letter to the press and held a meeting with the Minister of Justice requesting the government to speed up the process for the justice of all prisoners. After 5 months of investigation, the government's committee declared on November 19 that it will resort to mass pardon of prisoners which will result in the immediate release of many prisoners while the rest will have their jail term cut. (See details in "News from Thailand")

### 4 Handing out a letter against martial law in Poland

On December 21 Union for Civil Liberty and CGRS handed out an open letter in protest against the Polish government's declaration of martial law and its restriction of Solidarity movement's activities. The Polish government was requested by the letter as follows

- to release all prisoners of conscience and to avoid any acts of intimidation and any treatment which is contrary to human dignity

- to lift the martial law, the strike ban and other legal restrictions of basic rights
- to seek every possible nonviolent means in order to resolve the present conflicts among the Poles and not to allow other governments and their agents to create divisiveness

#### 5 Child labour activities

CGRS is concerned about the situation of child labour whose number is growing considerably. In 1978, 44% of children aged 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.

As a member agency of Center of Concern for Child Labour founded in September, CGRS launched in November a campaign to mark the 32nd anniversary of the UN Declaration of Child's Rights. Through radio broadcasting, the press, posters and leaflets, people were informed about the child labour situation and were requested to give information concerning the illtreatment of children in their neighbouring factories. In addition to mini-exhibitions organized in many universities in Bangkok, on November 23 CCCL held a panel discussion on "Child Labour and the Future of the Nation" which drew much attention from the public.

#### II Religious relations activities

Though the vast majority of Thais actively profess adherence to one or another 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, tackling, nonviolently, the evils of society.

To mark the anniversary of 14 October event in which students and people stood up to overthrow the dictatorial regime, CGRS organized an ecumenical ceremony in memory of those who sacrificed their lives for democracy. Religious services of Protestant, Catholic and Buddhist were conducted at the historic place where hundred of people were invited to join the ceremony.

#### III Rural development activities

CGRS has been trying to support local development groups in various ways. For example, we wish to build up a network among the groups so that they can share their experiences and help each other. Along with activities done in rural areas, CGRS tries to conscientize the urban people about

the problems that the rural people are facing, and encourage them both directly and indirectly.

Last year CGRS helped set up a rice cooperative in Baan Pukong Village in Chaiyapoom Province where farmers were heavily burdened because of high price of rice in the local market. Since the beginning of the cooperative, CGRS has continued its follow-up activities which include giving committee members the advice and skill needed for operating the cooperative.

#### 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; to 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 are better served.

During October-December micro media activities were carried out as follows:

- conducting itinerant theatre for seven villages and nine local schools in Chaingmai Province during November 10 and December 10. Its purpose is to disseminate to villagers basic and necessary knowledge as well as to arouse the consciousness of their own problem for the betterment of their communities. Teachers of local schools were also shown the alternative media for the education of the people and children in rural areas. Various topics ranging from health, nutrition to the exploited condition of villagers were communicated to people through a variety of performances such as fantasy theatre, realistic theatre and puppet shows according to the different levels of audiences.
- holding a performance in a refugee camp in Prasart District, Surin Province during December 21-23.

#### I Slum activities

The number of squatters in Bangkok is increasing rapidly due to rural poverty. It is estimated that at least 750,000 people (15% of the city's population) live in approximately 300 slums in Bangkok. These people are faced with various problems such as bad living conditions, lack of education, poverty, unemployment, narcotic drugs, etc. In addition they also face the constant threat of eviction. In spite of this, however, slums are growing rapidly in size and number, and have become a big social problem.

There is an urgent need to solve slum problems, One important factor that would help reduce or solve the problem is for the slum people to understand why they are in such a situation, for them to see how their problems relate to the political and economic structures of the society, and for them to see that they all have the power to change their lives for the better and to develop their community.

Slum work of CGRS was launched in Rama IV slum. All of its activities are meant to organize people to participate in the improvement of their surroundings. In the past three months CGRS play a catalytic role among the slum dwellers in the construction of pavement and installment of water facilities both of which are basic need of the community and were initiated by the people themselves.

As the situation in Rama IV slum related to that of other slums, CGRS consider the necessities of building a network among groups of slum dwellers in other communities which are facing eviction. In October CGRS and a group of community organizers finished a four month survey of 84 slums in Bangkok which later lead to the grouping of slum dwellers and community organizers called "Group of People's Development" whose aim is to promote the organization of slum dwellers for the development of their own community.