

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT

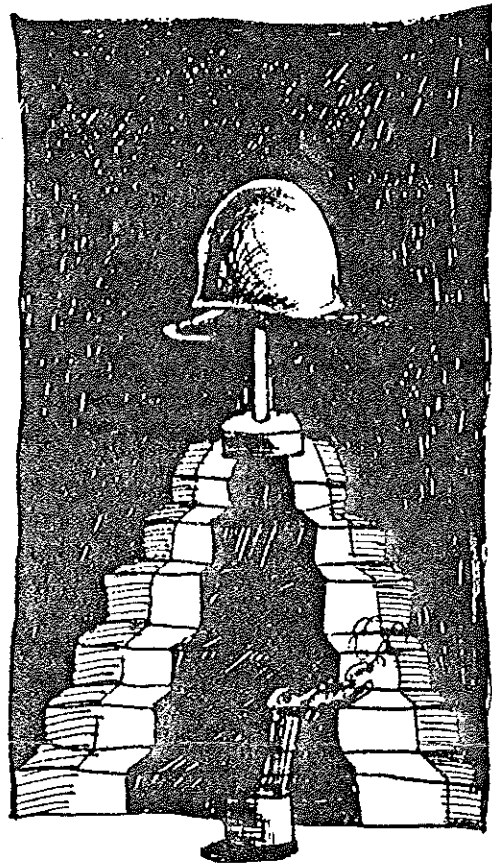
Vol. 7 No.2

April-June 1983

The human rights situation

The Thai political situation in April was not less tense than that in March this year, during which the dominant army faction actively instigated the constitutional amendments movement that culminated in the dissolution of the House on March 19. That a snap general election was to take place within 30 days had rendered the competition among major political parties one of the harshest

and the most disorderly. Only one week after the House dissolution, bombs exploded at the headquarters of the Social Action Party and the Democrat Party, two major political parties which had been opposed all along to the constitutional changes. The situation was all the more violent as the election drew near. Some canvassers and candidates likely to win the election were assassinated in some provinces. Two weeks before the election day, 13 persons were killed; this number, according to one political observer, is still higher than that of Thai soldiers killed during the same



In this issue

The human rights situation	1
Is the Thai labour movement in an impasse ?	3
The death of a labour leader	5
News from Thailand	9
Activities of CGRS	10

period at the Thai-Cambodian border. This state of violence and virtual anarchy was such that Interior Minister Gen Sitthi Jirarochana admitted that the situation was desperate. He said "How could one prevent such incidents? Candidates must protect their own canvassers. We cannot stop the killing. If we know the killers, we will arrest them." Most of the murderers are still at large.

Human Rights in Thailand Report is a quarterly publication of the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society:

Address : 495/44 Soi Yoo-omsin, Jaran-sanitwong 40 Road, Bangkok 10700, Thailand

After the election, no single political party gained enough seats to form a government. Political confusion ensued due to the fight between two major political parties to lead a coalition government. The resultant political instability was such that there was a rumour of a coup d'etat to be staged by Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Arthit Kamlang-ek who was all along behind the constitutional amendments movement during January-March this year. It was believed that a new government under the army influence would call for the constitutional changes, thus paving the way for Gen Arthit to become prime minister without resigning his most powerful army post.

Three weeks after the election, Thailand's 43th government was formed with the collaboration of four rival political parties, reportedly under pressure from the dominant army faction. It has become a tradition that for any government to be viable politically it must enjoy the army's support.

On May 20, the new government of Gen Prem Tinnasulanond announced its policy before the Parliament - a policy which clearly reflects the army's fighting ideology of the political leading the military methods; and of the Thai National Armed Forces to be composed of the military, the para-military and the volunteer forces. The last three months saw the army asserting itself not only in the political arena but also in the economic sphere when in May it began its internal rice trade programme and intended to embark upon foreign trade in rice with the collaboration of Thai military attaches abroad. Business circles were very much worried about the possibility of the army's increasing interference in the economic sector at their expense.

Together with the news of the political defeat of the Communist Party of Thailand, there were reports about the plight of several communist defectors-officially called nowadays "individuals united in Thai development"-who had been facing threats and all forms of harassment from local officers or other Thai volunteers under the government command. In the northeastern provinces of Ubon Ratchathani, for example, "Com-

rade Sornphet" of Don Tan district was killed at his house slightly after he left his jungle stronghold, whereas Suwan Oonjit-a former communist regular soldier-was injured by a group of seven Thai volunteers in Ban Nong-hainoi village, Chanuman district. These volunteers were not punished by their superior. In the Amnatcharoen district, Ubon Ratchathani, Lon Patthalee, another former communist soldier, was arrested on charges of attempted murder, though he was not present when the incident took place. In another northeastern province of Mukdaharn, "Comrade Phibul" former commander of a communist regular unit, could not move out of his village Ban Nong-hee, Pla Pak district, for almost one month, whereas his neighbour "Comrade Narong" had been ambushed two times. These were but few incidents affecting a number of communist returnees who are increasingly worried about their security. An important number of former communist guerrillas have been facing difficulty in earning their living, or have the feeling that the officials have had the serious concern about their welfare. No lands have been given them as promised, for example. All this is enough to have affected these people's confidence in the government's much publicised policy of general amnesty and of national reconciliation.

As far as freedom of expression is concerned, there has recently been a move to have the National Administrative Reform Council's notorious order No.42 repealed. (This order authorizes the Interior Minister and the Police Director to close down any newspaper without any court order.) This was a concerted move by opposition MPs and local newspapers which have been operating under the pressure of this order for seven years. However, when a draft bill to revoke that order was introduced to the House on June 16, the government requested to re-examine the draft bill within 60 days before the House would pass its first reading. And in so doing, the Prem administration simply maintained that order for a certain period of time which, as remarked by MPs who introduced the draft, could be extended for four more years - that is until the new general election.

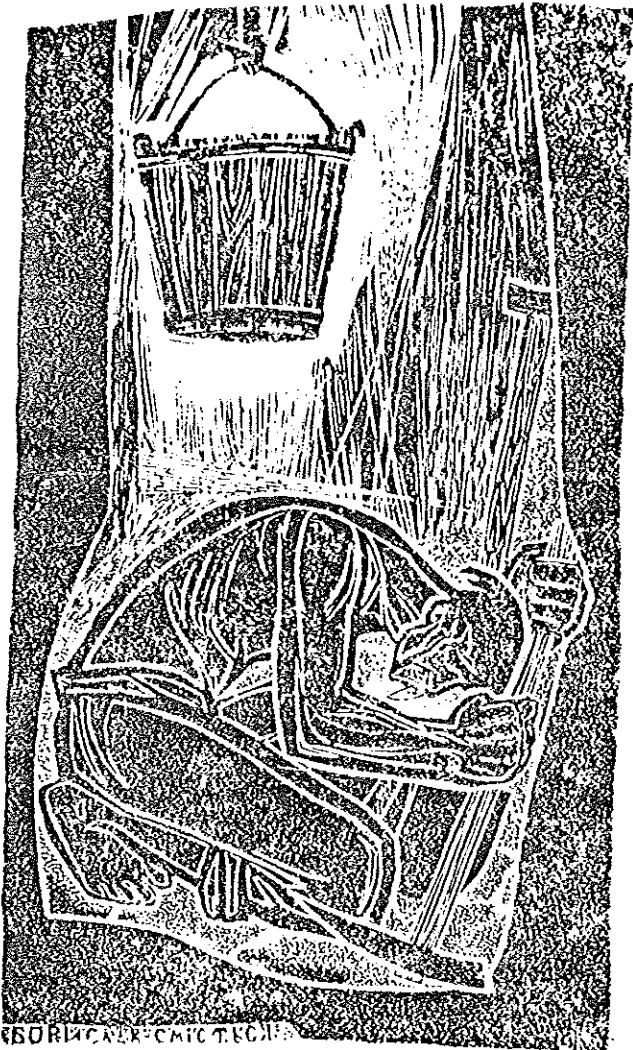
Is the Thai labour movement in an impasse ?

During the last two years, the Thai labour movement has faced a strong systematic pressure from the employers who have realized the necessity of combining their actions, with a view to thwarting the growth of Thai trade-unionism considered detrimental to their interests. Such a concerted move on the part of the employers occurred at a time when labour conflicts and work stoppages were widespread. The labour protests increased in number partly because of the deteriorating economic situation affecting the welfare of the workers who, consequently, were forced to strive for the preservation of their legitimate rights. Facing such a labour

situation, the employers resorted to two methods to exploit the workers. One of which was to avoid observing some employment regulations. For example, a lump sum was paid to a group of workers for a quantity of work. By this method, no permanent workers - to whom, according to the labour law, certain welfare and other benefits must be granted - were employed. Or the workers were given a wage less than that fixed by the law. On this particular point, the National Statistic Office revealed that in 1982, 40% of the unskilled workers in Bangkok and the neighbouring provinces were paid at that low rate.

The second method, a violent one, was used when workers took to various forms of protest to preserve their rights. These violent measures varied from lay-offs, dismissals, harassments to assassinations. In most cases, the victims were labour leaders or trade union members, and, where there were no trade unions, those who led the workers' protests or prepared for forming trade unions. In 1981, the Labour Congress of Thailand disclosed that during the period from the end of 1980 to September 1981, 7,989 members and committee members of 61 labour unions were laid off, arrested and murdered - excluding those who were not labour union members. During the first six months of 1982, 552 members of the Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand were dismissed.

These lay-offs were often illegal. Those affected were not paid compensation nor notified in due time, for example; most of them had been involved in labour protests or had figured in the employers' common black list. Sometimes the employers made use of certain loopholes in the labour law to lay off workers. For instance, they had employees arrested on charge of stealth and proposed to withdraw the lawsuits if these employees voluntarily quit their factories, in which case the employers would pay no compensation. Eventhough these cases



were quite often brought before the labour court (composed of representatives of the management, of the workers and of the government), it happened that the workers and the labour judges - representatives of the workers - had most of the time found themselves in a disadvantageous position because of their low level of education, their lack of experience and their weak bargaining power.

Recently such violent methods as assassinations and systematic harassment, were increasingly resorted to. It should be noted that most of the victims were members of the steel trade-unions or of the Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand. On March 29 this year, Khampun Wongkhan, deputy secretary general of MSLUT was killed by at least four men in an ambush. His assassination was reported to be an important move on the part of his enemy to thwart the growing movement of steel workers in the Samutprakarn and neighbouring provinces. Khampun had been in the last few years an active adviser to the Steel trade unions in these areas. (See more details in "The Death of a Labour Leader" in this issue.)

The success of such violent methods could be partly imputed to the negligence on the part of the authorities concerned, namely the Labour and the Police Departments. Only a few murderers have been arrested. In most cases, the close relationship between the employers, believed to have instigated these violent schemes, and the local officers often led to such inaction. Eventhough a suspect was arrested in connection with the murder of Khampun, skepticism was widespread among workers and observers whether the suspect was not simply a scapegoat or a hired one to divert the people's attention.

Aside from strong pressure from the employers, the present Thai labour movement has been facing an unprecedented schism within itself. It finds its origin in a serious ideological conflict between the breakaway Thai Trade Union Confederation (with a membership of 80 trade unions) which preaches trade-unionism, and the Labour Congress of Thailand (composed of 90 trade-unions) which supports the creation of a workers' political party. However, many believe



that the dominant army faction was behind this schism since this faction reportedly wished to use the labour movement to consolidate its power base. It is publicly known that such LCT leaders as Swasdi Lukdod and Amad Khamthetthong have had close relations with the Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC) and the Democratic Soldiers Group which have been instrumental in supporting Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Arthit Kamlang-ek's political manoeuvre since the beginning of this year.

The TTUC-LCT contest for the leaderships of the labour movement finds its roots in the ousting two years ago of Phaisal Thawatchainant, presently TTUC president, from the LCT presidency by the Swasdi-Amad faction with the active

support of the ISOC and the Democratic Soldiers Group. The rivalry between the LCT and the TTUC (both controlling about 90% of almost 200 existing trade unions in Thailand) was at its zenith when the former together with the Democratic Labour Party, sided with the Gen Arthit's faction in its move to have the constitution amended. This LCT leaders' political stand was harshly criticized by the TTUC as having served more the interests of Gen Arthit than those of the workers or the cause of democracy. For Swasdi, Amad and allies, however, their siding with the dominant army faction in the abortive attempt at constitutional changes was more than rewarding, since Swasdi, Amad and three other LCT leaders were later appointed senators in late April.

While the conflicts among labour leaders have been sharpened by the LCT leading figures' involvement in power politics, the problems of ordinary workers have accumulated and have been neglected or unresolved. Even the death of Khampun, did not much interest these labour leaders. Moreover, 1983 has been much predicted to be a difficult year for Thai workers because of the conceivably persistent economic recession. Unemployment and lay-offs, continue to be major problems awaiting urgent solutions. In this situation and amid the conflicts between the two important labour groups, a question arises: to whom should the Thai workers turn to alleviate their problems?

The death of a labour leader

On March 21st at around 8.00 p.m. on the streets of Samrong in the Phra Pradaeng district of Samut Prakarn Province, three bullets were pumped into the head and chest of young activist labour leader, Khampun Wongkhan, killing him instantly. The Thai police have mounted a huge cover-up operation to conceal the true nature of the killing trying to claim that it was the result of petty internal factional squabbling within the Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand, of which Khampun was deputy secretary-general, and very little has been reported by the timid (and largely controlled) Thai press. The assassination of Khampun was a precision-timed and highly professionally executed killing; the most likely instigator - and beneficiary - of the crime was appointed a senator of the Upper House of the Thai parliament a mere few days after Khampun's death.

Khampun Wongkhan was, to say the least, a most unusual labour leader. Aged only 25 at the time of his death, Khampun was born and raised in Ubon Ratchathani Province, in the arid and largely impoverished North-East of Thailand. He was very active in student organization of his school in Nakorn Ratchasima during the democratic period of 1973-1976, before leaving for Bangkok two years later to work in a Volvo factory in Phra Pradaeng. Khampun quickly started to organize a labour union in that factory, prompting his employers, in 1980, to request the Central Labour Court's permission to fire him. After the court at all three levels had refused to sanction Khampun's dismissal, his employers at Volvo refused to permit him to enter the factory (but had to keep paying his regular salary).

At the uncertain time of Khampun's attempted dismissal, he was invited by Pricha Srimisap to join the staff of International Metalworkers' Federation - Thai Council and Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand, where he was general-secretary and vice-president respectively.



Khampun readily agreed and started to draw a monthly salary of 800 Baht from the IMF-TC and 300 Baht from MSLUT. Khampun's daily activities, however, were chiefly concerned with the latter. He scored a major success as advisor to the workers of a clothing factory, the Thai Patraporn Factory whose strike halted the factories operations for some 56 days, and ended with their demands met. Another successful strike action in which he was involved was that of a blanket factory, Norsiam. He was also one of the founders and chief promoters of the workers' co-operative stores. (Indeed it was near one such co-operative which he had just visited that he was assassinated.) Soon many workers were approaching him directly for advice on their factory problems, bye-passing the official union structure.

Another activity that Khampun initiated was the "Lohasampan" (Metal Relationships) Education Project. Hitherto, all workers' education projects had to be approved by Pricha and the

official TMF-TC structure; all funding for such projects had to be paid through Pricha and he, in turn, would appoint his own advisors for a project, nearly all selected from among his own staff. Being increasingly concerned with the direction in which Pricha was leading the unions and increasingly aware of his connection with Internal Security Operation Center and the right-wing groups of the military, Khampun tried to set up a new education project which would receive funds directly from the organizations concerned and which could thus choose and appoint their own education/project advisors from outside the Union structure. Khampun himself approached progressive Thai intellectuals with experience in labour education to assist in setting up and developing the Lohasampan education project. The project received a surprisingly favourable response from the unions involved in it. Some workers' education foundations started to partially bye-pass the official IMF-TC



The funeral procession of Khampun in Samutprakarn.

structure sending some of their funding directly to the Lohasampan Project.

As a result of such activities, the young activist from the Northeast had only been in Bangkok some 4 years when, in the 1982 executive elections to the Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand, he was overwhelmingly selected as a deputy secretary-general. In his new capacity as an elected member of the Union Committee, Khampun continued to push the Lohasampan Project as well as acting as advisor to many member unions in their factory demands/strike actions. Another two successful actions were accomplished with his support at the Oyama Factory and the Gillington Tools Factory. Both the rapidly rising star of Khampun and the increasing strength and militancy of the unions with which he was directly involved, together with his bye-passing the IMF-TC structure over the important commodity of moneys for education programmes, was bound to bring him into personal conflict with the entrenched position of Pricha Srimisap.

Pricha naturally saw this as a threat to his own ability to control the member unions and it became increasingly clear to him that Khampun was trying to reorganize the unions with which he had direct contact and among whom he was so popular, into a new and renovated IMF-TC. Moreover the elderly President of MSLUT, Boonsong Vicharana was coming to rely on Khampun's advise.

Relations with Pricha continued to deteriorate, coming to public attention when Pricha charged Khampun of being a communist, and flared into outright antagonism over the issue of a new IMF-TC building. The IMF-TC recently purchased a new building for its offices, but rather than register the property in the name of the Union, Pricha insisted, against the demands of most Union members, of registering the newly acquired property in his own name and that of another friend on the Union committee. (Pricha argued that as the general social and political situation of Thailand was still so unstable, in the eventuality of another

military coup, the property would be safer from government confiscation if registered in the name of private individuals, rather than that of a trade union).

Khampun led the workers' opposition to this move. Relations with Pricha became so acrimonious, that only a couple of weeks prior to his assassination, Khampun wrote a letter to his sister stating that he believed that he was in danger of being killed by Pricha.

A few days prior to his assassination, Khampun received a hand-written note signed by a "well wishing member" telling him to resign from his position on the Union or he would be killed, accusing him of taking 10,000 Baht of soap from the co-operative stores (which Khampun himself had set up) and accusing him of acting against the Union's interests in selecting the "leftist" intellectuals as advisors for the workers' educational programme. This note was later used by the investigating police to claim that the assassination had been the result of a petty affair of internal Union factional squabbling.

But the assassination itself was far from a "petty affair". This was the work of no minor amateur hired killer (for which Thailand is justly notorious) but rather was clearly the work of a highly trained professional. Considerable planning had also been undertaken and it is now clear that the assassination was the work of at least 4 people, carefully synchronised; not by any means the sort of unco-ordinated drunken brawl that occasionally results in deaths from factional differences. Moreover, having received a death threat only a couple of days previously, Khampun had been careful to surround himself by other Union members when walking around; two to the front and sides, and two to the back and sides. On the evening of the fatal day, Khampun was supposed to attend a meeting at one of the workers' co-operatives in Samrong. To his and his attendants surprise nobody was present at the co-operative meeting. Khampun then left the co-ope-



rative building and walked away down the street, with four Union officials around him. There were a great many people about on the street which has a number of street vendors, food stalls ect. The street was well lit at 8.00 p.m. when the incident occurred. Several bystanders were thus able to witness the killing and get a good look at the killers. Briefly, as the group with Khampun at the center, passed the shoe shop they heard explosions which sounded like gunfire from back down the road behind them. Presuming the explosions to be caused by a gun (which was not the case), the group ducked down to lie on the ground to avoid any bullets. Whereupon, in a precision-timed operation a man walked calmly across from the opposite side of the street and shot Khampun three times, once in the head and twice in the chest. Khampun died instantly.

The killer then proceeded to walk extremely slowly some 100 metres back down the street where a second man had prepared a motorbike and was waiting with engine running. The two then left on the motorbike. A third man meanwhile had come across from the other side of the street, presumably to check whether Khampun was really dead or not. A Union official who had been among the four officials accompanying Khampun and who was still with the dead body on the street, feared that this stranger might be the killer himself, but the man

reassured her, saying, "I'm from the police". However, the man disappeared after an ambulance arrived and has never been seen since.

Faced by persistent workers demands to apprehend the killer, the police eventually made a show of concern by arresting "the killer". On 15th April the police produced a man called Phailin Na Wandee whom they claimed was the assassin. However, according to the eyewitnesses, the character of Wandee was quite different from that of the murderer. Moreover on being taken to the scene of the crime, Phailin was unable to indicate the spot where he had allegedly shot Khampun until the police told him.

With Phailin's and the police's stories so clearly contradicting those of the witnesses, doubtless all the "suspects" will have to be released on the grounds of "insufficient and contradictory evidence".

Although the general Thai public has been little informed of the assassination, concerned activists and human rights groups have been closely investigating the murder; the workers of the Metal and Steel Labour Union of Thailand will also not forget; on 11th April they held a massive public funeral for Khampun, part of which consisted of a rally in front of the Samrong Nua police station demanding that the police arrest the gunman and "whoever was behind the killing".

News from Thailand

"Endangering to Society" decree may revived

Interior Minister called on 29th May for a revision of the existing law to impose harsher penalties on criminals.

Gen Sitthi Chirarochana also said that the abrogated stipulation which entitled police to put anyone charged with being detrimental to the society in jail for at least 30 days pending trial should also be revived.

Expressing his concern on increasing crime rate and the widespread use of war weapons by civilians, Gen Sitthi said the Interior Ministry had been trying to crackdown on criminals and influential people who are engaged in illegal activities but "the present law is one of the obstructions for the officials in carrying out their crime suppression missions. The Criminal Law should be amended to stipulate stiffer penalties on criminals. The national legislative body will have to decide on this."

Gen Sitthi also said that he favoured the so-called "law on people detrimental to the society" - a legislation which he described as effective in the suppression of criminals and influential people in the country.

Such an imposition was put in force in 1976 by the Thanin Kraivixien administration which announced a National Administrative Reform Announcement authorizing police to put anyone charged with being detrimental to the society in jail for 30 days for interrogation pending trial.

Unsuccessful attempt to abrogate press restrictions

Concerted action among MPs and newspapers to abrogate an order restricting the freedom of the press was met with strong opposition from the government.

In early June, an MP of the opposition Chat Thai party introduced a bill which sought to abrogate the order of National Administrative Reform Council

No.42, which was enforced in 1976 and empowered the Interior Minister and General Director of Police Department to close down newspapers or revoke their licences. This order was, in previous years, under unsuccessful attack by several human rights groups and newspapers.

Opposition parties, three press associations and local newspapers threw their full support to the bill which was introduced to the House on June 16. The debate, however, resulted in the favour of the government, which gained success in requesting to re-examine the draft within 60 days before the first reading will be passed. It was considered by the MPs who proposed the bill that this was a tactic of the government to delay the abrogation of the order which can be extended for four more years.

Red areas reduced

The number of sensitive areas have been reduced in every part of the country, according to a senior military officer.

Assistant Army Chief-of-Staff for Civilian Affairs, Lt Gen Mana Ratanakoses said on May 16 that the number of communist-controlled areas in the North has diminished from five provinces to only one, under the programmed carried out by the Third Army Region. In areas under the responsibility of the First Army Region, communist remain in Prachuab Kirikhan, Petchaburi, Ratchaburi, Chantaburi, Trat and Prachinburi. In the South, under the Fourth Army Region communists remain strong in Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Pattalung. Lt Gen Mana described the communists as strong in Sakhon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, Loei, Kalasin, Ubon Ratchathani, Mukdaharn and Udorn Thani - areas under the supervision of the Second Army Region.

In the meantime the Police Department has begun taking charge of former communist-infested areas in several provinces which were once under the control of the army. Pol Maj Gen Ong-art Phudphard, chief of the Operation Centre, said border patrol policemen, members of

News from Thailand

the special Action Force and rangers were sent into the areas as army forces withdrew. He said the army will eventually transfer former communist-infested areas in 38 provinces to the Police Department. He also said the governors will have direct responsibility over the police forces which take over these areas.

US may up military aid to Thailand

US military assistance to Thailand may rise to \$99 million next year from \$66 million this year, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Paul Wolfowitz said in Singapore on 15th April.

"We have an ongoing programme of military assistance to Thailand, which has adequate capability to deal with the threat it faces right now. We will work with them and see that it continues in the future", he said.

He also said Vietnam is interested in a "military solution to the Kampuchean problem. But to persuade Vietnam, Thailand should be supported to make clear a choice of continuing aggression in Kampuchea or having beneficial cooperation with ASEAN, ourselves and other countries of the world. They cannot have their cake and eat it too," Wolfowitz said.

Death sentences

During April and June, four persons in three cases were sentenced to death after being found guilty of serious crimes, including rape.

Sgt Thawat Sriboonpuan, 25, was found guilty on April 15 of murdering Dr Nantapol Limsathanurat before officials and public and in spite of the victim's plea for mercy. Dr Nantapol was killed while he was trying to escape the brawl which involved Thawat and his rival in a restaurant of Chumphorn province last year.

Kimchin Karnjanapan, 33, and Sgt Vichian Suwansuthi were sentenced to

death on May 3, by the Yala Supreme court which found them guilty of murdering a girl friend of Vichian in Yala province on July 8, 1981.

Lek Sukane was found guilty of raping and murdering a student of Ramkhamhang University in the toilet of a theatre in Bangkok on July 13, 1982.

Death and injury in factories

Last year, the cases of workers who died or were injured due to their work amounted to more than 20,000, most of which had their hands and fingers cut by machines.

The Labour Department disclosed in June that in 1982, 279 workers died and 28,323 were injured from accidents in factories. Out of the latter figure, 9,162 lost their hands and fingers. An amount of 89.78 million baht was spent for compensation, nursing and funeral rites.

Activities of CGRS

I Human rights activities

Visiting and helping prisoners

In addition to providing them with necessities, CGRS also closely followed the trial of the following people:

- 1 Wimon Piantamdee (communist)
- 2 Prapan Sae Tan (lese majeste)
- 3 Adul Bun-rueng (communist)
- 4 Daleng Is-malae and 5 Muslims (treason)
- 5 Charas Srikes (murder)

Six more people in three cases are being followed by CGRS. (see below)

Providing legal aid

Three more cases were adopted by CGRS and received legal aid in the past three months. All of these cases involved farmers and workers facing injustice from local influential people. The first one is the case of three sugarcane farmers in Kamphangphet who

were defrauded and sued for violating a contract with their money lender. The second is the case of a Ubon Ratchathani farmer who was sued by a legal officer after defrauding his estate. The last is the case of a worker in Nakorn Pathom who was arrested and detained on charge of robbing the factory where he once led the workers to demand for better welfare and working conditions.

II Rural development activities

The campaign for job creation in the rural areas project

At present, the Northeast, Thailand's most drought- and poverty-stricken region, sees an increasing number of farmers confronted with the difficulty of solely earning their living from their farmland. A big number of these people have migrated to other labour-demanding areas, especially Bangkok where prosperity, business and economic opportunities are so much concentrated that it is cynically said that "Bangkok is Thailand". However, Bangkok itself has been facing a high rate of unemployment and will certainly be in no position to cope with the increasing number of rural migrants in the future. It is in this light that CGRS deems it most urgent for all concerned to find some preventive measures, and tries to bring about local coordination of such measures among local government agencies, among individuals or groups concerned, and among the rural people themselves - with a view to creating jobs for these rural people, to increasing their self-reliance with more income earned from non-agricultural activities, and to preventing their migration to other areas so that they will become an active force to develop their native region.

In this campaign, the first target group will be those living in city districts, namely those who have better opportunities and are in a position to support the job creation programme beneficial to the rural poor throughout the country. This campaign will mark the beginning of solutions to a chain of rural problems we are facing today.

The preparatory stage carried out in the past three months was a conti-

nunity from that of January-March which was characterized by three types of work.

1. Field Work The target province was Ubon Rajthani, which, of 16 northeastern provinces, is known to be mostly composed of poor areas. Three model villages were visited for data collection. Such inquiry visits were necessary to define the causes of rural migration as well as the villagers' reaction to this problem.

Aside from this village survey in the province of Ubon Rajthani, inquiry teams were also sent to the central railway station and the northeast-bound bus terminal in Bangkok, to interview Northeasterners who had just arrived in the capital to seek jobs or were about to make trips to other provinces known to be in need of labour.

Another kind of field work was to survey the living conditions of the northeastern people who had been working for quite a while in Bangkok and were concentrated in some slums.

In this survey the priority was given to those migrants from Ubon Rajthani in with the same survey conducted in the same province as mentioned above.

2. Research Documents and research papers either directly or indirectly concerned with the problem of labour migration were collected and used as basic data extensively to study this problem and its acuity, as well as the feasibility of the job creation programme.

3. Coordination and cooperation Contacts and cooperation were sought with both public and private institutions of which the field work or the network covered the job creation in the rural areas, such as the Department of Rural Development, The Appropriate Technology Association (ATA).

III & IV Child labour and slum activities

In the past two years CGRS helped establish and was a founding member of the Center of Concern for Child Labour. Keeping in mind the philosophy of being a small group, which tries to play a catalytic role in forming as many action groups as possible in areas of concern, CGRS devoted much of its effort to enable

CCCL to become an independent organization which deals mainly with child labour problems. With this principle, most of the child labour activities of CGRS were undertaken with or under the banner of CCCL. Now CCCL is firmly established and has gained much recognition from the public as well as governmental agencies. CGRS thus decided to withdraw from CCCL early this year. Most of the child labour activities in the past year were therefore not carried out by CGRS any more, except the dissemination project, which still continue until the end of this year with its emphasis on various types of media for use by those concerned in the countryside and factories.

The slum project is also in the same position. Three years after the beginning of the project, it has expanded considerably into many slums and consequently needs an appropriate structure which will enable it to work effectively and fluently. Taking into consideration this situation and the above mentioned philosophy of CGRS, it was agreed early this year that the project split from CGRS to be an independent group working mainly on slum issues. This new group which has its own identity and autonomy will be supported by CGRS in the early stage.

V Micro media activities

Micro media activities is aimed to spread knowledge, information and understanding in different fields to 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 culture 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 April-June, micro media activities were mainly carried out as follow:

- conducting itinerant theatre during June 6-24, in 15 schools of Chantaburi province.

- organizing two training courses. The first one held during April 1-8 in Nakorn Ratchasima province, attended by 23 teachers in village schools. The second one held during May 23-June 3 in Chanburi province, where 22 students of provincial teacher college has attended. All trainees also accompanied with the group to stage 18-day-itinerant theatre in the countryside.

Coordinating Group for Religion in Society:
495/44 Soi Yoo-omsin, Jaran-sanitwong 40 Road,
Bangkok 10700, Thailand

AIR MAIL
PRINTED MATTER