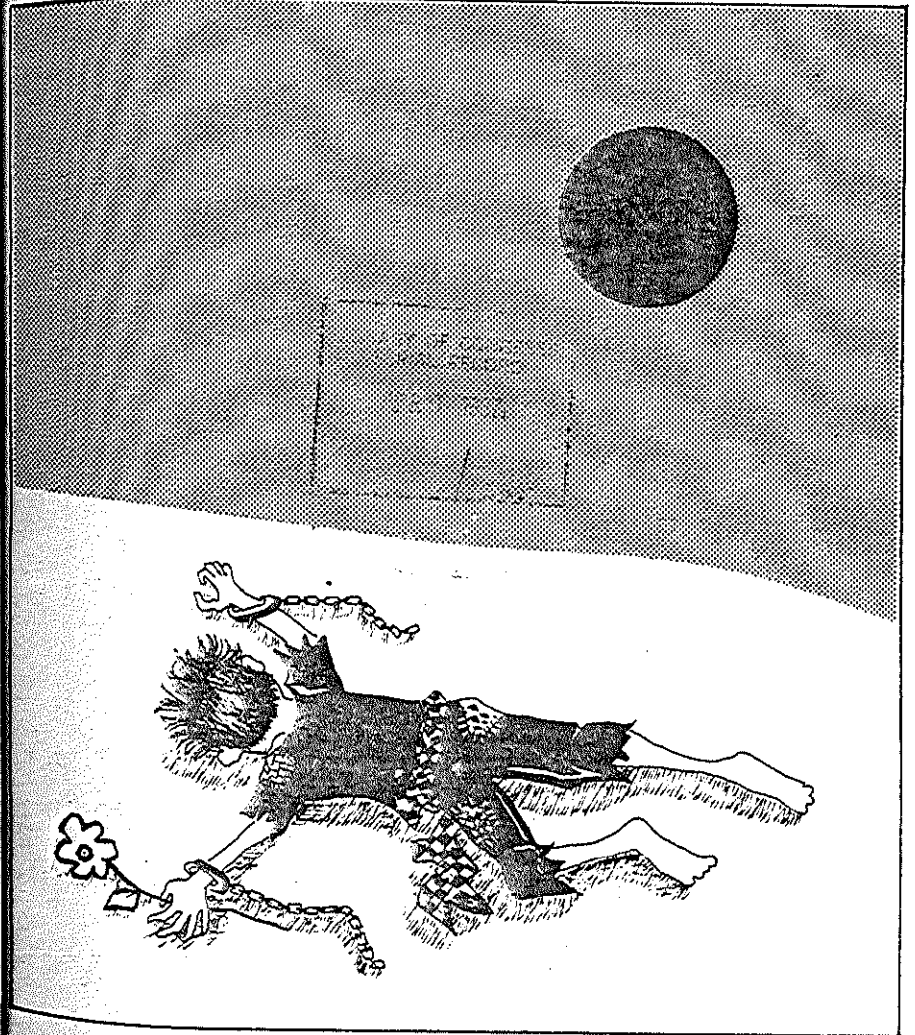


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REPORT
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND

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Ben V



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NEW ADDRESS

To Our Readers

In this April grand celebration will be held throughout Thailand when its capital, reaches its bicentenary. Ironically, while thousand of millions Baht were poured down for arrogant and luxurious ceremonies to create impressive image for foreign tourists and investors, majority of Thai people are left in miseries and despair. Despite of the coming new century, there is no sign of hope for malnourished children, young prostitutes, landless peasants, low-waged labourers or those people whose rights are infringed. From "The Human Rights Situation in Thailand in 1981" in this issue of HRTR, you will see to what degree common people in the 200th year of Bangkok have security in their lives and whether or not they have promising years in the third century of Bangkok.

In this issue you may notice that we include "Messages and Services" which is intended to keep our readers informed about activities of groups and organizations in Thailand which are actively involved in development and justice promotion. This will enable groups and organizations outside Thailand to establish network or contact with Thai NGOs which are now growing in many fields. Materials on Thailand either in form of book, slide show or film will also be covered in this section.

For five years HRTR has been published regularly with considerable help and contribution from friends who are in solidarity with us. Above all is tremendous support from the World University Service and the Uniting Church in Australia which continuously help us reproduce and distribute HRTR to our readers in Europe and Australia and New Zealand respectively for already almost three years. However, contribution from friends in other regions is still for HRTR which costs us for the production and distribution about US\$ 12 per person per year. Thus any help you can provide us or the organizations you receive your copy from would be most welcome. Though we are pleased to mail HRTR to friends who consider it useful and informative, we would also appreciate if those who no longer want to receive it would inform us so that we can avoid unnecessary expenditure.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

The number of killings in the last few months increased to such an extent that it became an important aspect of the human rights situation during that period. From the end of December 1981 to early March 1982, six persons involved in the struggle for justice and good cause were killed, and one was seriously injured. Among this number, four were journalists and the remaining three were, respectively, one labour leader, one leading teacher and one educationist. The first incident took place on last December 28 when Mr. Tam Bun-ua, representative of the teachers of Buriram Province, was shot dead while entering his house late in the evening. He had played an important role in defending the rights of provincial teachers, and before his death had protested a case of graft in school-buildings, worth 100 million baht, which reportedly had very much angered influential persons concerned.

Two weeks after, in the southern province of Nakorn Si Thammarat, Mr. Sumol Chumcheua, reporter of the well-known Thai language daily Thai Rath, was gunned down by a group of notoriously repressive Rangers on January 12, 1982. He had reported certain mistake or rangers operation which caused three deaths among them. These rangers had put pressure on Mr. Sumol not to publish the report, but he was adamant. In the wake of this incident, the Journalist' Association of Thailand appealed to the government for protection of reporters' security, but to no avail. Moreover, two months after, two more provincial reporters were killed in the same way. The first one, Mr. Anant Aphiwat-udomkhun, reporter of the Thai language daily Dee Siam, was killed late in the night of February 14, 1982, in the city district of Nongkhai Province. He had earlier appealed to the Minister of Interior for protection against threats on his life. On March 7, 1982, in the southern province of Phetchaburi, Mr. Prasit Tappinthon, editor of the Thai language daily San Manchon, was shot dead in his office. His death was believed to be linked with reports published in his newspaper on graft involving some provincial officials, leading to the transfer of a police officer from the province.

One week later, Mr. Wachai Hathajumphol, another reporter of an unnamed newspaper, was seriously wounded in an ambush. He was believed to have reported news affecting the interests of some influential people in the central province of Nakorn Pathom.

On February 4, 1982, Mr. Somjai Pholchai, lawyer attached to the Ministry of Education, was gunned down by an unknown group of killers before a crowd in the heart of Bangkok. He has a reputation as a clean-handed civil servant and a keen investigator into cases of corruption involving officials of the Ministry. Many corrupt officials had been punished thanks to his investigations. Before his death, he had been handling a reported graft case concerning the examination of would-be teachers in the central province of Ayutthya.

In another case a labour leader succumbed to an assassination. Mr. Chamlong Raksuk, a workers' leader of a smelting factory in the central province of Smtprakarn, was shot dead on last March 6 while entering his house in front of the factory. He had been involved in striving for a higher status for workers and had been facing threats on his life. He was going to become a committee member of the Federation of Iron and Steel Workers of Thailand.

Only the accused, connected with the cases of Mr. Sommai Pholchai, lawyer, and of Mr. Sumol Chumcheua, reporter, were arrested. In the latter case, only one suspect was arrested and was believed to be a scapegoat, for numerous eyewitnesses maintain that many notorious rangers were involved in the killing.

Together with the killings of justice-loving persons mentioned above, government officials' misdeeds were widely reported throughout the country. From the end of last December to early February this year, not less than 23 innocent people including children and women were killed by government officers in every region. Not counted in this number were those wounded. Most of these actions took place in remote areas where armed officers were considered influential. Amidst these sufferings caused by government officials' abuse of power, on January 26, 1982, the Ministry of Interior issued Regulation No. 4, returning the authority to police officers throughout the country to arrest any suspect without prior consent from the administrative authorities. This would facilitate police actions and increase the power of the police. In practice, this would also lead to harassment by the police of innocent people; it would authorize police officers to fabricate or find evidence against those suspects after their arrest. The infamous system of "arresting first and finding evidence after" was thus revived. It should be noted that the Interior Ministry's Regulation No. 3, issued on December 15, 1980, stipulated that the police must seek permission from the administrative authorities before proceeding to any arrest; despite this change, however, threats against innocent people were frequently reported. It is thus reasonable to fear that with the new Regulation No. 4 in effect, more and more people will be affected by the police's eventual abuse of power.

As far as noteworthy military operations during January - March this year are concerned, the one codenamed "Operation Tairomyen 9" was conceived to be the biggest ever launched in the South, the aim of which was to destroy one of the biggest communist strongholds in that area. This operation lasted from February 18 to mid-March this year and ended with the seizure of this camp. In the meantime, the military authorities admitted that this "search and destroy" operation created serious problems to the local populations. Houses, barns and ricefields of many peasant families in the areas suspected of being under communist influence, were destroyed and burned down by government forces - especially those situated between kilometres 4-6 at the entrance of the road leading to the communist camp. Houses along this road were burned to ashes, causing suffering and discontent to the innocent villagers. Even though there were no reports about villagers indiscriminately killed by the soldiers, the burning down of their houses increase the innocent people's animosity towards the authorities and the government forces. To a certain extent, this kind of military operation causes a political problem and in no way could be seen as a true victory for the government. All the more so if the innocent people affected by such operations are not taken care of or indemnified for damages caused to them by the government soldiers.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAILAND IN 1981



The human rights situation in Thailand in 1981 was essentially not different from that in 1980. Eventhough more democratic rights (of thought of speech, of expression, including the workers' right to strike) were granted, the government still maintained certain restrictions: certain cases were still under the jurisdiction of the military tribunal and martial law and decrees restricting press freedom were still in force. Furthermore, widely reported were violations of human rights, threats, assassinations by such security units as Rangers, police etc.

1. In 1981, certain laws restricting civil liberties were still in force, such as the National Administrative Reform Council's decrees No. 1,3, 29 and 30, authorizing the military tribunal to examine cases relating to national security, communist activities, etc. In this case, defendants have no right to appeal. Under the existing Anti-Communist Activities Act, any person charged with communist activities can be detained for a period of 180 days by a simple order of the Police Director and an additional period of 270 days if so ordered by the military tribunal.

Throughout last year many people were arrested on charges of communist activities; the number of these people has never been revealed, however. As was reported, they were, among many others, Wimol Piantamdee, Chanchai Chansaichommathi, Surachai Sae Dan, Damri Reungsutham. They were all detained at the temporary detention center of the Bangkok Police School.

Since the end of 1980, the number of communist insurgents and those accused of being pro-communist who surrendered themselves to the authorities had steadily been on the rise, roughly estimated at 4,000. This number included political leaders, students, labour leaders who had joined with the communists in the wake of the bloody 6 October 1976 incident. Towards these people, the governments has apparently been pursuing a lenient policy by bringing no charges against them and sending them to various recreation centers, such as the famous Karunyathep Center, before their eventual release. The exact number of these centers and that of those reoriented have never been revealed either.

In 1981, there were reports that persons who had joined the communists and later had surrendered to the authorities, or those suspected of collaborating with the communists or of being communist sympathizers, were killed either publicly or secretly or simply disappeared mysteriously. The method of secret killings gained currency and officers involved were sometimes specially rewarded for so doing. Some of such victims are as follow:

- In the beginning of 1981 three construction workers namely Lek Antano, Arun Chiewnagan, Wichien Chauwaphong who had joined the Communist Party of Thailand in Nakorn Si Thammarat and later defected were shot dead in the park of City District by 7 gunmen.

- December 24, 1980 - Pongsak Thirapattthapaiboon and Kamol Piantamdee, a brother and a nephew of Wimol Piantamdee who had been arrested and charged with being communist, disappeared. Their relatives did not receive any information from them since then.

- May 8, 1981 - Daranee Panyabusyakun, a Ramkhamhaeng University graduate disappeared after leaving home in Chachoengsao Province to take an examination in Bangkok. Her parents informed the Thai Lawyers' Association about the incident in June. She was later released from the Investigation Center situated in Bangkok Karunyathep Center in July and obtained freedom again.

- July, 1981 - Silpasert Phokaew, a deputy Secretary General of the now-defunct National Student Center of Thailand in 1974, who defected from armed resistance movement of CPT in 1981 disappeared in July that year. His relatives believed that the military secretly arrested him. According to an informed source, he had been killed shortly after his arrest.

2. The anti-guerrilla armed unit, better known as the Ranger, was set up to combat communist insurgents. This unit was under the control of the Commander in Chief of the Army. In 1982 military officials reported this unit's success in communist suppression operations, in consequence of which the number of Rangers would reportedly increase from 24 battalions in 1981 to 32 battalions in 1982. The fact that the Anti-Communist Activities Act fully authorized Rangers to kill without any prior investigation of any communist suspect, and that these Rangers were usually not well disciplined, led to widely reported abuses of power; innocent people were robbed, killed, abducted

raped and threatened. During the last three years, the Rangers were said to be involved in at least 126 cases throughout the country. Out of this number 84 cases were related to the killings of 132 people including children, women, village headmen and even policemen. In most of the cases, punishments could not be meted out to criminal Rangers, despite the authorities' continual assertions following each important incident that stricter control would be exercised over these trouble-making Rangers, and that those who misbehaved would be severely punished. These assertions have regularly been made since 1980 and yet the rangers' abuse of power is still widely reported. In some cases they are even protected by their own superiors. Misbehaviour of Rangers in 1981 can be summarized as follow:

-February 13, 1981-Kasem Pinyo was shot dead by Rangers who suspected him of being a communist sympathizer since his house was located in a sensitive area. He was a native from Surat Thani and had settled on his coffee plantation in Klong Thom District, Krabi Province in 1977.

-April 11, 1981-Bunruan Si-In was shot dead by 3 Rangers in Chawang District, Nakorn Si Thammarat Province. His relatives who petitioned the police were also threatened by the Rangers.

-April 28, 1981 - Ek and Roman Suthikarn were robbed and the former was shot dead at their home in Naldien Sub-District, Nakorn Si Thammarat.

-April 28, 1981 - A policeman and 2 passengers were shot dead by 5 Rangers, who attached to 4151 Center of Combined Forces in Surat Thani, during their robbery of the Thonburi-Sungai Kolok train.

-May 2, 1981 - Pan Kongchaiel was shot dead at a temple by a Ranger of Nai Toon Base, Nakorn Si Thammarat.

-May 7, 1981 - Chum Rongthong, a deputy village headman of Ban Tha Wa, Nakorn Si Thammarat, was shot dead by a Ranger.

-May 15, 1981 - Win Ratchanee was shot dead by Rangers at his house in Promkiri District, Nakorn Si Thammarat.

-May 23, 1981 - Kruatthamat, a village headman of Moo 7 in Nakorn Si Thammarat, was shot dead by a Ranger who was angry with his complaint to the governor about his misbehaviour.

-June 21, 1981 - Pua Sapanara, a was shot dead by Rangers in Thon Hong Sub-District, Nakorn Si Thammarat.

-August 18, 1981 - Eleven persons were massacred by twenty Rangers who fired on the crowd attending a funeral in City District, Nakorn Si Thammarat. Sixteen others were wounded.

-October 23, 1981 - Chingchai Swasdimongkhol was shot dead by a group of 13 Rangers who raided the City Police Station of Chantaburi to free his friend.

3. On December 15, 1980 the Interior Ministry's order No 3/1980 was issued, according to which the authority to arrest a criminal suspect would be exercised only if the police had solid evidence and only if the administrative authorities concerned consent to such a move. For a while this order had constituted to some extent a guarantee against any abuse of power. However in 1981 the Police Department solicited the Ministry of Interior to review, that is repeal, such a rule on the ground that it obstructed the flexible exercise of the police authority. On January 26, 1982, Interior Minister signed order No 4/1982, repealing the former order, returning to the police the authority to arrest without prior consent from the administrative authorities. This provoked a controversy among different circles, namely lawyers, academics, journalist, students and other segments, as to how civil liberties could be protected in the face of the new Interior Minister's order. It appeared

that arrests by the police were often far from justified, and that each year reports were widespread that a number of innocent people were unjustly arrested, threatened, assaulted and even killed by the police. Following are some illtreatment of the police:

- February 4, 1981 - On Saraburi-Lomsak highway, the local police and administrative officials killed 7 villagers. The victims' hands were tied behind with handcuffs and they were shot in the head. The authorities then cremated the bodies and made a report accusing them of being robbers who were shot during the clash with police. The local witnesses said that those victims had no weapons or any equipment for robbery whereas there were guns and hand grenades beside their bodies after the incident.

- March 7, 1981 Tung Mahamek police killed 2 teenagers out of a group of 3 encountered in the dark during their patrol. They started to investigate but the three ran away. The police claimed afterwards that the teenagers fired first. However a .38 pistol of a teenager never fired.

- March 15, 1981-Plew Haisean was arrested together with four of his friends by ten policemen of Nong Ya-Plong Sub-District of Petchaburi. He disappeared afterwards. His brother was informed later by the police that they had arrested nobody.

- May 26, 1981-A vocational student was killed by police who attempted to press false theft charges against him. The victim, Anucha Borisuth, was beaten up in the custody and died in a hospital after he had confessed to the charge and was released on bail.

- June 26, 1981 - On Yuyen, a worker of Sanyo Company was arrested by police of Bengna District, Bangkok on charges of stealing his neighbour's motorcycle. Later he was beaten to death in the custody.

4. The National Administrative Reform Council's order No 42 and the 1941 Law on the Press, controlling and forbidding certain publications, were still in full force. These laws authorized the Press Officer to withdraw licenses of publishers, advertisers, editors and owners of publications if the Press Officer deemed that articles, reports appearing in those publications were detrimental to the nation or the government, etc. In 1981, a number of publications were ordered closed or served the notice by the authorities according to these laws. Some of publications are as follow:

- March 16-22, 1981 - Dao Siam newspaper was closed for 7 days for publishing obscene pictures.

- March 5, 1981- Phadet Phuripatiphan, editor of Naew Na daily newspaper was charged with disclosing governmental secrets in newspaper.

- March 16, 1981 - Press Officer warned all newspaper editors not to report that the government finances were not sufficient to pay civil servants, since such a report would weaken the security of the government.

- April 15, 1981 - Editors of every newspaper were summoned by Press Officer to be warned not to report on further development relating to the abortive coup in April 1-3, including rumours of another coup.

- May 22, 1981 - Chao Thai daily newspaper, Naew Na daily newspaper, and Su Anakot weekly magazine were warned by Press Officer in the case of reporting the secret memo of a master mind of abortive coup, but the Chao Thai editor refused to sign the name to accept the warning.

- August 3, 1981 Dao Siam newspaper was closed on a charge of distorting the news which would affect the peacefulness and security of the state

- November 16, 1981 - Press Officer warned editors of every newspaper not to present a frightful headline.

As a matter of principle, the NARC's order No. 42 was undemocratic and violates the freedom of thought, of speech of the journalists. Many quarters were thus opposed to and demanded the abolition of this order. In the past few years, a certain number of Members of Parliament did make moves in that direction, but to no avail.

As for the journalists, many of them apparently continue to be threatened, attacked and killed for having exposed the misdeed of officials and influential people.

- February 13 - Supasak Jasamut, a local reporter in Krabi Province, was killed due to his attack against the misbehaviour of the officials.

- February 28, 1981- Wisit Sithart, editor of Siang Chao Baan in Pichit Province, was shot dead by 3 gunmen in his office. Before his death, Wisit had reported the corruption of military budget in the province and disclosed the people involved.

- March 14, 1981 - A man threw a hand grenade into the house of Somsak Watcharapirorn, Thai Rath daily newspaper's reporter in Nakorn Rajasima. Somsak had earlier written reports attacking the illegal log business in the province.

- April 17, 1981 - Sakon Duangkaew, reporter of Daily News in Saraburi, was shot due to his report of influential people who killed the villagers to seize their land in Lopburi Province.

- June 9, 1981 - Pisit Soythuran, Matichon newspaper's reporter in Nakorn Pathom, was threatened by a stranger due to his report about the move of people against the Crime Suppression Police.

- June 10, 1981 - Montri Phathrawat, Thai Rath's reporter in Nakorn Sawan and editor of local Seri Nakorn newspaper, was shot dead in his car on the way back home. He had reported the corrupt background of a policeman which resulted in the investigation of this policeman.

- June 17, 1981 - Manu Thawikun, reporter and photographer of Dao Siam, and Sakol Chaiyakham disappeared from a restaurant after taking pictures of the restaurant which was believed one of the big gambling places owned by an influential person.

- June 26, 1981 - Chak Akrasak Na Ayudhya, a photographer of Chao Thai daily newspaper was threatened and jostled by soldiers of Gen Arthit Kamlang-ek.

5. Throughout 1980, labour unions and organizations as well as labour congresses of various sectors made a move towards the lifting of the law prohibiting strikes. Finally, in January 1981, the government abolished the Interior Ministry's order of October 8, 1976 which banned all labour strikes and closures of factories or lay-offs. It was accepted that workers could strive for their legitimate rights.

Since the beginning of 1981, a big number of workers had been laid off. For the first nine months of the same year, this number was estimated at 7,000. The main pretext usually used by the employers was loss of profit. It should be noted, however, that many of those who were laid off were members or committee members of different labour unions striving for their lawful rights. Some lay-offs of workers are as follow:

- Sahamit Motor Seat and Craft Company located in Bangkok which produced motorcycle cushion laid off 63 workers who were labour union's members after they had demanded improvements in the employment condition.

- C.H.Auto Part Company in Samut Prakarn laid off 132 workers who demanded improvements in the employment condition.

- Piyawat Rubber Industry Company in Bangkok which produced Jump Master shoes dismissed 12 labour union committee members.

- Charoen Sawad Elastic Artificial Fibre Company in Nakorn Pathom dismissed 19 worker representatives after they had submitted their demands for improving the employment condition.

During the first nine months of 1981, the Labour Department received 3,186 petitions from workers appealing against unfair treatment by employers-involving 13,266 workers. During the same period, there were 158 labour dispute and 38 labour strikes involving 80,188 and 13,933 workers respectively. Also in 1981, 79 new labour unions -29 in Bangkok and 50 in the provinces - were registered at the Labour Department.

The Labour Department's factory inspections in 1981 revealed that 80 per cent or most of the factories still violated various aspects of labour laws i.e. refusal to pay minimum wage, illegal employment and working conditions, etc.

These statistics sufficed to indicate the degree to which the labour situation had become tense, especially in the second half of 1981. This tension resulted in increasing the number of workers and labour leaders striving for their rights, who were threatened, attacked and killed. Following are some cases above mentioned:

-April 10, 1981 - Vichien Prangthong, the former president of the Komolkit Rice Mill labour union, was shot dead in his house in Nonthaburi Province. The cause of murder was related to his arbitrary dismissed on March 7 after workers had staged a strike. He afterwards filed a lawsuit against his employer demanding compensation

- October 1, 1981 - After the Honeywell workers failed to win concessions in negotiations and were all dismissed, they went back in 2 cars to their homes. On the way gangsters drove close to their cars and hit the windshields, causing 2 wounded.

- October 2, 1981 - Gangsters in 2 small trucks hit the workers of Charoen Sawad Elastic Artificial Fibre Company in Nakorn Pathom during the strike in front of the factory. It was reported that the police standing nearby at the time of the incident did nothing.

- October 15, 1981 Samrong Naphachot, president of the Sahafarm Poultry Company labour union, and its two committee members were attacked by two unknown gunmen while they were waiting for a bus after the meeting in Bangkok. Samrong and his friend were shot dead. They were key persons in the formation of the labour union and campaigned for better working conditions at the factory

As to the condition of child labour, they were essentially not different from those in previous years. It was believed that a big number of medium-size and small factories still illegally employed children. Police rescues of flave child labourers from many "hellish factories" were regularly reported in the press.

6. In 1981, no political arrests - except those of communist suspects - were reported. Certain political cases submitted as criminal cases too were rejected by the court as null and void. Such cases are as follow:

- The case of Chaweewan Pobpuak, a key person in forming the labour union of DTC Industry Company, who was arrested on charges of stealing.

- The case of Phra Prachuab Khakhai, an active monk on development in Sakon Nakorn Province, who was arrested on charges of dressing as a monk without approval of the Church.

Since mid-1981, many human rights protection groups and people concerned have appealed to the government for leniency towards those detained by successive orders of former Prime Minister Thanin Kravixien and Gen Kriangsak Chomanand, empowered by Articles 21,27 and 200 of the then Constitutions. It was argued that these punishments were ordered without a due process of law, thus had violated human rights and equity of law. The trend is that the government might reconsider this issue and grant pardon to these detainees on a case-by-case basis.

At the end of 1980, 186 Chinese and Vietnamese detainees long waiting to be exiled to their respective countries were released from jail. At the end of 1981, 39 more of these persons were still detained at the temporary detention center of the Bangkok Police School. The authorities asserted that the delay was due to lack of documents such as alien registration. It should be noted that many of them had already been in prison for 18 years.

In 1981, many capital punishments were meted out to killers, robbers and rapists. There was also an attempt by official circles to incorporate a provision on capital punishment into the penal code to be applied to those charged with illegal possession of war weapons.

Conclusion

Various aspects of the human rights situation in Thailand in 1981 were not improved, if not deteriorating, compared to 1980. Eventhough the government had granted more freedom of thought and of speech to the people, it still maintained certain restrictions. At the same time, violations of human rights and civil liberties continued. The armed units still freely threatened the people, saw no restriction of their authority and had their strength increased. No measures were taken to ensure more safety in life and properties of the people. Most workers did not benefit from the minimum wage as required by the law. On the other hand, the chronic poverty of the people was such that 500,000 peasant families lacked farmlands. 55,000 children under 5 years old died from malnutrition and those above that age, by the hundred of thousands, came to work in unhealthy factories in Bangkok. Slum dwellers were regularly evicted from their areas. More than half a million women resorted to prostitution to survive. These are the aspects of society that apparently reflect the situation of human rights in Thailand in 1981.

On September 25, 1981 an agreement was signed between the residents of Rama IV community and the United Bangkok Development Co Ltd in an attempt to end the 15 year struggle over the disputed land of 20.8 acres. The agreement bound the company to set aside parts of the land to construct flats for the slum residents who choose to stay in the area and to pay compensation to those willing to move out.

However the fight is not settled yet. Six months have passed and no agreement on details of the flats to be constructed has been reached. There still remains the question of how big the flats will be, whether a school and market will be provided for the residents and how many stories the building will be. However this does not mean that the situation is "quiet". As time passes the company adopts every means for its own benefit. The impoverished residents, who are not sure whether or not the flats will be constructed, are being offered several thousand baht by the company in exchange for their evacuation. Every resident who accepts money and leaves the land means one less flat the company would have to build and eventually more land for their commercial center. Those who prefer to stay on the land were warned, if not harassed, by company representatives that they might be homeless if they did not comply.

The company undoubtedly knows that fire is an effective means to drive people from the land. In January alone five fires occurred in the area but people managed to put them all out. The latest incident took place on January 28 when a teenager was seen around 2.00 am. pouring benzine on a house and starting a fire before running to a motorcycle and speeding away.

Even though the fires were extinguished before they could spread through the slums, the repeated incidents fuel the slum dwellers' tension. About twenty families were convinced to leave when they were asked by some company representatives, "Which one do you prefer, money (compensation) or ashes?"

Along with the buying-off of dwellers is the company's move to get rid of hard-core leaders of the community. On February 12 deputy chairman of the community, Miss Suporn Srichaisupakit, was arrested following a charge by the company that she had trespassed on the company's land. In the charge the company accused her of building an extension to her house on land which had been reclaimed by the firm from her neighbour. She was released on bail one day later and her case is due to be brought to the court.

Regardless of their promise in the agreement not to harass the squatters, the company uses every possible method to weaken the community and get dwellers off the land so they can have more area for their commercial center. However, the community is trying hard to face the company's threat and stick together in the fight for justice. The victory of Rama IV community in the first round of the fight that was marked by the September 1981 agreement is the result of people's stubborn resistance, and significant support from friends around the world who pressed the government to intervene in the dispute in favour of the dwellers. Now the Rama IV community is entering the second round of fighting and your support is still badly needed to make the company aware that the world is supporting peoples' right to land and housing and that their harassment must be halted.

Please keep up the pressure :

- 1) write a letter requesting the government to make the company comply with promises made in the agreement.

Gen From Tinsulanonda
Prime Minister
Thai Ku Fa Building
Bangkok

- 2) write letters of support to Rama IV Community

Committee of Rama IV Community
c/o Mrs. Somsri Roonthongtroo
162 Trok Talard
Klong Toey
Bangkok 10111

1. Doctor killed in a brawl

Chumphorn, January 30, 1982

A doctor was killed and four other people seriously injured when a drunken group of soldiers engaged in a shooting with policemen at a foodshop in Muang District, Chumphorn Province.

Dr Nanthapol Chimsathayurat, 27, who was attached to the provincial hospital was hit in the head and died shortly after arrival in hospital. Many eyewitnesses identified Sgt. Thawat Sribunpnan as the murderer. Twelve policemen and four soldiers who were allegedly involved in the brawl were later arrested. (Bangkok Post 10/2/82)

2. Two policemen and a soldier murder a woman and two boys

Nakorn Rajasima, February 8, 1982

Two policemen and a soldier were arrested in connection with the murder of a woman and two 16-year-old boys. They were identified as Pol Pvt Suthat Srisang, Pol Pvt Akkaradej Panthulawan and Sgt Niwat Ondi. The three were accused of using a handgrenade and M-16 rifles in an attack on the three victims, Mrs Somchai Kanluang, 52, her son Arun, 16, and her nephew Samai Watsamrong, 16, while they were having dinner in their house of Park Chong District. The gunmen were hired by Mr Thieb Plangklang who wanted to kill Somchai's husband who he said was responsible for his father's death. (Nation 13/2/82)

3. Ranger kills eight at temple fair

Ubon Ratchathani, February 21, 1982

Eight people were killed and 46 injured when a ranger lobbed a hand grenade into a crowd of cinema spectators at a temple fair.

The ranger, Sgt Mongkol Khanpramarn, a platoon commander of ranger company 224 based in Ban Na-sa-ard, was arrested shortly after the incident in the compound of Wat Potharam in Senangkhanikom sub-district.

Mongkol who was drunk, after having quarrelled with a group of teenagers drinking in the temple grounds, took out a hand grenade and hurled it towards the youths who fled into a crowd of people watching an open-air movie (Nation 22/2/82)

4. Village defence volunteers kill three villagers

Nakorn Si Thammarat, December 25, 1981

About 1,000 villagers and teachers of Ron Phiboon District filed a complaint with Lieutenant Gen Harn Leelanond, the Commander of the Fourth Army Region against the policemen and village volunteers who shot dead 3 villagers - parents and their child - by M-16 rifles in Ron Phiboon District on December 25, 1981. They also present to the Commander the bullets rings which were used to kill the victims from the scene of the murder. The accused namely Mr Suchart (surname unknown) and a village defence volunteer Mr Fung (surname unknown) were later arrested. (Matuphoom 28/12/81)

5. Marines rob and kill two villagers

Traad, February 5, 1982

Four marines namely Jaroen Kaewsuan, Jaroen Intraraksa, Chuchat Phetnoo and Bankarn Nakchatrri attached to the military base of Ban Haadlek, Klonyai District, robbed Mr Yong, 57, and Mrs Yee Hoysang, 50, who owned a small shop near the base. The victims resisted giving them valuables and were shot to death. Two of them were also shot dead in the incident. (Thai Rath 7/2/82)

6. Five people robbed and killed

Surat Thani, January 18, 1982

A village defence volunteer, Mr Samien Bunsomphit, 22, attached to the Karnchanadit District, together with another 2 persons robbed and killed 5 people - a man, his wife, their children and nephew.

The three robbers raided the house of Mr Somboon Soralakikit, 60, shot him dead and took a golden race, 2 golden rings and cash totalling 20,000 Baht. Afterwards they took his wife, his children and nephew and killed all of them. The four victims were identified as Mrs Somsri, Thanomsak, 14, Songsri, 5, and Thavirat, 4. (Thai Rath 22/1/1982)

7. Eight police charged with murder of villager

Nakorn Sawan, March 10, 1982

Sixteen people, including 8 Border Patrol policemen were charged in the Nakorn Sawan Provincial court with the murder of villager and gang robbery.

On December 9, 1981, the 8 policemen from Zone 6 Border Patrol Unit, joined an influential person, Samnao Chantranond, to murder Mr Sa-ard Kiatpow, whom they accused of being a communist. They later burnt his body to prevent identification. After that they snatched 20,000 Baht cash from his wife and seized from other villagers and valuables totalling almost 100,000 Baht. The raid was done on the order of Samnao who wanted to claim land in the village. (Bangkok Post 11/3/82)

8. Rangers kill and rape villagers

Phattalung, February 5, 1982

Mrs Buntaai and Mrs Somsin Srinongchow, villagers of Chumpol Sub-District and City District filed a complaint to the City District police against Mr Narong Kamduang, a ranger and his friends attached to the Ranger Company 407 in Phattalung. Narong and his friends were alleged to cut the heads of their husbands - Mr Khajorn and Mr Rangsit Srinonachow and left their corpses in the forest beside the highway.

On the same day, Ms Prom Nocket, 18, a villager of Nathong Sub-District also filed a complaint to the police that she was raped by Mr Narong and was forced to be sold in Malaysia but she managed to escape. (Matuphoom 12/2/82)

1. Murder of seven reporters and activists

During December and March six people were murdered and one was seriously injured. Their deaths all related to their strive for justice and right cause. Four of them were reporters and journalist while the remainder were teacher, educationist and labour leader.

Mr Tim Bun-ua, one of the rural teacher representatives in the Primary Education Committee of Buriram Province was shot dead on December 23, 1981. He was attacked while entering the front door of his house at about 1 am. after returning from a charity fair of the Ban Satuk School in Satuk District, Buriram Province. His assassination was due to his important role in the protest against corruption connected with the building and restoring of schools, costing about 100 million baht, which caused influential people involved to become very angry.

Mr Sumel Chumcheua, reporter of the mass circulation Thai Rath, was killed by a band of army-trained rangers of unit 424 of Promkiri District, Nakorn Si Thammarat in a hail of gunfire from M-16 rifles and shot guns on January 12, 1982. The tragic death of Sumel occurred while he was riding a motorcycle, heading for his home. Before his death he made a report of the clash between rangers of unit 424 and the Promkiri local police while on patrol which was mistaken to be the clash with the insurgents, 3 rangers died and 2 were wounded on January 9, 1982. He was asked by the rangers not to report the incidents but he refused and afterwards was shot to death.

Mr Sommai Pholchai, lawyer attached to the Ministry of Education was gunned and stabbed to death by 2 unknown men in the lane to his house on Charansanitwong Road in Bangkok at 5 pm. on February 4, 1982. Before the incident he investigated the corruption of the officials in Ayuthaya Province which caused 8 corrupted officials to be dismissed and sued.

Mr Anant Apiwat-udomkhun, a reporter of Dao Siam, was shot dead in his own coffee shop in Nong Khai Province in the night of February 14, 1982. Anant had earlier sought help from Interior Minister Gen Sitthi Jirarote stating that he feared an attempt on his life.

Mr Chamlong Raksuk, a worker leader of Thai Special Steel Company was killed by an unknown group of gunmen while he was entering his residence near the factory in Muang District, Samut Prakarn Province on March 6, 1982. He was among worker leaders who strived for a better condition of workers in the factory. He was planning to run election of the Federation of Iron and Steel Workers of Thailand before he was killed.

Mr Prasit Tabpinthong, editor of the local Sarn Muanchon, and reporter of Daily News was shot dead by two unknown gunmen while he was working in his printing house at 9.30 pm. of March 7, 1982. His assassination was due to his report on the government officials' corruption, especially the report attacking a policeman's corruption, which caused him to be transferred.

Mr Wanchai Hatthajumphol, editor of local Sieng Nakhon Pathom and Thai Rath reporter was shot by 2 gunmen at 6.45 pm. of March 14, 1982. He was resting after football training at the football field of Muang District Nakhon Pathom when the incident took place which made him badly wounded. It is believed that he was assaulted by the order of influential people who placed obstacles in the way of his reporting.

2. Seven persons sentenced to death

Two gunmen identified as Mongkolchai Kampiranond, 26, and Saroj Phusri, 26, were sentenced to death on December 14, 1981 by Chonburi Provincial Court after being found guilty of murdering a boxing promoter in 1980. The two were identified by several witnesses in the court as the murderers who shot Napha Nakpratham to death at his boxing camp on a motorcycle.

Two defendants namely Mrs Bunlom Karanyaprasit, 44, and Mr Wisut Siributraphan, 42, were sentenced to death by the Military Court of Nakorn Rajasima on charges of robbery and murder on December 30, 1981. Both were found deceiving a rich land lord and money lender into a plantation and hitting her with a piece of water pipe before burning her body while she was unconscious.

Montri Thongkham, 51, an army sergeant found guilty by the Phitsanulok Provincial Court on December 29, 1980 of having murdered one superior officer and wounding another. He was executed on a firing range in Wang Thong District on February 17, 1982. He was attached to the Fourth Army Division and committed the murder in a shooting incident outside a Phitsanulok army hospital on August 14, 1980.

The Nakorn Sawan Provincial Court on December 18, 1981 sentenced Mr Amnuay Inthawan, 27, to death after finding him guilty of killing others intentionally. Mr Amnuay shot his victim while riding his motorcycle with his unregistered pistol.

Mr Somnuk Sukseri was sentenced to death by Nakorn Sawan Provincial Court on December 28, 1981 on charges of raping and killing his young niece of 11 years old on February 11, 1981 in Takli District. He was formerly a prisoner in Lopburi Provincial Detention Center but managed to escape his penalty and went to stay with his cousin in Nakorn Sawan before the incident occurred.

3. US boosts military and economic aid to Thailand

The US Embassy in Bangkok announced in March that US economic and military aid to Thailand will increase by 25 per cent this year which will include grant military funds totalling US\$ 4.5 million for the first time in several years. The total economic and military aid to Thailand for the current fiscal year will be over US\$ 100 million, including US\$ 62.5 million in guaranteed loans for military purchases. The US economic assistance, which will go primarily for rural development programmes, will increase from US\$ 24.1 million to US\$ 27.6 million which is the highest figure since 1973. The embassy said that in addition to the aid, the US has also nearly doubled its grant funds for military training in the US from US\$ 770,000 to US\$ 1,450,000. According to the US Embassy Thailand is the only country in East Asia to receive grant military funds from the US.

4. Army launches biggest assault on communist stronghold

The Fourth Army Region in February launched a large scale military drive against Camp 508, the largest communist stronghold in the South, that had withstood major military offensive in the past. The operation which was described as the biggest and best planned ever in the South started on February 18 with more than 4,000 men supported by gunships, army aircraft and armoured carriers and artillery units, covering the area of Suratthani's five districts.

After seven days of battle, the government troops declared that they had gained complete control over Camp 508 and captured many satellite camps, all of which together make 90 per cent of the insurgents' network of jungle base in the area. The "search and destroy" mission continued and expanded to other districts until mid-March. In an attempt to prevent the resurgence of communist influence, the Fourth Army Region stated that it would retain its forces in the occupied areas and would introduce development projects to Chongchang Pass where Camp 508 was situated. The news of Camp 508's seizure were greatly welcome by the Army and government, which made publicity, including broadcasts of the success throughout the country.

However, on March 19 the government has got what they believed to be the revenge of communist insurgents - a powerful explosion which tore down parts of Suratthani city hall and killed 5 people, including an assistant provincial chief, and injured over 50 others. Army officers investigating the incident reported that up to 100 pounds of TNT were believed used in the explosion. This planned sabotage got a strong reaction from the Army - the Fourth Army Region Commander vowed to take tit-for-tat actions against the communist insurgents

5. New combat-ready battalion to control riots

The Infantry 21 and Royal Guard Soldiers have set up a new combat-ready battalion to fight riots and coup d'etat and provide a 6-month training course to prepare soldiers for all conditions.

The Army authorities ordered the setting up of a combat-ready battalion to carry out any immediate action according to the commander's order whether there is a border crisis or not. This unit can move from its base within 3 hours without prior notice and can move within 1 hour with prior notice.

6. Police found involved in prostitution

Two scandals exposed police involvement in prostitution and collusion with brothel operators.

The first scandal took place when police were found releasing 52 girls - many were under 15 - back into prostitution. The girls were earlier rescued from brothel "Hotel 28" in Bangkok by Crime Suppression Police on February 2 and were expected to be taken care of at CSP's headquarters. However on February 4, an order was issued to transfer the girls to Phya Thai Police Station, which is responsible for the area where Hotel 28 is situated. Instead of taking them to the police station, the Phya Thai police ordered the

girls to board a pick-up truck on which were the manager of Hotel 28 and three of its waiters. All of them were brought to a shophouse which was next door to Hotel 28. On the same day pimps took the girls to Hotel 588, which belonged to the same owner as Hotel 28 with the connivance of Phya Thai police. After the raid Hotel 28 still operated as usual without police interference.

In the second scandal, the Police Station of Padrew District, Chasoengsao Province, was found to be taking bribes from brothel owners in return for the release of prostitutes the police had arrested. According to the law, a woman arrested and found guilty of being a prostitute by the court is to be sent to a rehabilitation center in Nonthaburi Province. However, during July-December 1981 at least 59 women were found guilty by Chasoengsao Court of being prostitutes but only 10 of them were sent to the center, whereas the remainder disappeared without any explanation from the Padrew Police Station which was responsible for the transfer process. It was found out later in March that 49 women were released by police and returned to prostitution again.

Both scandals hit the headlines of many local newspapers and got so much attention from the public that a police commission was set up to investigate the cases which ended with the transfer of six high-ranking Phya Thai and three Padrew Police officers who were found to be involved in prostitution scandals.

7. Thirty six children flee reformatory center

36 children, aged 10-14, fled the Reformatory Center for boys in Pakkled, Nonthaburi Province in the night of March 26 but 19 of them were rounded up several hours later.

The group of young boys in the "escape attempt" had been confined to the center from a few days to 3 months. After the incident, the boys asked the police not to send them back to the Reformatory again for fear of serious punishment and also asked for help in contacting their parents they have never seen since their arrest. The children revealed that most of them were arrested by a group of people who brought dirty and tattered children to the center and were rewarded 50 baht (US\$2.5) for a boy. In the center they were forced to do gardening all day and controlled by a "big" boy, 20, who would tell the supervisor to come them if they could not finish work according to the satisfaction of the "big" boy. Sometimes they were punished by being made to stand on one foot in the sun and to fast to the extent that they could not bear the punishment anymore and tried to flee.

The children were later taken back to the Reformatory. Afterwards they told the reporters that the only reason for their escape is to participate in the Bangkok Bicentennial celebration and never mention about the punishment they got in the Reformatory again.

8. Adopted girl grows up in forced confinement

Tukta or Wasana Wongchanglok, 22, a mental retarded girl who was adopted by Duangchai Wongchanglok, 42, when she was only 15 days, was rescued by police from a dark and dirty square room in the center of Bangkok on March 18, 1982.

Tukta's room was four by four metres in size and was where she slept, played, ate and took showers day after day, since she was a little girl until she turned 22 years old. She could not talk and didn't even know her real name. Duangchai said that Tukta had been mental retarded since she was an infant and she had to detain her in the room because she was very naughty and always destroyed things. Duangchai had taken Tukta to Rajvithi Hospital for the Mental Retarded but she was refused admission on the ground that Tukta could not help herself and they did not have a place for such a girl to live individually. She was told to wait until special quarters for this kind of child could be built.

9. Distillery workers on 10 day strike

About 2,000 workers of the Bangyikhan Distillery, the producer of Thailand's well-known Mekhong whisky, staged a 10 day strike during February 15-24 in a dispute over higher wages and welfare benefits. The strike was launched after 8 rounds of negotiation between the workers and management ended in deadlock. Considered to be the biggest strike ever held this year, the action was carried on with the full support of Labour Congress of Thailand, despite the rumour during the first three days that troops were due to attack the strikers. The dispute was however settled when Gen Arthit Kamlang-ok, the commander of the Metropolitan Peace Keeping Forces, stepped in as mediator at the request of the workers and convinced them that the management had agreed, per his request, to accept the workers' major demand for consideration.

10. Workers doped with stimulants

Dr Suwat Duangploy, director of Samutprakarn Provincial Hospital, disclosed in January that many workers in small factories in this industrial-infested province had been doped with amphetamine by their employers without being aware of the process which has operated for 3-4 years. The drug was normally dissolved in soft drinks - soy bean juice in the morning, coffee in the evening - in order to make workers produce more in a given time. Workers whose health slowly deteriorates from the absorption of the drug are refused compensation by the employers on the ground that the sickness is not caused by working in factories. Besides factory workers in Samut prakarn, those working in huge farms and mines in many provinces are also doped in the same manner. The Labour Department however refused to take action against factories, saying that the matter is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

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, in spite 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 abolition 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 those activities CGRS hopes to play a catalytic and coordination function rather than doing everything directly itself.

Activities of CGRS during January-March 1982

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.

3 Campaign against capital punishment of two Thai prisoners

Mr. Sirichai Sae Woon and Mr. Pote Kongkarn, are two Thai prisoners who were sentenced to death by a Malaysian court for possession of firearms. CGRS is very concerned about this case on the ground that capital punishment is against human conscience and that they appeared to be unaware of the strict security law in Malaysia. On December 20 CGRS and three other human rights organizations submitted to the Malaysian Pardon Board an appeal for clemency for the two prisoners. A letter was also submitted one day later to the Prime Minister of Thailand, urging the government to exploit the close relationship with Malaysia for the sake of Thai prisoners. Besides petitions, CGRS has mobilized public opinion in collaboration with newspapers which supported the move for clemency. On February 12, the parents of the two convicts, who lived upcountry, came to petition the Malaysian Ambassador in Bangkok as well as the Thai government on their behalf. This campaign was successful as the Malaysian government later decided to grant clemency to the Thai prisoners, whose sentences were reduced from capital punishment to 6 years imprisonment.

4 Campaign for justice of Forgotten 200

Following the wide campaign for justice of 200 prisoners detained without trial since 1976, the government committee which was set up to find a solution to the problem has reached the conclusion that mass pardon is the most appropriate way to help all prisoners. However, opinions were divided among the cabinet when the committee's proposal was forwarded for consideration in January 6. The case was thus withdrawn by the Prime Minister with no fixed date of next forwarding. As the issue is likely to be shelved indefinitely, on January 21, CGRS and representatives of 6 other human rights organizations called on the Prime Minister's representative to express support for the mass pardon. Letters in support of the Committee's proposal were sent to every member of the cabinet. In February the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office confirmed that these convicts will be granted a pardon on the occasion of Bangkok Bicentennial.

5 Dissemination of police's wider arrest power

In January, the Minister of Interior revoked the ministry's regulation which specifies police to arrest criminal suspects without prior permission from the Under Secretary of State for the Interior. This regulation which in practice gives police more power of arrest might intensify police malpractices which in the past never decreased despite the existence of former one that curb police power. As this regulation has considerable impact on the public, CGRS and three human rights organizations organized during January 12-16 an exhibition and panel discussion in Thammasat University to inform people about how much this regulation would effect the individual's rights. A letter in protest against the retention of police power will be submitted after compilation of substantial evidence on misuse of police power due to this regulation.

6. Campaign against police involvement in prostitution

During February 8-12, CGRS has collaborated with Center for Child's Rights Protection in a campaign to expose the police involvement in releasing 52 girls who were earlier rescued from a brothel, back into prostitution. (See "NEWS FROM THAILAND") This scandal got wide attention from the public and almost every local newspaper's which headlines reports concerning the police connivance continuously for two weeks. Beside making publicity, on February 12 CGRS and 9 other organizations handed out a letter to Minister of Interior requesting an investigation of the case as well as the punishment of officials founded involved in this scandal.

II Child labour activities

CGRS is concerned about the situation of child labour, number of which 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. Last year CGRS established the Center of Concern for Child Labour with collaboration of seven other organizations.

On 9 January- the National Children's Day - CCCL organized two visiting teams to give medical service to children working in 3 Bangkok factories. Besides medical check-ups, small packages of necessities donated by concerned people were provided to almost 100 children below fifteen. This activity was undertaken in two factories in February. With such an activity expected to be run every month, CCCL is able to build contact and carry out its social work in factories which employ child workers.

Along with welfare work went a campaign to create public consciousness of the child labour situation in Thailand. With the cooperation of over 30 radio stations, people were encouraged to take part in the rescue of children ill-treated by factory owners. This two week campaign got wide attention from the public in Bangkok and a lot of information about "slave" factories was received for further action.

In March, CCCL extended its information campaign to upcountry, from where children are sent to work in Bangkok. Radio stations were involved in this project which aimed to create people's awareness of maltreatment child workers get in Bangkok. Suggestions and warnings were also prepared for those who were forced by poverty to send their children to earn money in the city. This activity was conducted together with a survey in two poverty-stricken provinces in the northeast to investigate cases of families that need access to information about their children whose fate is unknown after being taken to work in Bangkok.

III 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 January-March micro media activities were carried out as follow:

- producing a slide set on democracy. This cartoon is designed to explain to the common people in both urban and rural areas the importance of democracy and their basic rights in the society.
- producing a puppet show entitled "Butterflies, Flower and Wild Bird". It is designed to promote among children the attitude of sharing and cooperation.
- producing a poster on "Proper Medical Use" which is meant to provide basic knowledge of medicine widely used without proper understanding.
- producing a serie of 15 illustrated posters on "Insecticide: Dangerous and Proper Use".
- conducting itinerant theatre in five villages in three provinces of the northeast. This is one of the joint project with Catholic Council in Thailand for Development in promoting sharing attitude among people during the Lenten campaign.

IV Slum activities

The number of squatters in Bangkok is increasing rapidly due to rural poverty. It is estimated that at least 750,000 people live in approximately 400 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.

In addition to activity in Rama IV community, CGRS this year starts its activity in Lard Bua-kao slum which is among 100 slums in Bangkok that face eviction. The slum started 70 years ago and grew with the settlement of many hundreds of households until 1978, when a big fire, believed to be arson, took place and drove a huge amount of people from the area. Nowadays, around 100 households which escaped the blaze are finally threatened with the order of eviction by private enterprise.

CGRS worked with Lard Bua-kao slum dwellers in their struggle for rights to housing not only by giving legal assistance such as arranging for lawyers to represent them in court but also by assisting them in the move to draw government attention to the issue. In March slum dwellers sent their representatives to air their grievances and negotiate with the Housing Authority of Thailand, which promised to seek solutions to their problem.

Two training courses for slum organizers and slum leaders were held by CGRS in March in order to share techniques and methods of slum organizing. The content of courses varied from techniques of conflict resolution, techniques of negotiation with land owners, to legislation and legal procedure in regard to land and eviction.

MESSAGES AND SERVICES

Asian Action

Asian Action is published by ACFOD as an on-going programme since 1976 to provide better communication between active workers in rural development in the region and for those who are interested in development work. The information to be published in "Asian Action" will be related to various on-going fields and research programmes being conducted by different groups in different countries in Asia. It is published in turn by the Executive members of ACFOD from Malaysia, Siam, India, The Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Asian Action has its purpose to provide better communication among the development workers and peoples who are interested in development work. The Newsletter is a collective effort based on material provided by agencies and individuals associated with ACFOD as to share field experiences, convey information about new skills and approaches, evaluate projects and develop feedback techniques, highlight problems, build a data bank of technical and other information, which could be availed of by development groups in and outside the Region. Asian Action is intended to reach field level agencies, workers, intermediate support groups, student groups, researchers concerned with people-centred development, religious organizations/groups engaged in development activities, sympathisers in government and international agencies and sympathisers and supporter outside Thailand.

Annual Subscription

6 issues a year	US\$
Subscription rate ; 1. for all institutions and individuals (air mail postage charge included) in developed countries	15.-
2. individuals in developing countries	9.-
Checks made payable to ACFOD office, GPO Box 2930, Bangkok 10501.	

Recent publications by Thai authors

A Siamese for All Seasons: Collected articles by and about Dr Puey Ungphakorn (Komol Keemthong Foundation) 359 p.p. US\$ 12 (including postage)

Dr Puey was a brilliant economist as well as a leading Thai administrator and educator, who cared for the welfare of the common man in the street as well as in the rural areas. He spent his entire life fighting nonviolently for social justice, freedom and decency for everyone - not only for the Thai as his previous book entitled Best Wishes for Asia.

As a result of this commitment, he was ostracized from his country on the October 6, 1976 when the bloodiest coup took place in Bangkok especially in and around Thammasat University where he was Rector. Since then he had been writing and lecturing about the cause of basic human rights and liberty for the Thai people. This volume is a collection of his works in English during this

period plus other articles written about him.

This book will let the readers understand Thai politics and above all a Thai mind, perhaps the best of all contemporary Thai thinkers, who was also a man of action, with great moral courage, yet with much humility and a good sense of humour.

by Sulak Sivaraksa

A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society (Thai Wattana Press) 243 p.p. US\$6 (including postage)

Religion and Development (Payab College) 72 p.p. US\$ 4 (including postage)

Siam in Crisis (Komol Keemthong Foundation) 462 p.p. hard cover US\$ 7 paperback US\$ 5 (including postage)

Few other Thai authors have ever aroused a similar measure of controversy than Sulak Sivaraksa. His work which is invariably characterised by strong points of view and intellectual audacity is often received with a mixture of outrage and enthusiasm. It also serves to illustrate his wide-ranging interests and academic competence, together with his constant concern over Thailand's social, economic and political problems.

In A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society and Religion and Development Sulak argues against the materialistic attitude which is prevalent in the present Thai society and against development programmes which are emphatically geared towards material improvements that fail to pay adequate attention to the fundamental value of man's human qualities.

Siam in Crisis reflects the author's evaluation of contemporary problems and events facing Thai society and his concern over the withering away of certain traditional values and way of life that he cherishes. His work illustrates the author's profound knowledge of Buddhist philosophy. He sees the constructive role that Buddhism can play in development. However, religion can assume such a constructive role only if it ceases to be a tool in the grasp of the economic and political system, if it ceases to unquestioningly cling to scriptural dogmatism, outdated customs and belief. Instead, religion must uphold such values as purity, justice, compassion, freedom. It must condemn the system that destroys human values. It must be aware of the structure of the social system.

For those who are interested in Thai culture, the following three books are highly recommended:

Essays on Thai Folklore by Phya Anuman Rajadon US\$ 15 (postage included)

Reflections on Thai Culture by W.J. Klausner US\$ 10 (postage included)

Monuments of the Buddha in Siam by Prince Damrong US\$ 7 (postage included)

All these books could be ordered through ACFOD office Bangkok.