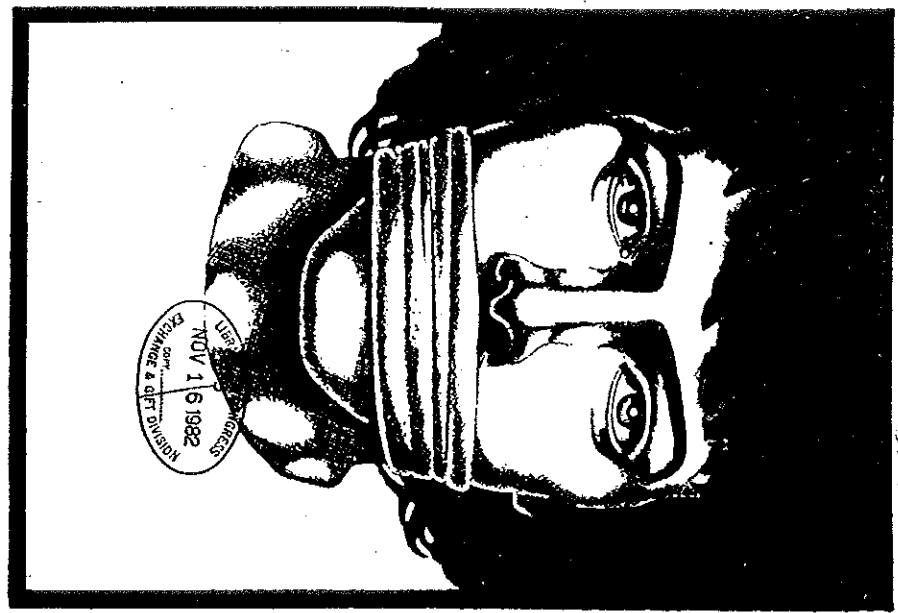


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# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND

REPORT  
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#### THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

On 15th August an M66 grenade was thrown into the residence of General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Prime Minister. Barely a month later, on 9th September, there was another violent explosion outside the office of the Minister of Defence, again General Prem. It was later disclosed that an M72 rocket was shot at Prem's car when he and his party were visiting Lohburi Province in July. The General escaped unhurt in all three incidents, which took place at a time when Bangkok was somewhat tense as a result of numerous bomb scares at shopping centres and Government offices. The average rate of bomb scares from January to September was twice a month. It did not appear, however, that the incidents during those periods were masterminded by the separatist movements or the Communist Party of Thailand. These groups were being closely watched by the Government to see whether they were now turning to urban terrorism.

The reason for the bombing incidents could be found in the conflicts of various business groups and political conflicts among the ruling class. It should be noticed that incidents occurred rather frequently between August and September, the period of the annual military reshuffle, including the appointment of the new Army Commander-in-Chief, the post regarded as the most powerful one in present Thai politics. After the announcement of the military reshuffle was made on 10 September, there was no more news of bomb incidents. It is therefore believed that conflict inside the Army concerning the military reshuffle was the reason behind the previous incidents.

No matter what the reason for the bomb incidents may be, what certainly is clear is the increasing role of the Army in peace-keeping in the Capital. General Artit Kamlung-ek, the new Army Commander-in-Chief has already extended the role of the peace-keeping force, of which he himself is the Commander. More soldiers are being sent to take charge of police duties in Bangkok, such as crime suppression, and carrying out arrests. The Rapid Deployment Force Unit, known as "Morastak" is charged with suppressing riots anywhere in Bangkok and the five surrounding provinces. The Unit is fully equipped with heavy weaponry, and armoured vehicles. Members of the Unit are trained for sabotage and psychological warfare too. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the main task of Gen Artit's Unit is to keep peace in the Capital or to be a strong military base for him to resist a coup d'etat or even to stage a coup d'etat for himself. The definition of an "unpeaceful situation" which Morastak has the duty to suppress remains vague. It is unclear whether it covers strikes and anti-government demonstrations.

The general situation of labour is still tense, although the number of factory closures and workers being laid off declined in the past 3 months compared to April to June. The tension continues, with no prospect of improvement. In particular, there was a bitter dispute between representatives of workers on one side and representatives of employers and government officials on the other side, over the minimum wage. In early September, the proposal for 83 baht as minimum wage was rejected by the National Wage Committee. The reasons given were that it would have a bad effect on the economic situation in the country as a whole, and on the investment climate, which is already not very encouraging. The representatives of the workers argued that in the present economic situation

no worker paid 61 baht as minimum wage could meet all his daily expenses. They also cited the figure from the National Statistics Office that 85% of workers who get paid the minimum wage are still in debt. The dispute resulted in the walkout of the worker representatives from the meeting room to protest the rejection of their proposal. After that, there was a meeting among leaders of 3 employee organizations and 14 state enterprise trade unions in which they agreed to campaign for an increase of the minimum wage. The threat of the workers to stage such a campaign was regarded by the government and the Military as a potential "unrest situation". It is believed that the government and the peace-keeping force would stop such a movement from spreading to all workers in Bangkok and nearby provinces, most of whom are already discontented with the present situation. However, after the demonstration and petition by the workers on the issue on September 22, demanding that the National Wage Committee review its controversial September 8 decision to freeze minimum daily wage rates, the Committee met on September 29 and reached a compromise agreement to increase the minimum wage from 61 baht to 64 baht for workers in Bangkok and 8 big provinces. The cause of worry of the peace keeping force and the government was eventually abated.

Although the human rights situation in general has not shown much improvement, legally speaking, some positive things have happened. Around mid-August, the House passed 2 bills which seek to modify the present Criminal Act by providing an opportunity for the accused to have a lawyer present while under police interrogation. This is intended to be a precaution against police harassment to gain a confession from the accused before the case goes to court. The new bill also shortens the length of detention from 84 to 48 days. The two bills are welcomed by all human rights supporters. They benefit especially those who are poor and have no knowledge of law. They at the same time lessen the opportunity for the police to intimidate suspects as often happens in remote areas. It has to be stressed, however, that there exist general laws which need to be changed to protect the legitimate rights of the people. These include the UNMO Decree no. 42 which authorizes the Director-General of the Police Department to close newspapers indefinitely, or the Communist Act which empowers the authorities concerned to detain an accused person up to 480 days before he or she must be brought before the Court.

THE POLITICAL CASES TODAY

The political cases in Thailand during this moment are mostly those connected with communist activities and national security infractions.

Nineteen political detainees have been brought to the court, ten of whom are charged with communist activities and seven more with threat against national security. Some of these accused people were arrested for political reasons but brought to the court under criminal charges. Some were released by the court but are still detained for further political cases. There were also some cases in which the court had passed the verdict and the convicted still met with political accusations. Many have been for many months in solitary imprisonment without any right to receive any visit by anybody. Some even are put in dungeons.

These political cases fall under the National Administrative Reform Council's decrees nos. 1, 6, 29 and 30, authorizing the military court to consider such cases as related to national security, communist activities under Anti-Communist Activities Act. Under this act, those charged with communist activities will be detained for 30 days with approval from the investigating officer, for 180 more days with approval from the Police Director-General, and for 270 more days if so ordered by the military court. Thus, anybody can be detained for a total of 480 days before charges are formally placed. A verdict by the court will be final without any right to appeal whatsoever.

1. Demri Ruengsubhan, a former member of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), and Prakob Thongthong were arrested on April 28, 1981 at Ban Chongchang, Tambon Phruphi, Ban Kasan District, in the southern province of Suratthani, and were detained at the Provisional Detention Center of the Bangkok Police Private Training School. They have been awaiting a trial on charge of communist activities. During the first phase of their detention they were put in solitary cells and were denied all kinds of visit even from their lawyers. They have been detained incommunicado for at least six months and have been ordered to stay further in prison by the military court.

On June 30, 1981 a former CPT cadre in the southern province of Suratthani, Surachai Sae Dan, was arrested in the heart of the city district, together with Mali Sakhorn (or Li Bunnak) and Panyit Panchareum, and charged with communist activities. They were detained at the above-mentioned Provisional Detention Center, and during the first phase of their detention they, like Demri and Prakob, were put in solitary cells and were denied all kinds of visit even from their lawyers. They were held in solitary detention for eight months. Later, on April 14, 1982 the prosecutor of the southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat submitted their cases to the military court of the Fifth Army Area. Surachai was charged with communist activities, being a member and a cadre of a communist organization, teaching other people to cherish communism, crimes against the state security, killing officers and robbers. Mali Sakhorn met with two accusations, and Panyit was charged with communist activities.

At present the 3 defendants are being tried by the military tribunal, and are still detained by order of the same tribunal.

Wimon Panthakae and Charnachai Charmsai-Chomatt were arrested on January 10, 1981, at different places, and charged with communist activities. They were first detained at the Provisional Detention Center. On December 30, 1981, the prosecutor of the Bangkok military court accused Wimon, first defendant, and Charnachai, second defendant, of being members and cadres of a communist organization, of supporting a communist organization or its members, and of possessing illegal documents and ammunition. At present, the two defendants are being tried by the military court and still detained by order of the same court.

Wimon is 53 years old, residing in Bangkok. She has been suffering from diabetes for a long time, and is almost blind because of her sore eyes. During the first three months of her detention, she had been denied all visits even from her lawyer. On May 8, 1981, she was granted a visit by her relatives and lawyer. Later, her sore eyes deteriorated and the left eye was taken out on January 13, 1982 at the hospital of the Corrections Department. Her right eye is not in a good condition either. At present, her relatives have been trying to bail her out to get a medical treatment outside the jail.

Charnachai stayed in Bangkhuntien District, Bangkok. He earned his living by selling kitchen utensils. Lending them in his mini-truck, he went from one province to another to sell them. Later he lived on money earned from hiring out his mini-truck. During the first period of his detention he too was denied all kinds of visit from outside. He was not allowed to be bailed out either.

There are two more persons arrested on charge of communist activities, but no more details have been reported. The first is Baitha Inthamni, arrested on July 13, 1981, in the northeastern province of Mahasarakham. The second person is Sampong Phukhuen, living at Ban Bang-makleu, Tambon Nakhonratch, in the northern province of Utharadit. He was charged with communist activities and crimes against the state security. He was arrested at his own house on January 10, 1982.

2. Adul Burayong, 23 years old, was born into a peasant family at Tambon Thungri, Sanpatong District, in the northern province of Chaiyaphum. His father died when he was studying at a technical college. Later, he gave up his studies because of poverty, and helped his mother work in the paddyfield. At his technical college, he and his friends had been engaged in various activities. He was president of the college club, member of the students' council; he organized exhibitions and panel discussion on various subjects.

On August 2, 1979 he was arrested by the Sanpatong Police and was detained for investigation at the provincial police station in Chaiyaphum. He was first charged with communist activities, but the investigation had found no evidence to substantiate the charge. Adul had been detained for 14 days when on August 16, 1979 the police charged him with killing of policemen during a communist assault on the Chaiyaphum Mental Hospital on August 15, 1978, with an attempt to get back a communist accused. He was later sent to the Chaiyaphum Central

Prison and was put in a dungeon despite the fact that he had violated no regulations whatsoever of the prison. The lawyers' association of Thailand sent a protest note to the prison authorities, demanding that Adul be detained in an ordinary cell like other prisoners, but he was still detained in a separate cell and put to chains for more than a year. On November 13, 1979, he was brought to trial before the military court of Chaiyaphum, on charge of killing of policemen. His trial lasted for two years and four months, and ended on March 30, 1982. He was sentenced to death without any right to appeal according to the prevailing procedures of the military court. On April 30, 1982 he was sent to the Central Prison Bangkok in Bangkok, and detained at a place reserved for those sentenced to death. However, on May 5 by a royal pardon his punishment was reduced to life imprisonment.

Nevertheless, Adul would be on trial for another charge of endangering the national security and of communist activities. On May 28, 1982 he and Thongdee Charataphing - accused of the same crimes - were brought to trial before the Bangkok Military Court.

Thongdee, 34 years old, was arrested on June 6, 1978 at Ban Phum, Tambon Banluang, Shomhong District, Chaiyaphum. He was charged with communist activities and detained incommunicado at the Chaiyaphum Central Prison.

On September 18, 1978 he was tried by the Chaiyaphum court on charges of illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives, and of carrying a gun in public without authorization. The military court, however, rejected all these accusations. Yet, Thongdee was detained for another trial before the Lampang military court for communist activities. At present, he is imprisoned at the Special Detention Center in Bangkok.

On April 1, 1982, six Panthakong University students namely, Samak Maseng, Jee Wee Usenghathijewee, Burdang Diarnan, Jekade Jee, Asew Bung-aseyn and Royal Lama, together with eight other friends, were arrested and charged with being members of a southern separatist movement. The six students were brought to trial on June 28, 1982, before the Bangkok Military Court, and were accused of armed rebellion for separatism, of assembling forces and stocking weapons, and of acting as secret agents of a separatist movement. At present, they are detained at the Bangkok Provisional Detention Center. As far as the eight more people are concerned, they were released on June 8 after being detained for investigation for two months.

3. Some from these aforementioned cases, there are some other politically motivated cases, in which the accused were instead tried in criminal court. For example the case of Phra Phuchab Kani - a famous social development monk and abbot of Sitarum Temple, city district of Sakonnakorn. He was arrested and disbanded on October 21, 1980, and charged with communist activities. However, he was later tried for having disguised himself as a Buddhist monk with an aim to deceive the people. In late 1981, his case was rejected by the court.

Another case on trial is that of Mangkorn Saeng-ngamsong, 25 years old, who was arrested on April 25, 1980, and charged with illegal possession of firearms, robberies and killing of three officers. On September 3, 1980, he was brought to trial before the court of the Third Army Area. After having examined the

testimonies of both accusation and defence witnesses, the court submitted the case to the regional judge for further action. This case is believed to be connected with some political issues. Many villagers affirmed that during the alleged incident, M. Nakorn was digging a river and building up a dike with them at Ban Botkong, Nong Bun Daeng District, Chaiyaphum Province. Later the regional judge rejected this case on July 7, 1982.

The third case is that of Jeouseng (23) and Isma-ae Daleng (21), who were arrested, respectively on April 8 and 9, 1982, and charged with illegal possession of explosives, and joint killing of one soldier and one villager. They were brought to trial before the military court in the southern province of Yala.

The alleged incident took place on April 4, 1982, at a restaurant in the city district of Yala, in which there was an explosion and two persons were killed, while many were injured. On April 8, the police arrested Jeouseng, a Ramkam haeng University student and a bus ticket boy; and on April 9 the police also arrested Isma-ae, Jeouseng's friend. Many eye witness maintained, however, that at the time of the incident these two accused persons were staying at home and were performing their religious rites. The two people are on trial and detained at the Yala provincial prison.

All the cases reported above are mostly defended by one of the Thai prominent lawyer, Thongpaal Thongpaoo.

#### Top Communist leader defects from the Party

Udom Srisuanan, the seniormost communist leader to have ever defected to the government, gave himself up together with about 12 relatives and followers under the government's anti-communist policy No. 66/B.E.2523, without condition on September 6, 1982. The reason for his defection came from the ideological conflicts within the party's central committee which, according to him, had reached the 'point of no return'.

Udom opposed the way the pro-China wing views Thai society as semi-colonial, semi-feudal, while Udom's faction believed that the influence of Thai capitalists has already prevailed in the country. He and his supporters in the Northeast made a proposal to the party to adapt its policies from the pro-China line and to be more democratic. But the proposals were recently rejected in the Party's Fourth Congress in March and April this year, and the pro-China wing led by Viret Angkhanavorn managed to assume control of the party leadership and dominate the party platform.

Udom had a high profile as a liaison official between the CP and foreign communist countries due to his great ability in languages and literature. He was also respected by leftist student activists. He was detained without trial in 1958, after Field Marshal Surt Thamarat staged a coup d'etat. After his release in 1969 he went to join the outlawed party. In 1977 he was elected president of the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces.

Udom, 62, suffers from acute heart problems and is in very bad health.

The government's anti-insurgency policy No 66/B.E.2523 and several military operations throughout the country are claimed to have contributed significantly to the deflection and the greatly-reduced number of armed supporters. According to the Secretary-General of the National Security Council, Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, the CP has lost more than half its armed supporters in the last three years. He believes the number is between 6-7,000 men - less than half the 14,000 guerrillas the party boasted of in 1979.

On September 28, Lt. Gen. Prayoon Bunnag, Assistant Chief-of-Staff, said the government had won the war against the CP, which was weakened to the point that the party could no longer use force to seize state power. The government had, he said, during April-September concentrated on weeding out the remnants of the communist insurgency in all parts of the country, according to Lt. Gen. Prayoon the army will continue keeping military pressure on the CP until it is wiped out.

Maj. Gen. Chaovallit Tongchaiyuth, Director of Operations, in the same press conference said the government was stepping up its 'political offensive' at all levels.

Since June, 1982 operations to suppress insurgents were carried out in almost every region, especially in the South.

Operation of the Fourth Army in the South have been the most intensive, under the plan widely known as 'Thai Rom Yen' or 'Peaceful South'. On June 11, 1982 'Thai Rom Yen 11', a military offensive launched by 3,000 government combined troops, was mounted to liquidate communist jungle bases in the three southern provinces of Trang, Phatthalung and Satun.

Col. Thammarak Issarangkul Na Ayudhaya, head of the information department of the Fourth Army, claimed on June 24 that the government's combined forces had successfully seized all the major communist camps in the three provinces, particularly those in Phatthalung, which had been a major military base of southern communist guerrillas. The Fourth Army would continue to maintain forces in the regained areas in the 3 provinces to facilitate development projects designed to gain political ground. There was no fierce fighting during the operation, as communist insurgents avoided it, Col. Thammarak said.

On July 25, another large scale military offensive was launched as a follow-up to the 'Thai Rom Yen 11', to wipe out the remaining communist strongholds in the South. The operation also included areas in Surat Thani, Ranong and Chumphon province.

In the North a three month operation starting from June 18, was carried out by about 1,000 government combined forces to liquidate a major communist stronghold in Tak province.

Another suppression operation known as 'Chao Pa Operation' was launched during August 24-29, by the combined force of the Third Army in the infested areas of the Phudhat mountain range, where the borders of Phitsanuloke, Loei and Phetchabun meet.

In the East another 2 communist camps on the areas adjoining the border of Prachinburi and Nakhon Ratchasima provinces, were claimed to have been seized at the end of August by the combined forces of the First and Second Army. According to Army sources the operation would be continued until the insurgents went out of the area.

Lawyers can now witness police interrogation and fight against extension of detention by police

The Senate, on June 25, unanimously passed into law two bills which entitle an arrested suspect to have a lawyer as his witness during police interrogation, in order to prevent police from assaulting him during questioning.

The two bills, which are amendments to the Criminal Code, also shorten the detention period for a suspect before a court trial from the present 84 days to 48 days.

According to the newly-passed law, a lawyer is not allowed to interfere in the questioning of a suspect by police. He can only be a witness to make sure that the suspect is not harassed or unfairly treated.

The approved legislation will be presented to His Majesty the King for final endorsement before promulgation.

Doctor stons giving free medical treatment for fear of being 'disappeared'

Sakon Nakorn  
Dr. Chariyat Pattanasriyarn, a 45-year-old ophthalmologist of Chulalongkorn Hospital, after repeated threats on his life allegedly by 'government authorities' has decided to stop contributing monthly free service to a rural hospital in Sakon Nakorn.

Dr. Chariyat had worked in Phana Nakhon district hospital on the last Monday of each month since 1978. The district, about 40 kms. from the province capital, is considered to be a communist-infested area. There were also people from surrounding provinces who came to receive treatment from him.

He managed to muster enough financial support for his free treatment program for poor people from a few private foundations, including the foundation set up in memory of Archan Funn, a highly respected Buddhist monk in a northeastern province. Yet, government authorities continued to suspect him of getting the money from the Communists to do propaganda work.

He, first, considered the matter as rumours. However, in May 1981, his nephew, who was not interested in any politics, disappeared mysteriously in a new pick-up under accusation of carrying a lot of communist propaganda publications. Through his own investigation, he concluded that his nephew had been 'disposed of' by government authorities on charges of being a Communist.

For fear of such heavy-handed measures against Communist suspects, he decided to stop his work in the rural area in October 1981.

Government changes anti-red strategy

A new anti-insurgency strategy was issued in order No 62/B.E.2525 on May 17, by the Prime Minister. The new strategy puts more emphasis on political than military operations and on rapid development of democracy in the country as a means to gain victory over communist insurgents. The order calls for the improvement of social and living conditions of the people in order to promote a firm foundation for democracy in the country. It also called for a purge of corrupt and abusive officials.

Included to the new anti-insurgency strategy is the destruction of all form of dictatorship among influential officials.

The new strategy would shift the focus of military operation from the jungles and the hills to the lowland and urban areas.

'Nerasingh Force'

A special army deployment battalion which can be mobilized to any trouble spot in the country at short notice has been formed and is officially known as 'Rapid Deployment Battalion at Peace Time' or 'Nerasingh Force'.

The unit, which has no fixed quarters, is fully equipped with weapons necessary to deal with all kinds of unrest and with armoured vehicles and rapid moving units.

It comprises 153 personnel selected from various military units and can handle a wide range of tough military operations.

The task force is responsible for areas covering Bangkok and 5 surrounding provinces. It also specializes in sabotage and psychological work.

Less than 40% getting 61 baht basic wage

Amidst the call from laborers and labor unions for a minimum wage adjustment from 61 to 83 baht due to the high cost of living, the tri-partite National Wage Committee decided in a meeting on September 8 to freeze the minimum wage until January next year.

However, after a demonstration and petition by the workers on September 22, the National Wage Committee reached a compromise agreement to increase the minimum daily wage for unskilled workers in Bangkok and 8 other big provinces from 61 baht to 64 baht as of October 1. But the rates were frozen at 61 baht for Chiangmai, Nakhon Rachasima, Saraburi and Chonburi and 52 baht for the rest.

In the meantime the National Statistics Office found in a survey in August this year that as many as 32% of the workers in Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Northburi and Pathumthani are getting less than 55 baht a day.

It shows that only 59% of unskilled workers earn the 61 baht minimum wage.

Social Democratic Party committee member shot dead

Khon Kaen  
"Kaon Sarn" editor and Social Democratic Party committee member, Prakartphet Mesomai, was shot dead at his house in Muang District, Khon Kaen province, while he was discussing with his friends at the Party's first congress at 8:30 a.m. on July 3, 1982. The motive for his killing was believed to come from his articles in his newspaper opposing many corrupt projects of influential people in the province. He had also attacked the behavior of one of these influential persons in his newspaper before his death.

Ex-ranger sentenced to death

Chantaburi

A former military-trained ranger, Sing Nakarat, was sentenced to death on July 13, 1982 by the Chantaburi Provincial Court, which found him guilty of robbing and murdering a woman and her son on February 5, 1982.

One of his accomplices was sentenced to life imprisonment and another to 20 years in jail.

Torture and disappearance of citizen accused of being subversive

Sakon Nakhon

On July 1, Mr. Sud Srinonetr of Bang Thon village, Phon Sung Sub-district, Sakon Nakhon District, Sakon Nakhon province came to the Parliament in Bangkok and aired his grievances that in October 1981 he was arrested by the district officer, Chaturun Chamrak, and was charged with being a communist sympathizer and possessing an illegal M. 16 rifle. He was also threatened in several ways, including killing by a digging tool. After 2 hours of torture he was brought to be imprisoned and sent for "re-education" in the provincial "Wood Merry Garden" for 14 days before being released. He was threatened to be killed if he told of the incidents.

In another case Mrs. Nipun Mangkhitwan of Saeng-Dandin district of the same province stated that one of her younger brothers was called to meet the same district officer on May 19, 1981 and then disappeared. She was threatened to be killed together with all her relatives when she came to investigate the problem. (Metuphon 9/7/1982, Metichon 8/7/1982, Nation 10/7/1982)

Seven-member gang including 2 police kill 4 civilians

Petchabun

Three suspects, including a police staff sergeant, were arrested on September 11, 1982 for their alleged involvement in murder of 4 residents of Nong Phai District, Petchabun province.

Police claimed that the suspects belonged to a seven-member gang. The arrested were identified as Pol. Staff Sgt. Samroy Nakhunabthong, 33, Pravit Chanlyong, 32, and Somporn Pannguan, 36. Another Pol. Corporal attached to Lam Sak police station was also ordered to be arrested.

The suspects were held on charges of involvement in the murder of 4 persons whose dead bodies were found on a roadside in Bhong Samphan District on August 26. The four men were all cruelly shot at the back part of the skull through their foreheads.

The four persons' wives - all are teachers - aired their grievance to an MP, the representative of that province, who brought them and their relatives to meet the director of the Police Department on September 7, 1982.

The four were identified as Mr. Samarn Kerdbongprai, 27, a merchant of Bang Phai District, Mr. Somchart Mankongdee, 26, a taxi-driver of Nong Phai District, Mr. Pramote Mangpetch, 36, a worker in a car shop of Nong Phai District, and Mr. Wachai Srithong, 32, a photographer shop owner of Nong Phai District. (Daily News 12/9/1982, Bangkok Post 13/9/1982)

Kidnap case suspect dies in jail

Northburi

A suspect in the kidnaping of Kovit Uthachand, manager of Erawan Concrete Co. Ltd., hanged himself with a T-shirt in a padded police station cell on the night of August 18.



Amphai Mankhala was one of the three men arrested for the kidnap of Kowit on August 13 for 3 million baht ransom. His parents accused the police of driving him into committing suicide. His father, Fern, said there were bruises all over his body, especially on his back. He was also beaten up while he still had his hands on in the police investigation room, his father recalled Amphai telling him. There were also scars as a result of electric shocks under his chin and also various parts of his body. (Bangkok Post 20/8/1982, Nation 28/8/1982)

Soldiers over-react to stop car

Bangkok  
A young student, Pairoj Preppha-apiratt, had his left arm cut by broken glass from the windshield and his sedan severely damaged by a hail of gunshots fired by two soldiers who attempted to stop him from occupying a check-point in Yanawa vicinity on the late night of August 18.

Pairoj explained that he drove the car away from the check-point because he was afraid of being arrested for not having a driving licence. Two soldiers who were standing on guard in the area immediately ordered him to stop but the young man reversed his car in an attempt to escape, police said.

The police said further that the soldiers, after firing 2 shots into the sky with their M-16 rifles without result, then fired 3 more shots, 2 at the front of his car and another which hit the windshield.

His mother complained that the soldiers over-reacted, but they were defended by high ranking officials. (Nation 20/8/1982)

Two young men shot dead by policemen

Surat Thani  
Two villagers of Prasong Sub-district, Thachana District, namely Chon Nilthachand and Pua Raksayam, complained to the Minister of the Interior on September 17, that their two sons, Surin Wilthachand and Ood Raksayam, were killed by policemen on inspection duty with HK rifles while they were driving home from their rubber plantation on August 14.

The incident was believed to have begun when the policeman lit their faces with a spotlight and received furious words from them. It was believed that they were shot to death in Chaiya District and were brought to Thachana District in order to disguise the case.

Pol. Captain Praechub Pattina, Suppression Inspector of Muang District, Pol.Pvt. Somchad Theprinal, Pol.Pvt. Chamlong Malitong and other policemen were identified as the murderers. (Thai Rath 17/8/1982, Matichon 18/8/1982)

ACTIVITIES OF CGRS

The Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) is composed of laymen, priest and young activists from the Buddhist, 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, despite of repressive government 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 conflict 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 July-September 1982

I. Human rights activities

Providing legal aid

In the past three months two cases for which CGRS has provided legal aid were finished. They are the Mangkorn Saeng-ngamsueung case and the Bangkok Fishing Net workers case.

The Mangkorn Saeng-ngamsueung Case

Mangkorn Saeng-ngamsueung, 24, a villager of Ban-Bo Thong, Kong Bun Daeng District, Chalayaphon Province was arrested on April 25, 1980 on charges of possessing an illegal war weapon and killing 3 officers on duty, namely Lance-Corporal Saengsak-koman, Lance-Corporal Sawai Jachajathenk and Village Defence Volunteer (VDV) Saan Yod-rungrueng on April 11, 1980. The two corporals died on the spot and VDV Saan died four days after the incident in the hospital.

Background

On the day of the incident, Mangkorn helped construct a small dam in his village with his 60-70 neighbours until 18.00 p.m. and went to have dinner with the village head. His neighbours could confirm his presence with them.

On April 24, 1980 he went with his 7 relatives to his parents' village - Ban Bannatwan - to celebrate one of his younger sisters' marriage, and on the way back to Ban Bo Thong they were arrested by a group of police at Ban Ban Na Nam in the afternoon of April 25. They were brought to Wat Na Na Nam and Mangkorn was threatened to accept guilt for the killing of the three officers on April 11, 1980. But he refused and was severely beaten on his face, his jaws and was also kicked in his stomach.

The following morning, after signing to accept the charges, he was sent to the Nong Ban Daeng police station and his case was brought to court on July 23 when he pleaded not guilty. His seven relatives were sent to be reeducated in "God Mercy Center" in Sakorn Nakorn Province for more than ten days and were released.

On July 7, 1982 his case was acquitted and he was released, since the evidence was shown by the defendants' lawyer to be insubstantial and the witnesses' statements were confused and sometime contradicted each other.

The Bangkok Fishing Net workers case

In this case 13 committee members of the Bangkok Fishing Net Labour union were charged with causing damage to the company, which tried to fire them. The cause of this case came from a dispute over working conditions between the labour union and the employers, which ended in a compromise that dismissed the employer. Then on August 30, 1981 the employers closed the factory, let go 138 workers and told the rest they would have to reapply for work. Being against the law, the factory closure was protested by the workers and negotiations between the workers and employers ended with the re-opening of the factory. However, in November 1981 the employers charged the 13 committee members of the company labour union with obstructing the company's work and thus causing the company damage and sued for the right to fire them. On July 9, 1982 the Central Labour Court decided that three workers would have to be fired but one would receive compensation and other 10 would be taken back to work.

Petition for investigation of assassin cases

On August 27 CGRS with Lawyers' Association of Thailand, the Union for Civil Liberty and the Committee for Justice and Peace in Thailand, submitted a petition to Interior Minister calling for an investigation into cases in which criminal suspects were said to have committed suicide while under police custody.

The letter said officials on duty should be held responsible when a suspect committed suicide under police custody and cited as an example the suicide in a Park Road police cell of a suspect arrested in connection with a recent kidnapping case. (See more details in page 11)

The petition also sought an investigation into the arbitrary use of war weapons by officials on duty and cited a recent incident in which the car of a student was shot at by soldiers armed with M-16 rifles when the driver tried to avoid a check-point. (See more details in page 12)

Petition against capital punishment in Malaysia

On September 7, CGRS together with three human rights groups, namely the Union for Civil Liberty, Regional Council for Human Rights in Asia and the Committee for Justice and Peace in Thailand submitted a petition to the Malaysian Embassy, appealing to abolish capital punishment under the country's tough internal security laws. The petition stated that the groups' deeply regret this cruel disregard for basic human rights in this region, and felt disturbed by several cases where the "death penalty has been handed down, although there were divergences in evidence or questions of fact which could not but lead to serious doubt concerning the charges in the mind of fair minded observers."

The groups urged the Malaysian Government to stop further hanging, and return to a system of fair trial by civil courts with the normal rights of defence and protection recognized as the rights of persons charged with crimes.

The move for the abolition of capital punishment in Malaysia was spearheaded by a student federation called "TUMESSON", and many other human rights groups are also conducting similar campaigns.

II Rural development activities

In 1980 CGRS mounted a fund raising campaign to support a rice co-operative in a village in poverty-stricken Chalyaprom Province. The outstanding character of this is the interpretation of a popular Buddhist ceremony - Thod Pha Pa - in the rural development context. Traditionally, after Lent, people will collectively give monks robes, necessary commodities and money which nowadays is normally spent for luxurious material purposes such as building a new temple hall. With the new interpretation, the "Thod Pha Pa" ceremony organized by CGRS and 5 other organizations received a lot of interest and support from the public, which contributed a large amount of rice as well as money to support the rice co-operative.

Realizing the great influence of the Thod Pha Pa ceremony and the necessity of introducing a new social context to such a popular ceremony, CGRS is collaborating with 9 voluntary organizations to launch a Thod Pha Pa ceremony at a temple in Nakorn Pathasama in December this year.

Funds raised in this campaign which started in September, will be channelled to 19 villages which are now initiating 7 different projects to combat the lack of four necessities - rice, water, medicine and knowledge - in their villages. This campaign will be mounted on a large scale than that in 1980, with the expectation that not only funds but also people's awareness of rural problems will be raised.

Thod Pha Pa will be accompanied by a "Week for the Countryside" where music, drama, and exhibitions will be performed and second hand commodities will be sold at cheap price. This will take place from November 19-21.

### III 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, in collaboration with seven other organizations, established the Center of Concern for Child Labour in an attempt to tackle this problem.

Realizing the important role of private job placement, COOL is planning to hold a seminar on "Private Job Placement in Relation to the Child Labour Problem in Thailand" on the coming National Children's Day in January next year. The participants in the seminar will consist of representatives from the Government's Labour and Social Welfare Departments, NGO representatives, lawyers and Members of Parliaments.

In July COOL made a general survey in Buriram - a province where a huge number of child workers in Bangkok came from - to collect information about children who disappeared after getting jobs in factories. After the survey, three villagers where many children were found to have disappeared were selected for more in depth study.

In June-August COOL sent four child workers who had escaped from their employers' house or factory back to their home-towns. In August COOL also organized two recreation trips for 40 children from two Bangkok factories which produce balloons and candy. The trip is a part of an educational programme aiming to promote physical and mental development of child workers. So far many factories have expressed their interest and willingness to co-operate with COOL in starting the programme in their factories.

### 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.

There are four slums CGRS are now dealing with. They are Rama IV, Lat Ba Kao, Wat Kao, and Soi Panyam communities. As for Lat Ba Kao community, after a meeting in June between the four parties concerned in the dispute failed to reach any agreement, CGRS together with the community leaders and the slum dwellers discussed the problem and decided to call on General Arthit Komlaeng-ek, the then director of the Peace Keeping Force in Bangkok, to hold a talk with the land owner - the Mahasin Company - to settle the land problem. In the beginning of August the company consented to sell the land of two rai (0.8 acre) for 1.6 M baht to National Housing Authority, which divided the land into 65 units, including 2 units for a community activity center. In addition the temple gave another 10 units of land to the slum dwellers. However, these 73 units are not enough for 120 slum families. Therefore, a tri-partite committee comprising representatives from Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the Peace Keeping Force and the National Housing Authority, conducted another survey and divided the land among qualified families, who have to pay in installments for the land and the reclamation. According to the agreement the land is provided for 3 categories of families, namely families who settled on the land before the big fire of 1976, families who possess evidence of being the home owners, and the poor surrounding the community (if any units of land are left). Thanks to those measures 73 families had already returned to their community by the end of September.

### V. Macro media activities

The objectives of the macro 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 food production 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 July-September macro media activities were carried out as follows:

- preparing slide sets on "Co-operatives" and "Rural Problems";
- producing a poster on "Proper Use of Insecticide" to introduce proper methods of using insecticide, including prevention and re-evaluation. Thousands of copies of this poster were distributed to villages in many parts of the country where insecticide is widely used with inadequate knowledge.
- conducting itinerant theatre in 7 villages in the provinces of Surin, Buriram, Khon Kaen and Nakhon Ratchasima during 14-30 July. Issues related to villagers' daily lives were the themes of performances, after which discussion of the topic were held among the audiences.

It should be noted that after two years of intensive activities, the micro media section, widely known as "Makkompon Troop", was officially recognised by government agencies. On September 11, "Makkompon Troop" was awarded a prize as a prominent group promoting people's media for grassroots people by the National Youth Bureau of the Office of the Prime Minister.

#### MESSAGES AND SERVICES

##### Justice and Peace Commission - Thailand

That society is not different from other societies in which there still are exploitation, injustice and violence against people of different opinions. This is manifest in general phenomena today.

The Bishops' Conference of Thailand was well aware of this problem, and passed a resolution asking for the establishment of a Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand. On behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Thailand, Bishop Bunnhan Mansap appointed scholars and personalities of various circles, known for their role in promoting social justice, members of the Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand on February 17, 1977.

##### Objectives

1. To promote religious persons' consciousness of and their interest in problems of injustice and violations of human rights;
2. To study and analyze thoroughly the causes of injustice;
3. To disseminate data and results of these studies by various means, among people or groups concerned and to the public either Thai or international, and
4. To cooperate and coordinate its activities, either directly or indirectly, with a view to finding a peaceful solution to those problems.

##### Activities

1. Analyses, in form of case studies, of causes of social injustices;
2. Seminars on the results of such case studies;
3. Education by means of panel discussions, exhibitions and publications;
4. Cooperation with other Thai and foreign agencies sharing the same objectives.
5. Services in certain audio-visual forms to fulfill the afore-mentioned objectives.

##### Recent activities

1. Case Studies - The Impact of Multinationals: The Case of Dole-Thai Company.

The Thai ruling class of different periods has appealed for foreign investments in Thailand, has proposed all promotional privileges to potential investors and has expected only good things. However, Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand saw certain adverse effects of foreign investment and collaborated with Research Group 79 in studying the impact of multinationals through a case study on the Dole-Thai Company. The Commission finally discovered certain facts contrary to the belief of the Thai ruling class.

##### Women's Labour

The present economic situation results in involving a large number of women in social affairs, notably in urging them to work outdoors to earn a better family income. Female labour has become one of human resources in the

labour process. However various social values still impede the development of female labour. Female workers are facing various forms of injustice.

- Problems of Labour Migration to Bangkok  
Successive failures of the state agricultural development policies result in urging rural people to migrate to Bangkok and to sell their labour to survive. The number of migrating workers increases steadily. A case study centers upon problems those workers are facing and services they need while lacking for a job, etc. The objective of the study is to collect data with a view to finding ways and means to help these workers.

- Impact of the Year of Tourism (1980) on people's income, the social situation and culture in the provinces of Chiangmai, Chonburi, Bangkok Phuket and Songkhla,  
Although the Thai Government, like those of other developing countries, asserts that development of tourist industries leads to a redistribution of income to rural areas or is beneficial to the Thai economy as a whole, the results of a case study prove that they cause other adverse effects of which the government should think and urgently find measures to prevent or eliminate.

## 2. Seminars

- On the Impact of Multinationals: The case of Dole-Thai Company.
- On Women's Workers: Problems and Solutions.
- On Labour Migration to Bangkok.

## 3. Education

- Exhibitions and panel discussions on such important days or occasions as World Day of Peace, International Women's Day and Human Rights Day.
- Thai language quarterly, "PHUWAI" (Liberator) handbooks and English language newsletters.

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