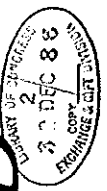


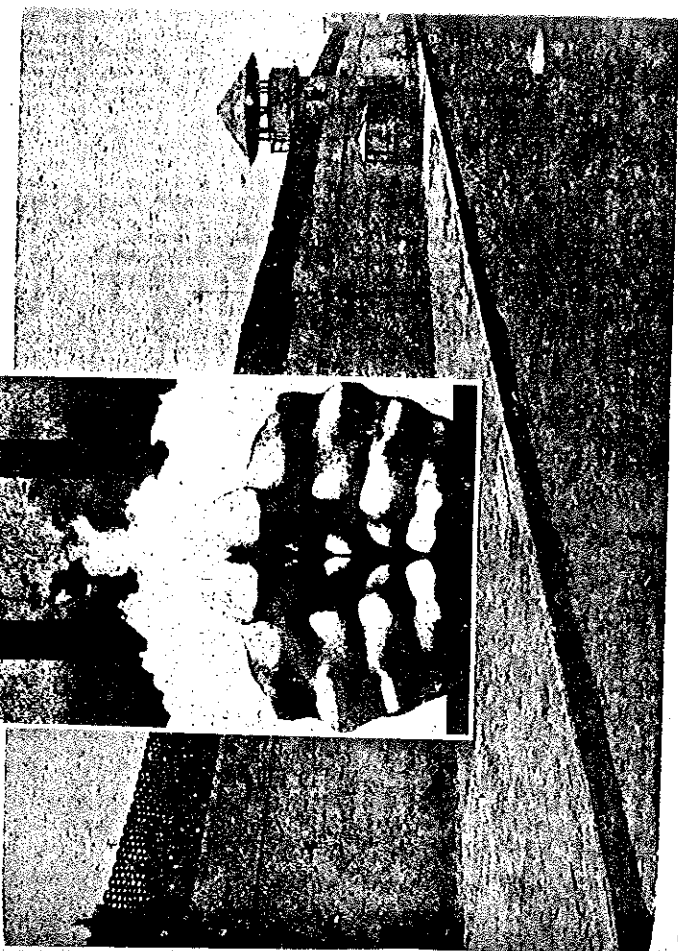
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HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT



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Health-Care Behind Thai Prison Wall

Of all the people in Thailand whose rights are infringed, prisoners suffer the most serious abuses. And yet, conditions in prisons are not known to many, other than the few who have first-hand experience.

In the middle of January this year, a report did appear in the Thai press. At Bang Kwang Prison a male prisoner died of tuberculosis, and it emerges that he was the sixth prisoner to die of the disease in a year. Such reports provide glimpses of the true situation as if the prison gates had opened a crack momentarily.

Some mornings a line of pale prisoners can be seen emerging from a prison gate, their leg irons clanking, some needing support. These are the severely sick on their way to the Correction Department's Central Hospital. It is open to question whether they will receive adequate treatment. Only recently Dr. Sorote Narkrichum, the Director of this hospital, told reporters that the government's budget for the health care of prisoners throughout the country amounts to 2.05 baht (about US\$ 0.08) per prisoner per year. He added that his hospital could only handle 300 patients at a time whereas the need was for at least 400 prisoners to receive hospital care.

One of the most immediate causes of health problems is severe overcrowding. The Central Prison at Bang Kwang should accommodate 2,000 inmates. In April 1985 there are some 8,000. At night they lie shoulder to shoulder, barely able to turn. Their rooms have meagre ventilation, a grimy fan-extractor serving only to disturb their sleep. The sick inmates are mixed in with all the others. It is difficult even for new healthy arrivals to maintain their good health.

The government's food budget for prisoners is 12 baht (about US\$ 0.45) per person per day. And even some of this could be subject to misappropriation. What remains is used in a complicated riddle of bidding and price bargaining supposedly in order to provide the prisoners with nourishment, but even at the final stage wardens and inmates in the kitchen conspire to sell off the best food.

Many sources have described the dirty, dark soup with the odd bit of soggy meat floating in it. Only rarely can a proper piece be found. The rice contains gravel. One warden said, "Even the dogs at my house wouldn't eat it." This is no exaggeration: prisoners with some money feed themselves.

If the prisoners do get to the hospital to be treated, their treatment leaves much to be desired. One informant who had spent some time in the prison hospital said, "Prisoners come from the various prison wings. They are examined by the wing doctor who is a warden. If the sickness is not too severe, the wing doctor prescribes medicines appropriate to the

300 TB cases among prisoners reported

No more than 300 prisoners throughout the country are now suffering from tuberculosis, Corrections Department Director General Sa-nit Ruchinarong.

The director general said that at Bangkokwang detention centre alone, there were about 100 TB cases. A prisoner recently died of the disease there, he added.

Sanit said that most of them refused to take medicines because they did not want to do hard work or enable them to be released under a royal pardon sooner than usual.

The prisoners were locked up in separate jails so that the disease would not spread to other inmates, he said. (see conflicting report on Health-Care Behind Thai Prison Wall in this issue)

Sanit also said he had instructed prisons nationwide to provide cooked meals and boiled water to their inmates to prevent a spread of cholera and diarrhea.

About 200-300 prisoners at Bangkokwang had suffered from diarrhea, said the director general who added that an inmate had died of the disease.

"It is for this reason that the 'Wing Doctor' tries to prevent the patients from seeing a real doctor. And because the 'Wing Doctor' has the power to make applications for hospital treatment, sometimes if he happens to dislike a particular prisoner, that prisoner will find it very difficult to get to hospital under any circumstance. Some 'Wing Doctors' use strange methods in deciding who should apply for hospitalisation. They might simply feel the patient's head to determine whether there is a fever. If there is no fever then there is insufficient reason to apply for hospitalisation," our informant told us.

The patients who get to stay in the hospital are those whose condition is at some stage of coma. If their condition is not too serious, they will not be given proper treatment. Upon arrival at the hospital they might not be examined immediately.

Our informant said that while he was in hospital, in March 1984, "three patients arrived suffering from stomach pains, each in a coma. One of them, upon arrival looked young, but after three days he looked 70 because in those three days he ate nothing. On the day before he died he vomited blood - half a bowlful."

By nightfall he was moaning with pain, but his cries were useless because there was no doctor or health worker left in the hospital. Before he died he called out for a doctor. He complained bitterly that this was no hospital. He fell silent for a moment, then thrashed about, talking unconsciously. Then he died, his eyes wide open." Our informant said that this patient was unlucky. He died without even seeing a doctor's face.

After the press reports of the prisoners who died of TB, Mr. Sanit Ruchinarong, the Director General of the Corrections Department, said, "I admit that the hospital of the Corrections Department lacks drugs and equipment. But the reason why so many prisoners catch tuberculosis is because they want to, so that they don't have to work hard, and so that they can receive special treatment at times of remission or amnesty." That is the opinion of the most senior administrator of prisons in the country at the moment.

When the attitude at the top is such, it is not surprising that attitudes lower down the scale are not better.

In another case, a prisoner's relatives took the necessary documents to the Prisoners' Welfare Section of the Department of Corrections to seek permission to have the prisoner treated at a hospital outside the prison. The law permits this, in cases such as this when the prisoner has been chronically sick over a long period of time. The prisoner's relatives were disappointed, and indeed shocked by the contemptuous way the prison staff treated them. Two months later they were informed "there is no need for treatment outside the prison."

Such is the situation in Thai prisons. Not only is the treatment inadequate, but relatives are prevented from initiating their own treatment. The solution for prisoners is to guess what their illness is and attempt to cure it themselves. If they have caring relatives, then the guesswork can have some scientific foundation, in other words the relatives can describe the symptoms to a doctor outside the prison who can then guess what the appropriate medication should be. Sometimes, in the process, the patient has to be a guinea pig before the correct treatment is established.

Without relatives, the prisoners are left to the vagaries of fate.

(This article was written by a well-informed volunteer who has been in close contact with friends and relatives of prisoners who have been denied of basic humane treatment under the existing penal system. Names and certain references must be kept as classified materials so that prisoners may be protected from further ill-treatment. CGRS shall continue to publish this kind of health care conditions behind the prison walls as long as this inhumane practice exists. However, CGRS shall not publish any materials which could jeopardise the well-being of the prisoners.)

Employers charged in child assault case

At around 9 or 10 pm, February 7, 1985, Aang Boonsorn returned home from "Matichon", the garland shop in Phuket where she worked as a garland maker. Mrs. Buaphan Boonsorn noticed that her 13-year-old step-daughter's cheek was bruised and scratched, and her shoulders, arms and back seemed to be severely bruised. Aang would not give any explanation.

Later that night, Aang complained of abdominal pains and when pressed again about what had happened, said that another employee at the shop had stamped on her back, and the employer's daughter had beaten her on the arm with a stick.

The following morning Aang's condition was worse. She would not eat. She vomited and had diarrhoea. Her father, Mr. Toem Boonsorn, went out to buy some medicine, but by mid-afternoon he was so concerned that he took his daughter to Wachira Phuket Hospital. The doctors diagnosed symptoms of assault with a blunt object or objects, but it was not until February 10, when they X-rayed Aang's abdomen that they realised that surgery was required. A 2-foot length of Aang's intestine was removed. Her doctors said that the bruising and blood-clotting might otherwise have proved fatal.

Aang remained in hospital, fed by saline solution drips, with plasma tubes and an oxygen mask. By the 17th, she was beginning to take some liquids orally.

By this time the Bangkok-based daily "Matichon" had reported Aang's story, with banner headlines which spoke of brutality by an "agreed-heard employer" and pictures of Aang strapped to her drips.

The press coverage resulted in swift action. The police accompanied "Matichon's" reporter to Aang's bedside. So did the chairperson of the local Red Cross, who is also the wife of the Governor of Phuket Province. So did the Public Welfare Officer for Phuket. The Deputy Governor of the Province, acting in the absence of the Governor, personally instructed the local labour office to investigate the case and make a report within three days. Mr. Charman Pojana, the Director General of the Labour Department telephoned the local office from Bangkok, expressing concern and ordering detailed investigations into all aspects of the case, including the terms and conditions of employment at the garland shop. The employer was charged with infringements of the labour law, her daughter and an employee with criminal assault.

The irony is that public interest might never have reached this level if officialdom had been quicker off the mark. Apparently, on February 10, an Aang was being prepared for surgery, (another report says it was

pieces that trade in alcoholic drink either for consumption on or off the premises; newspaper delivery; "sports services"; collection, sale, receipt or delivery of flowers. Fruits, groceries or non-alcoholic drinks; lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling weights not exceeding 10 kilograms. The extent to which children are employed in activities such as these makes it difficult to conduct thorough inspections to make sure that the employment of children is within the limits of the law, but at least there is some protection.

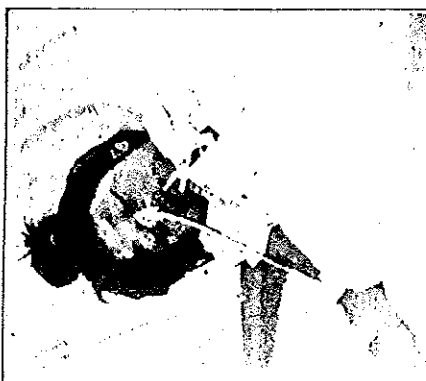
A category of employment which is not covered at all by labour law is domestic work, and therefore employers frequently employ children as domestic workers, getting them to do jobs, such as garland making, which are in fact of a commercial nature. The border line is not very clear. However, brutality is quite another matter: if detected it comes under criminal law.

The details of what actually happened on February 7, are not clear and besides, the case is still subjective. It is alleged that because of "disobedience" on the part of Aang, attempts to get her to "obey" resulted, Aang's weeping becoming more hysterical, and attempts to deal with her becoming more and more rough. It is alleged that the scenes culminated in her being beaten, locked in a toilet and stamped upon. Mrs. Pornpen, the shop-owner was not herself at the shop on that day, but her daughter Reasamee, 25, was. Reasamee and a fifteen-year-old employee have been charged with assault but there are conflicting reports about the role of Khied, Aang's older sister who was also on the scene.

After all the publicity given to the case, Mrs. Pornpen is reported to have given 5,000 baht (US\$ 187) for Aang's hospital treatment. On February 19, Mrs. Pornpen was charged and convicted at Phuket Provincial Court of offences under the labour law. These were: failure to put up notices at the place of employment stating the precise working hours, failure to give employees the mandatory 13 days "customary" holidays annually, making employees work an excessive number of hours, and paying them below the legal minimum. For this she was fined 10,000 baht (US\$ 370). It is doubtful if such a case would have been brought at all if so much publicity had not been given to the allegations of brutality.

The criminal charges of assault brought against Mrs. Pornpen's daughter and employee are still pending and the two are on bail awaiting trial.

CORS shall publish the results of the trial in the next issue with more details.



Canadian helps battered girl

THE sad story of a 13-year-old girl allegedly beaten up by her employer in Phuket has touched the heart of a Canadian businessman.

Garland-maker Ang Boonsorn was reportedly kicked and beaten by her employer and another girl on February 8 for making mistakes in her work. The beating caused serious internal injuries and Ang later underwent an operation in hospital.

Canadian businessman Jim Phillips who recently visited Phuket read about the case in the Bangkok Post and has offered financial help to Ang.

He contacted Somchok Vejpiatak, 31, who operates a car rental business in Phuket, and through him sent Ang a cheque for 1,400 baht. He has also promised to send Ang more money each month if she opens a bank account.

Mr. Somchok has given the cheque to the Red Cross Society in Phuket and it will later be forwarded to the Children's Development Foundation which has been taking care of Ang and her family in Bangkok.

Why Thai children work



Rescued from a factory recently, some of the children could not walk by themselves but had to be helped by a policeman and friends.

THROUGHOUT underdeveloped and developing countries, child labour is common. In order to help their families, children work on farms, in factories — any place where they can earn an income.

Children in fact must function like adults — without any chance of gaining a good education, not even enjoying the time that they're young.

In a paper delivered at a seminar on child labour protection at Thammasat University Saturday, February 23, Narong Petchprasert, a lecturer in the Faculty of Economics of Chulalongkorn University, discussed some of the reasons that Thailand is one of these countries with a high rate of child labour exploitation.

Professor Narong pointed out that most of the children employed in industry in Thailand work in small factories, which usually employ children less than 15 years old.

At some factories, child employees suffer from beatings and heavy work. In some cases, children have even been locked up, tortured, or beaten to death.

In his paper, Professor Narong made an interesting point: In Thailand, the rate of child labour is very high at the same time that the number of unemployed adults is very high. The answer, according to Prof Narong, lies in three factors: the "pull" factor, the "push" factor and the "supportive" factor.

THE PULL FACTOR: Business owners like to "pull" children into the labour force. Child labour costs far less than adult labour. By employing children, the owners are able to reduce the cost of production in order to maximise their profits.

The owners themselves are under the control of contractors who buy the products and can, if they wish, reduce the price they pay.

By employing cheap child labour the owners have a means of protecting themselves from the fluctuations in the agreements made with the contractors.

The owners protect themselves another way. As industry has expanded in Thailand, the legal rights of workers have been increasing too.

However, children, especially children from farming families, have been taught to respect older people. They are afraid to argue with their parents — or their employers. Thus the owners have complete control over their child employees.

The reality, said Prof Narong, is that these owners do not have enough knowledge of management and production. They know only the easy way to make a profit — a way that hampers industrial expansion and in the end wastes a valuable resource — children.

THE PUSH FACTOR: The families of child workers are willing to "push" their children into the labour market. A poor family offered 4,000 baht a year for sending a child to a factory has very little choice but to accept, for not only is the family able to reduce the number of people to feed in the family but it is also able to gain an additional income.

In farming families, the children are expected to find work along with other members of the family after the harvesting season every year, when about 30 per cent of all agricultural workers are unemployed. Parents, not understanding the working conditions of the factories, see nothing wrong in sending their children to work in the city.

THE SUPPORTIVE FACTOR: The law, said Prof Narong, does not protect child labourers sufficiently. In fact, there are no provisions at all to protect working children.

Government officials do not pay enough attention to cases where child labourers have been locked up, beaten or tortured. Labour Department officials usually claim that they do not have enough people to take care of the problem.

Fugitive farmers come to grief in city

CHILD labour and prostitution arise from the fact that about 40 per cent of rural youth do not want to become farmers and have come to Bangkok to seek alternative jobs, a survey by the National Youth Bureau shows.

Bureau Secretary-General Dr. Saisuree Jitkitt told the Bangkok Post that a survey of 322 rural children between the ages of 12-14 in 24 provinces showed that about 40 per cent did not want to become farmers and sought to leave their home-villages for better jobs in Bangkok or in their own provincial capitals. A number of them also wanted to go aboard to find work.

Dr. Saisuree said that because of their age they were susceptible to being exploited by job brokers who tricked them into child labour or prostitution.

She explained that the main problem was that after the harvesting season about 50 per cent of the children had nothing to do.

"Since they have no work they have no income. They complain that farming does not provide an adequate income and want to leave home," Dr. Saisuree said.

She cited research carried out by Dr. Channan Prathumsil on youth problems in the five southern provinces of Yala, Songkhla, Pat-

tani, Narathiwat and Satun. It was found that most of the children did not have work, wanted to leave their provinces and disliked the difficult life of being a farmer.

Dr. Channan organized a meeting between 21 governmental and private agencies in Hat Yai to set up a vocational training programme for the provinces.

Dr. Saisuree said the programmes carried out by government agencies usually did not suit the individual provinces. Many of the children could not find work with their newly-acquired skills.

"They are taught to make cakes, doughnuts and pumpkin-flavoured crackers. This is totally unsuitable to the situation in the provinces and is a waste of effort and energy," she said.

Factory closed for lead poisoning

THE industry Ministry has ordered a factory producing batteries to close down, with its licence suspended, after it was found to have caused health hazards including lead poisoning to residents in: Soi Ornuvit, Phrakhanong.

However, workers of Keang Seng Ltd Part, told The Nation on March 3, 1984 that the factory will resume production.

The closure order came after Ramathibodi Hospital reported that there was a patient with lead poisoning. Nikom Promchana, seeking treatment for muscular cramps, generalized weakness and his teeth have traces of lead.

The ailment indicates an acute or chronic poisoning caused by the absorption of lead or any of its salts into the body. Lead poisoning may result in anemia, which is a reduction in the number of red blood corpuscles leading to paleness and weakness. It can cause constipation, colic, paralysis or muscular cramps.



FEMALE worker of Keang Seng Ltd Part shows her swollen hands after they were swallowed by lead sheet rolling machine. She says she has been ignored by the factory operator.

When the noise and the odour became intolerable, residents there complained to the factory operators who temporarily shut down the facilities, but soon resumed production.

The situation became worse in recent days when the exhaust channels broke down. Smokes and vapour then scattered to engulf the whole area. Some residents said that monks at Wat Ton Sai have also complained because the wind was blowing in that direction. The abbot told The Nation yesterday that the poisonous substance caused rapid erosion of corrugated roofing sheets which needed frequent replacement.

The abbot said that monks and residents there could not keep rain water for consumption. A factory workers disclosed that his colleagues often got sick and the main symptoms include pain in abdomen, joints and skin diseases.

A female worker said that factory employs 12 females and three or four men. The male workers take charge of battery assembly while the female colleagues are assigned to paint chemicals on lead sheets, and rolling of lead sheets where accidents often occurred.

Hands were injured or deeply cut and many who suffered critical injuries were forced to quit the job without compensation or medical treatment by the factory operators.

Recently, a female worker faced an accident which caused the swelling of her hands. She has been ignored by the factory operators. If they stopped working on any day, they would not be paid.

"The worst thing is that the factory operators, in an attempt to avoid paying higher wages, simply asked the workers to write new job applications. One of the supervisor called "Napha" always demanded new applications, according to a worker who has been with the factory for three years. "I have no other choices but to stay on," she said.

Nikom Promchana could not withstand his ailments and muscular pain before he was

taken to Ramathibodi Hospital. Physicians there diagnosed the symptom an excessive lead poisoning.

Nikom has quit the job but some of his relatives are still working the factory. "Nobody here has good health. Everybody must have once suffered abdominal pain because no handgloves were given to prevent lead poisoning. Once hands were exposed to lead, it cannot be washed and there were always traces of lead on workers' nails," said a worker who extended his hands out to prove his claim.

Labour officials visited the factory last week, but they did not ask any workers. "The officials just talked to Mrs. Napha but the queries mainly concerned the wages which are 40 baht per day for newcomers and 60 baht per day for employees with long service. Nobody receives more than 60 baht per day," the worker said.

Owner claims factory is up to standards

THE OWNER of Keang Seng Ltd Part, producer of K.S. Batteries brand, was unaware that his factory was ordered to close down because it was recently inspected by officials who did say that there were problems.

"It was impossible for nearby residents to complain that they have been disturbed by hazardous substance because the factory was built according to the specification of the Industrial Works Department," insisted Uthai Luangarunthai.

"Whatever installations the department wanted me to have, I have done them all. The factory also has an exhaust channel," he said.

Uthai argued that if the department closed down his factory, it means that his way of living was blocked. "I am doing an honest business. I have obtained bank loans for investment and my business has been losing for two years. My factory was flooded for four or five months in 1983 and I had to pay wages to workers during the period," he asserted.

He said there was an ill-conceived plan by some residents who said the factory was causing health hazards. "I have been living in the factory for four years and never gotten ill," he said.

Uthai was contacted by The Nation last night at a batteries shop located on Baihathong Road, which is believed to serve as his residence as well.

He explained that he regularly instructed workers to clean their hands every time after they finished their work. There was regular medical check-up by doctors.

He contended that the abdominal pain as complained by some workers might have been caused by other ailments such as consumption of unsanitary food. "They might have eaten raw papaya and it hurt their stomach. I could not prevent them from eating such fruit," Uthai said.

He claimed that workers usually stayed with the factory one or two months. There are exceptions when some workers stay there for years.

Uthai admitted that there was a warning from the department to relocate the factory from the residential community to a new site. "I have asked for more time because I am losing money. They gave me five years before relocation," he said.

The Owner

Nearby residents told reporters that with operations continuing, the factory keeps on discharging dust caused by lead powdering and emitting fumes of sulphuric acid, disturbing the residential community as before.

Mrs. Napha Koonsombai, 39, who supervises workers, disclosed that the factory has received the closure order but it could not be followed because the owner and his sons insisted on continuing production.

Vichian Luangrunuithai, the manager, said the factory can not install a waste treatment system because it would need a high amount of investment.

He asserted that workers have been instructed to wear masks to prevent contamination by toxic waste while on duty. "The contended that the masks were heavy and inconvenient for them. I can not force them to do what they do not want to do," he said.



Female workers are seen lifting lead sheets from casting moulds without any protection against smoke or heat from the moulds. The majority of workers are young girls.

"Closure will have disastrous effects on the firm which has borrowed loans from banks. If the licence remains valid during the next five years the factory will be relocated to Lad Krabang Industrial Estate as promised to the department," said Vichian.

"But as of now, I want to recover whatever investment I have injected into this business," he added.

The Workers

Workers at Keang Sang Ltd. Part. told the reporters that they get only 40 Baht daily wage and those with long service only 60 Baht. The lead poisoning was reported to the department after Ramathibodi Hospital admitted a victim suspected of severe lead poisonings.

Miss Uraivan Kongsawang, 20, said she has worked there less than a month. While the workload is heavy, she gets only 40 Baht a day. She pointed out that there was no protective equipment against health hazards such as acid solutions and lack of proper ventilations.

"Though fans were used to blow out the foul smells, the situation did not improve," she said.

Miss Uraivan worked there because it is the first job she could get after moving from up-country to Bangkok. Workers were instructed not to talk with officials who enquired about the daily wage rates.

Boonhiang Srakew, 18, said nobody could last long at the factory because they could not stand the bad smell. Workers' hands were hurt by lead and sulphuric acid. "If I can find another job, I will certainly leave this place. Workers here, like myself, get sick frequently. They are not as strong and health as they were before they started working here," he explained.

Nikom Romchana, who was hospitalized, has already been discharged but he has not returned to work due to fear that his application would be rejected.

"It has happened before. When workers, who get ill enough to be hospitalized, wanted to return to work, they were rejected," he said.

The Official

Director General Chamrong Phanaschutabul said that if the factory defies his closure order, he would definitely take rough legal actions.

"I have already filed a complaint with Phrakampong police Station and police has summoned the owners for investigation on March 14," he said.

Police rescue 64 child labourers from factory

Sixty four children, aged between 13-15, were rescued on March 18, 1985 from a factory in Rongmuang area where they were allegedly forced to work from 6 am to midnight without holidays, police reported.

Most of the children were reportedly sold by their parents to job placement firms near Hua Lampong railway station which sent them to work at the factory for yearly wages of 2,000-4,000 baht.

A team of policemen raided the mosquito net manufacturing factory of Churn-seng Ltd Part in Soi Salak Hiri following a complaint by officials of the Foundation for Children Development of child labour abuses there.

The policemen found about 60 children in the factory, mostly between 13 and 15 years old. Fifty of them said they wanted to go home and were later taken to the Emergency Home, a temporary home for children and women in distress.

The factory owner, Senan Saitian-samrit, was held by Phayathai police for questioning.

An official of the foundation, Montri Klongsang, told reporters that the children were forced to work under harsh working conditions from 6 am to midnight and were given no holidays.

Montri said the foundation had found during an investigation that the children were supplied to the factory by job placement agencies near Hua Lampong railway station.

The factory made a contract to pay about 2,000-4,000 baht in annual wages to the children. The money was paid to the job placement firms which promised to channel it to the parents of the children.

"We have yet to find out whether the parents have really received the money," he said.

Police held the factory owner for questioning to find out whether he had violated the law on child labour which prohibits employment of children under 15 without permission from the Labour Department.



Rescued children are seen being explained of their rights at the Emergency Home in Bangkok.

Bangkok. Among them are two sisters from Buri Ram Province, Chantra and Sophia Chirani, who said they wanted to new jobs to support their families.

Chantra said she began working at the mosquito net factory five years ago when she was 11. Her sister was forced by poverty to enter the labour market four years ago when she was only 10.

"We were forced to work from six in the morning until midnight without pay. We had to get up very early in the morning to wash our clothes," she said.

"About two years ago, some 10 girls successfully escaped from the factory at night by using the mosquito netting to make a rope which they used to climb down from the fifth floor of the building," she added.

Asked whether they were allowed to play or watch TV, Chantra said they were not normally able to do as the factory set a target of finishing at least 150 pieces a day.

Miss Chompoonuj an official of the Children's Development Foundation involved in the raid, said that the foundation initially aimed at helping about 10-15 children under 15 years of age. But when the

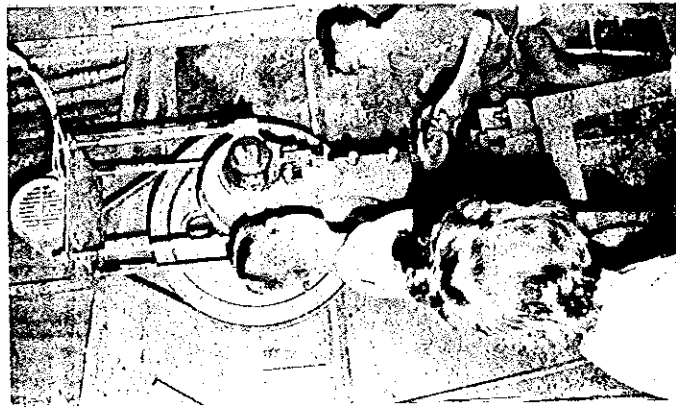
police and the foundation's officials asked who wanted to leave, some 51 out of 64 workers aged from 13 to 22 years said they wanted to do so.

"Normally we don't think helping children who are not seriously abused is the best way out as they need work to survive," Miss Chompoonuj said.

About 50 per cent of the children rescued from this factory have decided to get new jobs in Bangkok.

"The remaining 50 per cent would like to go back home. Still, it does not mean that they will not return to Bangkok and risk getting abused in factories again," Miss Chompoonuj said.

The foundation and the police plan to take legal action against factory owner Sanan Seangsamphan and also seek to secure overtime payments for the children.



Pressure mounts on child workers

CHILD labour problems are being aggravated by the sub-contracting business system, a Chulalongkorn University lecturer said on Feb 23, 1985.

Economics lecturer Narong Petchprasert said sub-contractors were in fierce competition and had to minimise costs to remain in business.

Addressing delegates at a discussion at Thammasat University, Mr. Narong said child labour exploitation enabled businesses to reap dry profits.

Mr. Narong based his statements on a survey he conducted in small factories which hired a large number of child workers. Most of those units, he said, sub-contracted for large companies and were mainly engaged in producing components at the lowest price.

During the economic slump of 1984 and this year, Mr. Narong said many sub-contractors openly said they had pegged or even reduced wages and cut down on workers' meals.

Delegates agreed that since child labour exploitation was inevitable in a country where extreme poverty dominated certain sections of society, serious efforts should be made to inform the rural poor of what they could face.

It was also proposed that a mechanism should be established to keep children in contact with their parents.

A Child Labour Protection Centre representative said there was a constant stream of enquiries from parents who had lost their children for as long as five years.

He also said local job agencies had influenced the villagers and easily persuaded them to send their children to factories in the city.

Facing up to child-labour abuse

CHILD labour in Thailand, a stain on the image of the country, was brought to public attention again in early March, 1985 when several groups met to work out ways of cooperating in finding ways to prevent the abuse of working youngsters.

The absolute right of parents over their children, as stated by the law, has been pointed out as a major obstacle deterring many well-intentioned groups from giving a helping hand.

It was generally agreed at the meeting that children "belong in schools, not in factories." Therefore, families whose children

become the essential income-earners should receive assistance so that they can earn enough to feed their children.

While the country suffers from economic problems, children cannot be allowed to become the victims of such economic failings, it was agreed.

Five major groups which have been set up to deal directly with the child labour problem — the Child Labour Protection Centre, Children's Rights Protection Centre, the Emergency Home for Distressed Women and Children, the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand, and Woman and Child Labour Division under the Labour Department — as well as many other authorities put their heads together at the recent Child Labour Conference, and shared their experiences and findings.

A common problem was brought out — limited resources, both human and financial. The conference, which took place at the Social Welfare Science Department of Thammasat University, decided to try to overcome this by promoting cooperation between the various groups involved.

The meeting agreed that there was no need for government or private organisations to set up any more committees to deal with the problem as the existing number of working groups was quite enough already.

However, the head of the Labour Congress of Thailand, Vichai Thosuwanchinda, told the meeting that the LCT was already planning to set up a committee specifically to deal with child labour issue. He added that the LCT could act as coordinator in dealing with any problems which may occur between workers and employers in child-labour abuse cases. The congress could also seek suitable financial support for any projects designed to help young workers.

What the Government has to do, meanwhile, said one participant, is to enforce the law, making sure that the most immediate problems are solved properly.

Though many statistics, figures, theories and papers were presented during the conference, some solutions were put forward to



solve the problem. A change in the law concerning the legal minimum age of employment was suggested. According to an Interior Ministry announcement dated April 16, 1972 it is forbidden to employ children below the age of 12, and children aged between 12 and 15 may be employed only with permission from the Ministry, and work must not be harmful to the health or development of the children. The meeting agreed that the minimum age should be raised from 12 to 14 and the intermediate age range reduced to 14-15.

Dr. Saisuree Chutikul secretary-general of the National Youth Bureau, said she had set a long-term aim to spell out the use of child labour by setting a minimum working age at 15 and extend compulsory education from six to nine years so that children could not enter the labour market before reaching the proper age.

The legal minimum wage for children, which has been ruled on by the courts, should be strictly enforced, it was agreed, so that the employers would not so easily be able to abuse their young workers.

Employers who broke the law should receive harsher punishment, the meeting agreed. According to an official of the children's Rights protection Centre, the maximum punishment now is six months' imprisonment or a 20,000 baht fine.

Public awareness of the problem was also emphasised as one of the most effective solutions. If the people were more aware of the problem, more cases would be reported to the police. Then authorities could not just turn a blind eye to the increasingly-serious problem of child labour abuse, it was agreed.

Probe finds most factories abuse law

MORE than 90 per cent of factories and industrial plants in Bangkok and outlying provinces have been operating in violation of Industrial Act, a senior official said on March 17, 1985.

Director General Chamnong Panaschutabul of the Industrial Works Department said inspections of 717 factories in Bangkok and the outskirts on Feb 21-Mar 8 found that the operations of only 44 factories are in line with the requirements and regulations of the Industrial Act.

Many other factories cause pollution while some have been in operation without legal licences or permission from the Industry Ministry, he said.

He said the inspections were made following complaints from people, particularly those living in industrial neighbourhoods, to the Industry Ministry about pollution caused by factories.

Industry Minister Ob Vassurana then instructed the Industrial Works Department to seriously look into the matter and check factories in Bangkok and outlying areas.

The department, he said, set up an ad hoc committee to inspect factories and industrial plants, covering 717 of them, to investigate their operations.

He said 90 of the 717 factories were found to cause air pollution while 370 others caused noise pollution and dust which disturbed people in their respective neighbourhoods.

He said 186 factories have been operating or have expanded their operations without legal permission from the department while 27 others have been closed down.

He pointed out most of the factories which have been operating without legal permission have caused pollution and the authorities also found that many factories and industrial plants did not have water treatment systems because of limited space.

This is a problem that needs urgent solution, he said.

He said another problem is that most factories do not have engineers to control the conditions and operations inside the plants.

Risks of workers sustaining injuries at work rising

THE number of labourers who sustained injuries while working increased by 73.50 per cent last year from the previous year and is expected to rise further this year, a report by the Labour Clinic of the Siriraj Hospital revealed.

The clinic, established in 1982 as the first clinic here to treat a specific group of people, has also found out that most of the injured workers in the industrial field were involved in mechanical accidents while the number of patients suffering from chemical contamination had decreased.

Associate Professor Doctor Vichai Vanadurongwan attributed accidents which occurred while working with machines to the lack of skill in operating the machines.

"Most of them live outside Bangkok and are employed at industrial establishments after having finished their harvests. So, they are most vulnerable to accidents from handling the machinery," he said.

He said that most of the ailments incurred by the industrial workers involved the degeneration of bone joints and muscles, caused by overworking or misusing various parts of the body.

The danger from working with chemicals have decreased because people are now more wary and more careful in working with the chemicals, according to the doctor.

He said that male patients at the clinic outnumber females by almost 50 per cent.

"Perhaps male workers are employed in more risky jobs; women by their nature are used for delicate work; or simply, there are more male workers than the females in the labour market," the doctor said, explaining the reasons behind the statistics.

He said that most of the patients are young with ages ranging from 16-25.

The highest number of patients are in the range of 21-25 years of age while those between 16-20 years of age ranked the second on the list, he said.

"This fact does worry us because these people constitute the force that represent the future of the country. Many of them are crippled each year and the number is on the rise," Doctor Vichai said.

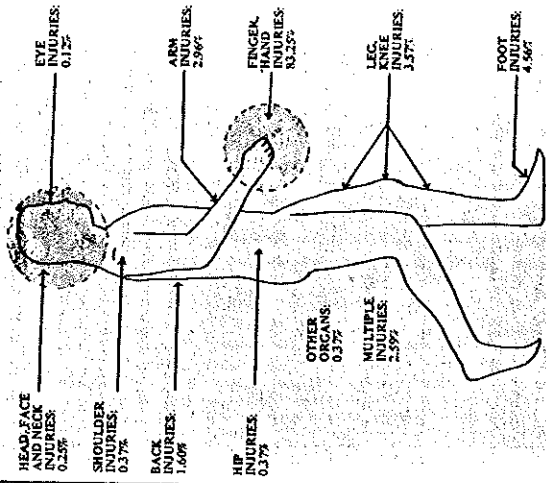
He said that 68.60 per cent of the patients were crippled or suffered injuries which are lasting ones in many cases, while working with machines.

The percentage rose to 73.03 when patients who suffered while working with electrical appliances and other tools were counted, he said.

Because hands or fingers are used almost all the time while working with such machines and tools, the risks of injuries to their hands and fingers are far greater than those to other parts of the body, according to Doctor Vichai.

"The risk is about 20-700 times greater," he said.

The doctor said that the clinic was set up because of the increasing rate of accidents from working. "Employees are usually exploited because the employers want them to yield the highest amount of produce. Sometimes, the employers mix stimulants into drinking water for their workers and sometimes, they force the workers to overwork," he said.



A diagram showing the risks of injuries to various organs from working. The data is based on 1,000 patients receiving treatment at the labour clinic, Siriraj Hospital last year.

Increase in women seeking urban jobs

MORE Thai women are migrating into cities to look for jobs, a report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) said.

The report, prepared for the current 41st session of ESCAP in Bangkok, said the proportion of women in paid employment in Thailand during the past decade increased substantially.

It said more young Thai women aged between 15-19 have been leaving their homes in the countryside for Bangkok and other big cities.

The main characteristic of this flow, the survey said, is that the development of transportation and changes in the labour market have created a situation where migrants can move easily from rural to urban areas providing resources to the former through income acquired in the latter.

The ESCAP survey showed that women work primarily in the service sector where they are more often employed in low-level direct service jobs than in managerial positions.

In Bangkok, the survey said, almost all the jobs in domestic service, such as housework, are filled by women. Sixty to 80 per cent of auxiliary medical personnel and staff in small retail trade are also women, it added.

According to the survey, a large number of women are employed in the tourism business and related recreational activities. However, it is difficult to acquire an accurate estimate because of the fast growth of such business in cities, it said.

The survey found that in the manufacturing sector, work that is repetitive in nature or requires special dexterity is performed mainly by women.

Moreover, eighty to 90 per cent of the labour force in electronics industries are women, most of whom are single and between 19 and 25 years of age, according to the ESCAP survey.

The study said these women bring their income from urban centres back to rural areas, which also serve as temporary havens during prolonged periods of unemployment in cities.

Women samlor drivers: A tough bunch

THAI women strive to prove their equality by doing the same kind of work which their counterparts do, even when the going is physically tough.

Approximately fifty singburi women have left their poorly paid work in the paddy-fields to become pedal samlor drivers.

Ubol Lurdlum, 20, said while working in the fields she earned only 150 baht for working one-day of land, which represented two or three days of hard labour.

"I worked harder as a farmer than I do as a pedal samlor driver. And I earned less money," she stated. Ubol added that she thinks she would have remained in debt for her entire life if she continued working in the fields.

Kanchana Kirdtem, 23, a mother of two children and wife of an unemployed husband, said she preferred pedalling to working in the fields. "I've worked in construction and I have even worked as a Ramwong dancer, but I prefer pedalling the samlor. I am quite satisfied with my present income." She has been in this business for eight years.

She currently earns about 60 to 70 baht daily at the set rate of five baht per trip. On some days she may earn as little as 20 baht.

It's a big drop from the average of 150 baht daily takings she used to earn up to quite recently. Today it is more difficult to get passengers as there is stiffer competition.

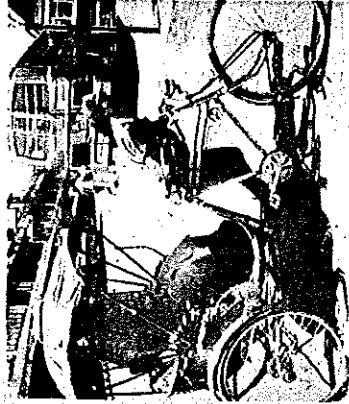
It's a big drop from the average of 150 baht daily takings she used to earn up to quite recently. Today it is more difficult to get passengers as there is stiffer competition from various transport services. In addition, more and more pedal samlor drivers have gone to Singburi from other provinces.

At singburi's bus terminal there are about 400 pedal samlor drivers at the disposal of some 2,000 passers-by.

Kanchana added that she and her colleagues often have to sell their blood to a hospital when they face

severe financial problems. They are paid 200 baht for each bottle of blood.

Most of them have to shoulder heavy burdens — besides their heavy work loads. While Kanchana has to support four people plus herself, Ubol worked until the eighth month of her pregnancy and had to return to work a few weeks after giving birth.



"Ubol rarely eats because she is afraid that she will not have enough money to buy milk for her new-born baby, her friend Kanchana said Ubol was abandoned by her husband and had to cope by herself.

According to woman drivers, samlor pedalling is hard work, especially in the beginning as they have to get used to pulling along the 60-70 kilo weight of their passengers. Approaching bridges is an awesome task.

One female pedal samlor driver remarked: "Some clients are kind, they offer to help me push the vehicle but sometimes I have to manage with my hard-hearted passengers."

The skin of the female samlor pedallers is darkened through exposure to the sun. But regardless of unfavourable weather conditions, they are always on duty.

Most of these workers are uneducated or have received minimal schooling. They seldom plan for their future, but just worry about each day's expenses.

But some like kanchana have a project in mind. She said of herself and her husband: "We are trying to save money to run a shop of our own when we get older because there is a limit to the age of a pedal samlor driver."

To be old, lonely and productive

WHEN senior members of the family grow old, Thai society believes that they should retire from all kinds of work.

But, as a matter of fact, many elderly Thais see nothing enjoyable in such a monotonous world.

They suffer the feeling that they have lost an important role in the family, and it's the time of life when they usually experience the grief of losing elderly friends or spouses.



At the Home for the Elderly, Bang Khae, where elderly residents work at handicrafts.

Society, said psychologist and researcher Archarn Nisa Xuto, should encourage the elderly back into the society. They are still valuable people and want to be recognized as such.

When people pass the age of 60, it does not mean they are incapable, said Dr. Prasob Rattanakorn, president of the independent welfare committee for the elderly.

"Our bodies are weaker, yes, but our experience in life and work is on the contrary much stronger than in the young ones."

He argued that if society ignores the elderly, they will become a big burden in the near future, especially as family planning will reduce the number of people in the younger generations.

The psychologist, himself over 60, gave the examples of HRH the Princess Mother and famous artist Archarn Fua Haripitak, the winner of the Magsaysay Award, as people "over eighty" who have proved they are still competent and devoted to their work.

To encourage the elderly to get involved in community service and to help themselves instead of remaining lonely at home, Dr. Prasob has introduced a group for the elderly.

It meets every month, giving the opportunity for lonely elderly people to make new friends. The group has been continually expanding as more and more old people join.

But the picture of life for the elderly is very different in rural areas from the problems in Bangkok. Outside the cities, said Archarn Nisa, most of the elderly work because they have to earn a living and fill their stomachs.

Recent research that 40 per cent of the elderly still have to struggle by themselves to earn a living.

The majority of those people are in agriculture. Most of them (80 per cent) said they have economic problems, and most said they are suffering because of them.

A large percentage persistently work until they can't manage to any longer.

The result is that there's a large number of sickly elderly people in Thailand — about two-thirds of the total figure.

Even in the government-run home for the elderly, residents have to help themselves by washing and cleaning. Not much service is provided.

Mrs. Wanna, a 65-year-old resident of the home said her family's financial status is not bad, but she came to the home because she wants to rest. Unlike the others, she pays for services.

Some elderly people prefer to work. In the home, palmreading, making dresses or paper bags are popular occupations.

When asked why they go on working, their answers are the same: "I don't want to do nothing at all."

But Archarn Nisa is against elderly people being asked by their families to do baby-sitting. "Taking care of small babies is hard work and not appropriate for old people," she insisted.

With the increase in the elderly population (seven per cent of all Thai people), the government is being urged to pay more attention to the problems of the elderly.

Key aims are: Appropriate work for the elderly should be found, as well as welfare; the elderly should have social activities to participate in; and, most important, the elderly population should not be overlooked.



Joint draft sought on anti-prostitution bill

THE Cabinet on Feb 26, 1985 sent back to the Interior Ministry for re-tudy a proposed bill which imposes harsher penalties on those involved in white slavery.

The Interior Ministry was instructed to jointly study the bill with the National Women Development Committee which in the process of discussing the issue. The committee is chaired by Deputy Premier Bichai Rattakul.

The two groups were told to come up with a joint conclusion before submitting it to the Cabinet for consideration and approval.

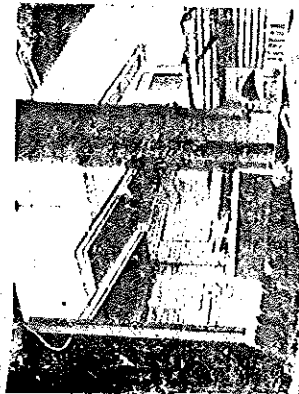
According to the Interior Ministry's draft bill, stiffer punishments will be meted out to purveyors and operators of brothels for prostitution purposes.

The bill proposed jail terms of three months to one year and fines from 1,000 baht to 10,000 baht for pimps or purveyors while operators of brothels for prostitution purposes will be subject to jail terms of six months to three years and fines from 6,000 baht to 30,000 baht.

Operators of entertainment places which are found to be involved in prostitution will, according to the proposed bill, be liable to jail terms of six months to three years and fines from 6,000 baht to 30,000 baht.

An informed source said the details of the draft bill, currently under the study of the National Women Development Committee, are quite similar to the Interior Ministry's draft but the committee's draft also refers to arrested prostitutes who will not be punished.

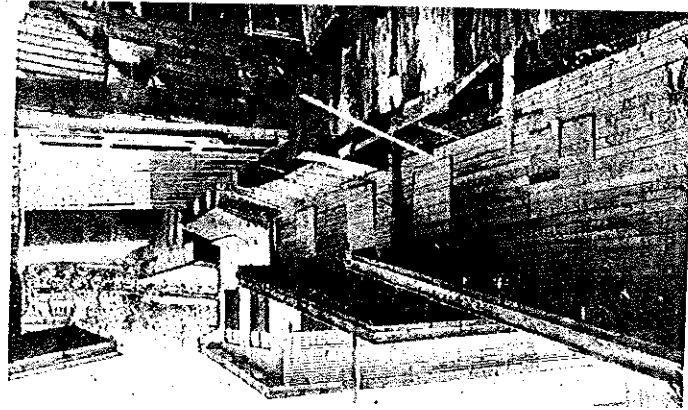
The committee is expected to finish its draft soon, the source said.



Draft on workers safety approved

The Interior Ministry approved on Feb 27, 1985 a draft to lay down safety measures for industrial workers in such industries as mining, quarries, petroleum exploration, decoration, building demolition, maintenance and others.

The draft also requires a business establishment with 100 employees or more to assist at least one security officer. The new regulations will be enforced 180 days after they are published in the Royal Gazette.



THE factory of Kcang Seng Ltd Part, which produces batteries, has an exhaust pipe which had broken down. Lead substance emitted from the factory has caused rapid corrosion of nearby corrugated roofing sheets.

Accident fears at 2,500 plants

THE Industrial Works Department has expressed concern that serious accidents may occur at 2,500 plants using chemicals in their manufacturing processes.

IWD Director-General Chamrong Panasathaboon said the plants were operating below international standards.

He said 77 of these plants produced chemical substances, 74 turned out fertilisers and pesticides, 139 made paints and varnishes, 162 manufactured soaps, cosmetics and toothpastes and 266 dealt with explosives and matches.

There were also 1,515 factories making plastic products and four oil refineries, he said.

Most of the plants are scattered around Bangkok and the nearby areas. Some of the larger plants were reported to be keeping large stocks of chemicals for production.

Mr. Chamrong said the methods used in stocking the chemical and transporting them were below international standards and that safety regulations have yet to be imposed on them.

The IWD chief said any accident, whether manmade or natural, could destroy these factories and residential areas near them.

Mr. Chamrong said his department has both short- and long-term measures to deal with the matter.

Under the measures, IWD will scrutinize all requests submitted to it for setting up new plants or moving existing factories to new locations.

Properties of different chemicals will also be studied to see which are to be given special control, and a survey will be made into the plants' storage facilities and the types and amount of chemicals being kept.

In the long-run, IWD will coordinate with concerned agencies including the Police Fire Brigade and the Public Works Department in finding ways to prevent accidents from occurring at these factories.

Building site safety rules 'inadequate'

FORTY-SEVEN workers died in accidents and 4,094 were injured on construction sites in 1983, according to Mr. Arun Chaiseri, chairman of Arun Chaiseri Consulting Engineer Co.

Mr. Arun, speaking on "Safety in Construction" at the Thai Builders Expo '83, organised by the Thai Construction Industry, at Chulalongkorn University, said construction in the country has expanded greatly and was estimated at 100,000 million baht annually.

He said authorities paid little attention to safety measures and this has resulted in a large number of accidents.

Mr. Arun estimated the death rate among workers was one in every 100 million baht of construction cost. The death and injury rate tended to increase with the construction cost, he said, adding that even for small projects the rate was high.

In a 40-50 million baht construction project, the injury rate would be one worker per day or 365 workers per year.

He said of the figures, quoted by the Labour Department, for 1983, 1,778 were recorded in Bangkok, including 17 being disabled, and 36 in nearby provinces with 26 disabled.

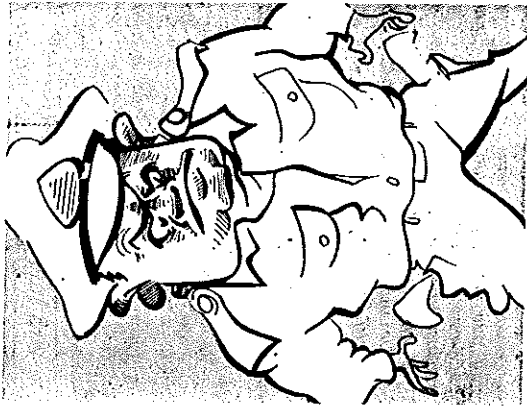
The main causes of death and injury were from falling from high places, being hit by falling iron or wood, and injuries to limbs from electrical saws. Mr. Arun believed there were still many cases which were not reported.

He cited an example of a construction project involving two four-storey and one six-storey buildings estimated at 137.5 million baht which had at least two tower cranes and a mobile crane but did not have any safety apparatus.

The work would require 174 workers and about 62 would be injured and one killed during the construction, he estimated.

"If the authorities paid more attention to installing safety apparatus, the injury rate would decline by 80 per cent," he claimed.

The recent incident of a little girl falling down a pile shaft at a construction site has raised concern about safety measures.



Disabled workers now entitled to 20,000 baht

EMPLOYEES who become disabled or lose their limbs on duty will from now on be entitled to the maximum compensation of 20,000 baht for their physical rehabilitation in addition to the payments for medical treatment, a senior Labour Department official said on Feb 26, 1985.

Director of the Compensation Fund Office, Mrs. Amporn Chuananond, said the payment will be given by the Compensation Fund to workers whose employers pay their annual contributions to the fund.

Employers who do not join the fund will have to pay the maximum 20,000 baht from their own expenses, she said, adding that the new ruling has been in force since Jan 31 this year.

She added that the Labour Department also planned to set up a centre for physical rehabilitation of disabled workers so that they will have the chance to return to work.

The centre, to be set up with the assistance of the Japanese Government, will be first of its kind in Asia, she said.

The centre will be located in Pathum Thani and Mrs. Amporn predicted that it will be able to serve nearly 400 people annually.

The director added that the Labour Department will, starting this July, expand its compensation fund programme to 20 more provinces including Krabi, Kampaengphet, Chacherngsao, Chaiyaphum, Chumphon, Nakhon Phanom, Narathiwat, Prachinburi, Pathani, Poyto, Pichit, Perchaburi, Phrae, Maha Sarakham, Roi Et, Lamphun, Si Sa Ket, Sukhon Nakhon, Surin and Sukhothai.

The scheme requires any business with more than 20 employees to give a financial contribution to the fund.

Police reveal crime statistics

THE deputy director general of the Police Department, Lt Gen Sulhat Sukhumwat, disclosed on Feb 15, 1985 the results of crime suppression both in the metropolis and provinces, according to the Ministry of Interior.

He said that from December last year until the present, police have made the following arrests:

- Murder and assault — 704 arrests, involving 820 suspects.
- Theft and robbery and other offences involving property — 1,998 arrests, 2,505 suspects.
- Organised crime: 1,700 arrests, 1,929 suspects.
- Vice: 13,855 arrests, 26,461 suspects.
- Possession of war weapons: 2,147 arrests, 2,203 suspects.
- Others: 16,546 arrests, 20,636 suspects.

Follow-up on Phuket prostitution house fire

The most tragic dead of 5 prostitutes who were burned alive with iron chains in their legs is still being followed closely by various human rights groups and concerned citizen in Thailand as well as abroad.

According to provincial Chief Judge, Ms. Duangmal Sitapa-archa of Phuket, the prosecution of the couple who ran the house of prostitution is carrying out with some delay. About 70% of the case has been completed, she said.

"At first, we were trying to finish the case before the end of 1984, however, there were some obstacles preventing the expediency of the trial, such as the investigation must be completed with some necessary facts and evidence from Udonthani and Khon Khen provinces where some of the prostitutes came from.", commented the chief Judge. The state witnesses necessary for the prosecution of the case could not be reached by the officials at first attempt are survivors of the fire.

Finally the public prosecutor had decided to cut down a number of state witnesses and had set December 17, 1984 for the defendants, witnesses to testify in court.

Despite desperate attempts on the part of the defense counsel to ask for the postponement, the court decided to set the date for December 18 and 19, 1984. The defense counsel again strongly requested for more time to prepare the defense of the case.

Due to the fact that the case is very much in the interest of the public, Ms. Duangmal said that the court therefore wishes to have a fair and exemplary trial. Consequently the court decided to grant a postponement to hear the testimonies of the defense witnesses on January 30 and 31, 1985.

"This court schedule shows that the court and the prosecutor's office are both trying to speed up the trial and fully cooperating with each other", said the Chief Judge.



167,000 Baht lawsuit filed against the owners of the prostitution house in Phuket

Mr. Leng Tien-ngarm and his wife were formally sued in the provincial Civil Court for the death of Miss. Chamrieng or Paj Chaiyasith, a prostitute who died in the blaze when the prostitution house was burned down last year. According to Mr. Vidhya Kaeuwaradai, a lawyer designated by the Lawyers' Association of Thailand to represent to parents of the dead prostitute, Mr. Paj Chaiyasith, 41, of 197/1 Moo 1, Tambon Lolo, Amphor Chomthong, Chiangmai Province has filed a lawsuit worth 167,000 Baht against the owners of the prostitution house, in provincial Civil Court. The lawsuit was for the death of his daughter and the parents are now left without any financial support, deprived of supporting labour in their family and the main provider of the household including the expenses in the funeral.

The parents of the dead prostitute formally asked the power of the court to force Mr. Leng Tien-ngarm and his wife to pay the said amount with 7.5% of interest. "The court has officially accepted our lawsuit" said lawyer Vidhya Kaeuwaradai.

The representative from the Bangkok-based Lawyers' Association also disclosed that he went down to the southern island along with other members of the Friends of Women Group to lend a helping hand to the families of these prostitutes who died with their legs chained to the house posts designed by the owner of the house to prevent any escape attempt of the prostitutes, mostly young girls from very poor families in the north. Five of them died in the fire which was on the headlines of all newspapers in Thailand early last year.

The tragedy occurred on March 30, 1984, but up until now, only one civil lawsuit was filed against Mr. Leng Tien-ngarm and his wife simply because only one girl's parents have been contacted for legal assistance.

The young lawyer disclosed that their collective efforts to work for the case was supported by the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS), The Union of Civil Liberty of Thailand (UCLT), Children Protection Centre and Friends of Women Group.

Testimony in Trial

It was reported from Phuket that on January 30, 1985, the provincial police has taken Mr. Leng Tien-ngarm, the 1st defendant, Mrs. Phakapan Tien-ngarm, the 2nd defendant, and Mr. Viphol Thongdee, the 3rd defendant respectively to the provincial Criminal Court for the prosecution of the case where 5 prostitutes in their house were burned to dead in the fire.

This is their first time to testify in the court as witnesses for the defense. It is expected that the trial could be concluded after one year or even longer.

A sad tale that goes on.....



CHANTANA Yodkrue, 15, was believed to be suffering from mental illness, she was sold by her parents and finally ended up as a prostitute.

Chantana is 15 years old now. She was sold for 10,000 baht when she was 13. She was told that she had to do household work in Korat for a man called Pa-Dang. But in reality she was forced to be a prostitute because he employer turned out to be a procurer.

Afterwards she was transferred to Per-chburi and her life was put under the mercy of "Pa Dang" and "a woman called "Mae Ning". She related: "I rarely did housework. They asked me to receive clients and sleep with them. Other girls in the same house advised me to do anything that Pa Dang and Mae Ning told me if I didn't want to be punished."

The victim related her life to the police after being saved from a brothel named "Samanong" in February. She was sent to the Emergency Home on Sukhothai road in Bangkok. There, she was given medical treatment for venereal disease.

Sources said that the procurers must bribe officials at the border checkpoint in order to bring their victims from the Burma side of the border into this town. The average charge is 300-400 baht for each girl.

A survey conducted by The Nation recently found that there are at least 20-25 brothels in the district seat. Some are operated openly in defiance of the authorities while others are hidden in small alleys.

In one of the typical brothels, about 10-15 girls from the E-Kaw tribe were made to sit in a glass cubicle which was dimly lit while the brothel owner and the pimps sat outside.

In the backyard was a row of compartments reserved especially for the guests to sleep with the girls they picked from the glass cubicle.

The Nation learned that in many of the smaller brothels, the girls are closely watched by pimps who are afraid they would escape.

The pimps also make contracts with potential customers who are willing to pay high prices for the "virgins."

Most of the girls are not allowed to leave the brothels as their owners fear they will escape. The living conditions of these girls are said to be deplorable; the girls are allowed almost no movement.

The girls are mostly enticed into prostitution with promises of good jobs and money. Most are from various hilltribes inside Burma.

The customers are a mixture of Thai and Burmese. The majority of them are tourists coming here in groups.

Some Burmese businessmen cross the border to Mae Sai to buy sex as prostitution is a serious crime in socialist Burma.

A Story of E-Gaw Prostitute



PISEUH (right) and Lai'vloom, E-Kaw girls enticed into prostitution and now staying at the Emergency Home after police raided the brothel.

MAE SAI, Chiang Rai — This border district has become a major transit point through which hundreds of unfortunate hilltribe girls have passed.

Many of the girls encounter their first ordeal here in the prostitution business before they are "distributed" to brothels in other parts of the country.

It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the hilltribe girls who are enticed by procurers from inside Burma pass through this town.

Mae Sai is of the official bordercrossing points with Burma. The district, which is about 60 kms from the provincial seat and has a population of about 65,000 is bustling with daily cross-border trading. And prostitution is one of its booming businesses.

Most of the brothels in Mae Sai have their own procurers who supply them with girls recruited from the various hilltribes along the border.

Sa-Ing insisted that she absolutely need Chantana and had to take her home. She asserted: "I need to take Chantana back or the whole family will be in trouble. But she didn't explain the motive for her action.

The social workers in the Emergency Home believe that Chantana has had to return to her two procurers Pa Dang and Mae Ning. They tried to propose to Sa-Ing that they would take care of Chantana if she has difficulty supporting her daughter. They also offered health and medical care for Chantana to help treat suffering any mental illness she might be still. Sa-Ing insisted taking her daughter home. Chantana was finally handed over to her mother after the investigation of the Crime Suppression Division's officials.

Chantana herself said that she wanted to be with her mother. "I wanted to help my mother with her housework," she said.

She added that she didn't want to return to Pa Dang and Mae Ning's house again. "I prefer to stay with my mother. I don't want to work with Pa Dang and Mae Ning anymore because I don't have the opportunity to do housework but only receive clients," she stated.

Emergency Home social workers said: "It's evident that Chantana has been forced to be a prostitute again. She certainly has to return to Pa Dang and Mae Ning's prostitution House. Unfortunately we can't do anything to help her because it is against her mother's wish.

The social workers suggested that children exploitation should be prohibited by law. They stressed: "The government should punish all parents who traffic their daughters to prostitution houses. They expressed their sadness at seeing these rescued victims being forced to return to prostitution houses by the parents."

Chantana said she received many customers every night. But sometimes she found consolation in a few clients who talked to her and also gave her some money.

In the Emergency Home, Chantana was taught to read and write. She was illiterate since she had never been in school like most provincial children.

Three days after her arrival at the Emergency Home, the two procurers Pa Dang and Mae Ning tried to bring her back. They were accompanied by a Petchburi police officer who said that he was investigating the case.

Still the Emergency Home officials refused to let Chantana go with them. They insisted that only Chantana's parents had the right to take her back.

Almost a month passed by before the 50-year-old mother Nang Sa-Ing appeared at the Emergency Home to reclaim her daughter. She was also accompanied by Pa Dang and Mae Ning. Sa-Ing said that she was informed by the two that Chantana had been brought to Bangkok and she wanted to take her daughter back.

Sa-Ing said that she had sold Chantana to Pa Dang and Mae Ning for housework and did know that her daughter would be turned to prostitution. She confessed: "I sold Chantana for 10,000 baht but Pa Dang still sent money from time to time to my family."

She explained that she had to sell her daughter because she couldn't earn enough money to support her seven children. Sa-Ing added that another reason she had to give up Chantana was because of her daughter's mental illness. She said that her daughter often fled from home during the night and returned home very dirty. She tried to justify her decision to sell Chantana: "I had to send her away. How I could let her stay at home if she behaved like this?"

Some of the girls said in interviews that most customers prefer virgins for whom they are willing to pay between 1,500-2,000 baht for a night.

They said except for some clothing, food and medicine, they are given no money. The brothel owners keep all the earnings.

"Once in a while, some guests may give us some token tips," one of the girls said.

She said only the girls who have stayed long enough in the brothels to prove their "loyalty" are allowed to have home leaves.

From Mae Sai, many of the girls are sent to Bangkok and other provinces through established agents. Among the provinces when the girls usually end up are Songkhla, nakorn Sawan, Ayudhya and Samut Sakhon.

In most cases, the parents of the girls are not aware of what has happened to their daughters. They are simply told that their daughters are working as house maids or in factories.

Sometimes, the brothel owners send the parents money which they say are their daughters' wages. But the parents never know that the money is only a fraction of what their daughters have earned as prostitutes.

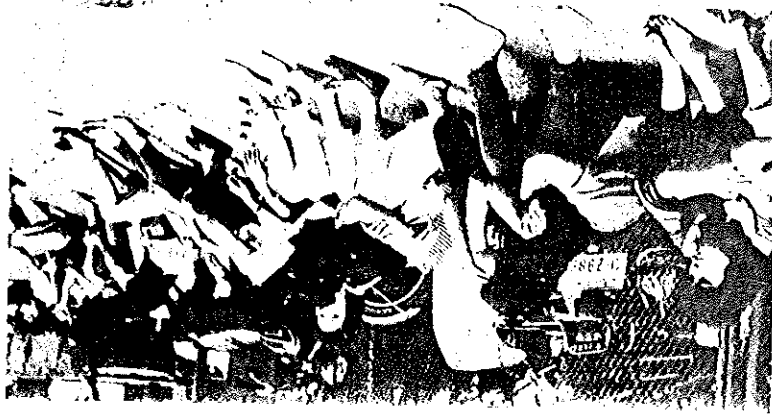
Chamlong Bunsong reported in The Nation that many young hilltribe girls from Burma have been brought into Thailand to work as prostitutes.

Call-girl purge nets 459

SOME 459 women were arrested and charged with prostitution after a crackdown on the callgirl business in Bang Sue District on February 8, 1985

Eleven others, allegedly pimps and brothel operators, were also charged in the two-hour operation in sois off Suthisarn Road which ended at 3 p.m. and involved 150 policemen.

Some of the girls caught in the Suthisarn crackdown. (below)



The above proposition is confirmed by the study that concluded most tourists visit Pattaya more than one time because they fall in love with call girls there.

The study ranks "to enjoy having sex with Thai girls" as the priority of foreign male tourists, while it ranks "to spend a holiday at the seaside", and "to enjoy the city's night life" as their second and third most important objectives in visiting Pattaya.

The researcher quoted an Australian man as saying "I love Pattaya, because it is real cheap to enjoy sex there. I really want to move the city to Australia."

A German tourist even said that the city should do its best to preserve its sexual activities. Moreover, he added, the city should launch a large-scale advertising campaign to introduce this sex heaven to people all over the world.

However, a Canadian said "Pattaya should be more meaningfully developed rather than just emphasizing sex and Thai girls. Those concerned should pay more attention to the development of local culture and its beautiful scenery. I believe Pattaya can survive without sex and girls."

Pattaya has grown so fast and unregulated that the slow-moving bureaucracy evidently cannot cope with the city's accumulating problems. For instance, the full-scale implementation of the waste water treatment project which needs a huge investment might hurt the existing businesses.

City planning is another deeprooted problem. An effort to limit the area for trade in vice in a "red light zone" will not restore the good image of the city.

Meanwhile, the complete elimination of such businesses might adversely effect the multimillion baht investment in tourist businesses.

It seems that little can be done to save Pattaya at the moment. Let the city be a lesson of past mistakes and let it be the only and the last tourist attraction site which has been destroyed by a huge private investment aiming only for maximum profit, and a fast growing but unplanned city development.

Many male tourists view Pattaya as 'sexual heaven'



NEARLY 50 per cent of foreign male tourists visiting Pattaya went there mostly because of its reputation for sensual pleasures, according to a study conducted by a private development organization.

In research conducted by Vachit Chansuriyawong of the Justice and Peace Commission for Development found that the eradication of the pleasure trade in Pattaya would seriously affect the economy of the city.

Evaluating the answers to questionnaires filled by 173 foreign male tourists, the researcher found that 42.76 per cent visited the seaside resort city because of its reputation for sex, while only 16.55 per cent stated that sex was not the main objective of their visit.

However, 40 per cent of the tourists declined to give the true purpose of their visit. One tourist said that sexual relationship with homosexuals was the attractiveness of Pattaya.

The finding indicates that the number of visits made by a tourist have a direct connection with his sexual fulfillment. That is, the more visits to Pattaya a tourist makes, the more emphasis he gives to the desire for sexual adventures.

BANGKOK 22 : A follow-up report on Communist suspects

CGRS has been monitoring the events and developments of the arrests of 22 communist suspects made in Bangkok in early July, 1984 for the benefit of those who are concerned about the Human Rights situation in Thailand. The HRTR published by CGRS (see Vol.8, No.3, July - December 1984) carried a rather objective report of the mass arrests which in itself could be served as reflection of the political climate in the country, at least for the duration of the historic trial.

Almost immediately after the mass arrests, many speculations were focused on the nature of the arrests and the possible results of the trial. However, the relatives of the suspects in custody were most anxious to see the accused be prosecuted in the court of law without prolonged investigations.

Whereas many concerned citizen have shown considerable interest in the trial and thus followed closely the treatment of suspects in custody awaiting prosecution in military court.

One case in point is the mother of Kavin Chutima, one of the suspects who were likely to be released on insufficient evidence, had filed a complaint against the delay in preparing the case on the part of the case officers. On January 3, 1985, Mrs. Krisana Chutima, Kavin's mother and Dean of Science Faculty at Kasetsart University in Bangkok, formally appointe Mr. Thongbai Thongpao to request the court to expedite the case and also ask the power of the court to pressure the Director-General of the police Department to reprimand the Commanding Officer of the Police Special Branch for prolonging the process of gathering evidence against her son.

According to the complaint, Mr. Kavin Chutima was arrested on July 3, 1985 and subsequently was detained as suspect at the Bangkok Prison for 30 days, but the police could not, for unknown reasons, sum-up the case for the Prosecutor's Office. As the result, the case officer requested a permission from

the Director-General of the Police Department to detain him for an extended period.

Kavin's case was not ready to be prosecuted in military court until August of 1984. During that time, Dr. Preecha Piemongsarn and Mongkol Yuthisingchai had already been released on temporary bails. It thus confirmed the completion of evidence-gathering process on part of the police, while Kavin was still in custody on similar charges. His father's request for bail was disappointed denied by the police claiming that Kabin was still under investigation.

It is interesting to note that around December of 1985, Police Maj. Gen. Daseem Saengmitr, the Case Officer in Chief, announced to the press that the investigation was completed and 14 of the 22 suspects would be prosecuted in court while 8 others could be arranged to enter the re-education programme as stipulated in the Executive Order No. 66/2523 issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

Kasem also disclosed that some of the suspects had already been granted temporary release on bails, such as Journalist Chatcharin Chaiwat and Former lecturer Mrs. Chonthira Satayawatana. Besides, 7 of the suspects were sent to re-education camp in Cholburi as expected earlier.

Kabin's father, Mr. Visuth thus made the second attempt to request for his son release on bail, but it was again denied without explanation from the police.

Kavin's parents complained that the prolong detainment of his son was unjustifiable and the delay in gathering evidence against their son was unfounded simply because the suspect had been detained for the total of 184 days. Thus the further detainment of the suspect is a clear case of violation of human rights.

As the result, the court accepted the complaint and consequently issued an order for the police to present Kavin Chutima to the court on January 30, 1985.



Kavin Chutima's account of conditions in detainment

Two days after his release on bail from detainment on January 10, 1985, Kavin Chutima disclosed to the press that living condition in Bangkok Jail was very miserable. During his 6 months or 191 days detainment, all the detainees had suffered from perpetual colds due to bad ventilation and lack of sun light in their cells. The suspects were never permitted to exercise outside their cells.

Throughout his stay in prison, he was given only one medical examination at the Police Hospital.

International Support from Abroad

On January 7, 1985, Mr. Emanuel Mah C. Gonzales, Secretary-General of Asian Students Association, sent an open letter to His Majesty Government stating that representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Singapore, Thailand and Yemen at the conference held in Khon Khaen Province on December 30, 1984 - 2, 1985, had passed a resolution on the roles of students in the region. The conference also concluded that there were some cases of violations of human rights in Thailand. The representatives therefore respectfully request the Thai government to allow more political freedom and respect the rights of the citizen to freedom of speech and political expression. The letter clearly stated that all political prisoners presently in Thai prisons should be set free, especially 22 Communist suspects and 6 Muslim students from Ramkhamhaeng University.

6 Suspects formally charged

Six Communist suspects, including three alleged senior members of the Communist party of Thailand (CPT), were formally charged in the Military Court on January 24, 1985, it was reported.

The six suspects are :-

- 1) Pirun Chatwanichkul
- 2) Manoj Methangkul
- 3) Prasong Arunsantiroj
- 4) Ransan Sae Chee
- 5) Sawat Anantpanyakul
- 6) Sa-nguan Thipsing

Pirun, Manoj and Prasong were alleged to be members of the central committee of the CPT.

The Military Court set February 1, 1985 for preliminary hearing of the case.

It was reported at that time that Pirun's wife Chonhira and Chatcharin would be released because of insufficient evidence against them.

Those who were expected to be set free on February 1, 1985 were :-

- 1) Suchit Yingkittasathavorn
- 2) Mrs. Aree Tarnthaleychon
- 3) Mrs. Pathum Tapainthong
- 4) Kavin Chutima
- 5) Mongkol Yuthisingchai
- 6) Saiyud Sapanst

Chatcharin, Mongkol and Chonhira were already free on bail at the time of the first appearance of the six in Military Court.

The other suspects who had been earlier been given 'conditional freedom' are :-

- 1) Dr. Preecha Piemongsarn
- 2) Mrs. Boonsong Arunsantiroj
- 3) Pradith Pakdeebamrung
- 4) Mrs. Surirat Viriyakul
- 5) Chuchai Arunsantiroj
- 6) Phibul Arunsantiroj
- 7) Prawing Uthaitaveep
- 8) Lert Chaichamorn

With the exception of Dr. Preecha, the other seven were sent to undergo a 're-education programme'.

Charges dropped For 8

On January 25, 1985, Human Rights Lawyer, Thongbai Thongpao disclosed to the press that the military prosecutor had decided to drop charge against the following suspects :-

- 1) Saiyud Sapanst
- 2) Mrs. Pathum Tapainthong

- 3) Mrs. Aree Tharnthaleychon
- 4) Suchit Yingkitsathavorn
- 5) Mrs. Chonthira Sattayawatana
- 6) DKavin Chutima
- 7) Charcharin chaivatt
- 8) Mongkol Vuhsingchai.

Six suspects denied charges

At their first hearing in Thai Military Court for February 1, 1985, all six of the Communist suspects formally denied all charges filed against them.

It was reported that the suspects were taken to court under specially tight security. With them at the court were Thongbai Thongpao and former political, Sukhum Saengprathum.

After they all pleaded innocent to the charges, the six suspect were taken back their cells at Bangkok.

The first hearing of the prosecution's case was then scheduled for March 15, 1985.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Chonthira and two other former Communist suspects, Mrs. Aree Tharnthaleychon and Suchit Yingkitsathavorn, asked the police to return belongings and 88,590 Baht in cash which were reportedly seized during their arrests.

Suspects urged discharge from charges

At their hearing on March 15, 1985, six suspects normally asked the Military Court to drop all charges against them and end the trial without further prosecution.

They said in the statement that the Military Court has no authority to try civilians and the trial is against the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights because it denies them the rights of appeal.

The defendants also denied charges that they had tried to overthrow the government and said they had always supported democracy under the monarchy.

The hearing was scheduled to hear charges against the suspects from 3 policemen but the hearing was postponed at the request of the prosecutor because two of the them failed to show up.

The new hearing was therefore set for May 22, 24, June 25, 27 and July 23, 25, 1985

The statement submitted by the suspects said that some of the charges against them were vague and were filed after the prescriptions of the offences had expired.

The defendants also questioned the circumstances surrounding the arrest which they said was made on unsubstantiated grounds. They said police investigators had also misled them into giving cooperation without a promise that they would not be prosecuted. They said the Military Court should drop all charges against them and end the trial as soon as possible.

At the court, the press was prohibited from taking pictures and taping the court session.

The four communist suspects, from left: Suchit Yingkitsathavorn, Mrs. Prathum Tapianthong, Mrs. Aree Tharnthaleychon, and Saiyud Sapanisit, stepping out into freedom at the Bangkok Police Training College.

Human Rights lawyer Thongbai Thongpao (for right) talks to the six communist suspects who were formally charged in the Military Court. The six are (from left) Pirun Charwanichkul, Sanguang Thipsing, Presong Arunsantiroj, Ransan Sae Chee, Sawat Anantpanyakul and Manoi Methangkul.

Communist suspect Pirun Charwanichkul (centre) with his wife Chonthira Sattayawatana and their baby outside the Military Court. Pirun is handcuffed to another defendant Ransan Sae Chee.

Student brutally beaten by teachers,

March 5, 1985, the most spiritual day for the Buddhists in Thailand where people flocked by thousands to the temples for religious rites at night, has become the day to mark for the brutality committed by teachers and a janitor of a school in Chaiyaphum Province.

According to the fact-finding report filed by the Human Rights Section of CGRS, the savaged incidence happened on the night of Makabucha when 2 students, Somchai Manotham, 15 and his schoolmate, Sonthaan, of Phrayatae School, returned from candle-light procession around the temple. On their way to their home, both teenage students were walking through the school ground when they were suddenly excited by loud noises from a drmktons party. Somchai and Sonthaya, out of curiosity, decided to have a closer look at what kind of celebration their teachers are having.

They found out soon enough that the Head Master and a group of teachers of their own school were all drunk and apparently were not happy about the appearance of the ill-fated students.

Before Somchai and Sonthaya could do or say anything to their respectable teachers, one of the teachers in the drinking party started to well at them: 'You two have come to steal again? He's catch them'

At once, the two students were attacked by the whole group of drunken teachers and one janitor. Somchai was brutally beaten with a piece of wood, punched and kicked until become unconscious, while Sonthaya was fortunate enough to escape severe injuries. He ran for his life and managed to hide behind the nearby bush under the cover of darkness.

He witnessed the whole act of savage beatings, the attackers, 8 teachers and 1 janitor beat up his friend till he dropped to the school ground. When the teachers were certain that Somchai had passed out, they ordered the janitor to fetch some water and pouring some water into Somchai's mouth and irrowed it to his body.



When Somchai became conscious again, he was forced to confess that he came to the school ground at night with an intention to steal some property. Moreover, he was threatened that if he told his parents of the beatings, he would definitely be expelled from the school or even killed.

Later on, when Somchai was taken to the provincial hospital by his father, they were coldly received by a nurse working at the hospital, who happened to be the Head Master's sister. She told Somchai's relatives that his condition was not at all serious and they has nothing to worry about, because the patient just suffered some minor injuries. In fact, Somchai was, at the time, still unconscious.

With such encounter, Somchai's relatives then decided immediately that the patient should be much better treated at other hospital. They had to make a long trip from Chaiyaphum Provincial Hospital to admit Somchai in another provincial hospital in Nakhon Rajchasisima.

The result of medical examination issued by the physician at the Rajchasisima Provincial Hospital on March 7, 1985, showed that he suffered some skull fractures, blood-clog in his brain resulted from being hit with hard object, and become paralysed on one side of the body.

After the incidence, Somchai's fat had made some attempts to report the beatings to the local

police in Chaiyaphum. He tried repeatedly to file a complaint with the police 5 times, but he could not find any policeman to register his complaint officially. No one seemed to be willing to hear his complaint at the local police station. This could be only explained by the fact that many of the local police officers were known to be friends and were on good terms with the Head Master of the school.

With all avenues to the court of justice was blocked to them, Somchai's relatives has no alternative but to file a complaint to the central administration of the police force in Bangkok, the capital city. The matter was registered at the Crime Suppression Unit of the Police Department eventually.

It is also important to note that 2 days after the beatings took place, Somchai's friend and the only witness to the incidence, went to the school as usual. He was immediately summoned by the teachers and interrogated by a group of teachers.

Sonthaya was slapped in the head during the interrogation, was coerced to answer any questions for tape-recording. Finally he was forced to sign a confession admitting that he was one of the their gang and was caught during the attempt to steal some property from school on the night of the incidence.

Sonthaya was so afraid to go to school ever since.

Now Somchai's condition is out of critical stage. The physician has released him from the hospital and allowed to return home for recuperation among his parents and relatives. However, the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society or CGRS, Centre for Children Protection, Children Foundation and other concerned human rights groups have jointly decided to provide necessary aid to the legal action of the case.

Hopefully, our next issue may have some goods news and developments for our readers.

Police Brutality : Suspect beaten to death in custody

On April 2, 1985, the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society or CGRS was informed by Mrs. Thavee Sawaddi, a resident of Chachergsao Province that her son had been arrested and later was found dead in the cell of the police station.

According to Mrs. Thavee Sawaddi's story, the tragic incidence occurred around 02.00 am. of January 24, 1985 when a group of 5 uniformed came to her house and arrested her son, Pairoj Sae Ung, on robbery charge.

At the time of the arrest, the policemen accused Pairoj of an alleged crime supposedly committed on September 1984 at about 07.00 am. In fact, said Mrs. Thavee, Piroj was still at Thanyaburi Hospital in Pathumthani Province. To be exact, Pairoj was released from the said hospital at 09.00. Therefore, in her opinion, it was impossible for her son to commit or even become involved in such a robbery in the home province, Mrs. Thavee said.

On January 25, 1985, Mrs. Thavee went to visit his son at the police station. By that time, Pairoj was not able to stand up straight to greet his mother. We was clearly in great physical pain. Pairoj had to lift himself up from the cell floor with painful effort. The iron bars were his support throughout the brief conversation with his mother standing on the other side of the bars.

The first words came from her son was 'Mother, the whole inside of my body is in miserable pain, because the policemen have beaten me up badly'.

The conversation was cut short by the police guarding the cell who overheard the complaint from Pairoj. He hurriedly chased Mrs. Thavee away from the visiting area, saying that the visiting time was over. The same policeman also yelled at Pairoj to go back to his inner cell at once.

Despite the harsh words from the cell guard, Pairoj, before forcing his weak body back to the inner cell, shouted out to his mother that the policemen who had beaten him up were Policemen Somkiat (last name unidentified) and Chumpol Silapanava.



The next morning of January 26, 1985, Pairoj Sae Ung was announced death by the police. The police claimed that the suspect had hanged himself in the cell.

When the suspect's relatives went to the hospital to identify the body, they were surprised to find that pairoj's body did not appear like someone who had hanged himself. Pairoj's relatives, however, saw some traces of beatings on his body: his left eye-brow was deeply cut, some clearly visible bruises appeared on his abdomen as well as the back waist, especially, there appeared some red marks around his neck, a possible sign of strange and violent struggle on the part of the victim.

At present, Pairoj's mother, Mrs. Thavee is still preserving his son's body pending for further investigation and as evidence of injustice done wrongly to her son under the custody of the police. She has determined to take the matter to the court of law with strong belief that justice will prevail.

Due to the fact that the mother of the victim is not in a financial position to pay for all necessary expenses in taking legal action, CGRS has deemed it appropriate to assist Mrs. Thavee Sawaddi by procuring her with lawyers to handle the case in the court of justice.

Further development on the case shall be reported in our next issue.

Eviction of Nakhonsawan Villagers

Follow-up Report on

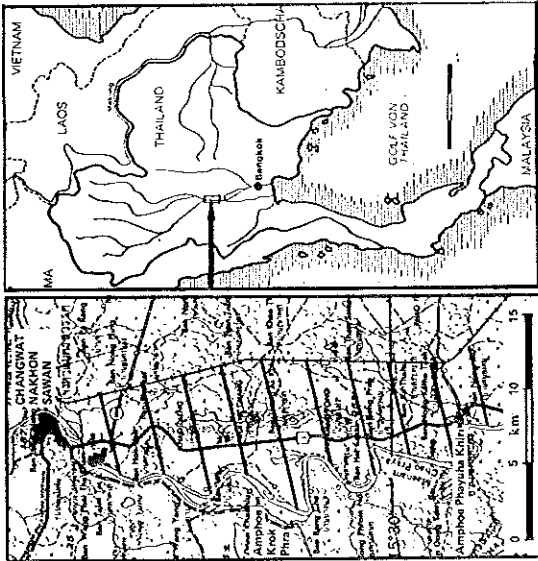
The struggle for the rightful ownership of the cultivated 23,712 acres of land in Nakhonsawan Province has been waged with increasing intensity amid many confusions about the legality of the Royal Thai Army's attempt to evict 42,300 villagers off their land which has been occupied for more than two centuries by their ancestors.

CGRS has become more and more concerned about the explosive potential of the issue, due to the fact that land is the only property that the poor villagers have proudly called their very own. Their dignity and their survival depends on their ownership of the land. If their last and almost sacred land is taken away from them, who would be responsible for their existence.

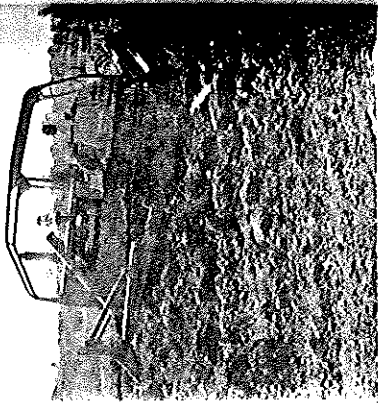
Human Rights in Thailand Report (HRTR) Vol. 8 No.2, April - June 1984 published by CGRS reported a detail account of the situation from the start of the conflict in 1983. However, the situation in the disputed land is still very much the subject of discussions, among villagers themselves, academics and concerned individuals, possible with no peaceful settlement and/or legal ground for negotiation in immediate future, many suggestions have been offered by concerned lawyers and well-wishers that a legal settlement may be the best answer to the whole situation.

The main legal point, as proposed by legal advisers, seems to center around the content of the 1936 Royal Decree of which the military claims to the right to the disputed land.

Consequently, a public seminar was then organized by CGRS with kind cooperation from a number of concerned scholars and lawyers. Invitations were extended to selected



Latest Developments



lawyers reputable for their expertise and experiences in cases of land dispute, legal historians, well-informed politicians, judges and social activists.

At the seminar, the content and the logics behind the promulgation of the Royal Decree in 1936 were discussed with an intention of finding some alternatives to the problem.

The seminar concluded that the villagers who actually cultivated the land prior to 1936, provided that they can produce proper evidence of their lawful occupation of the land, should have the right to ownership and should be allowed to continue their ownership as interpreted from the 1936 Royal Decree.

CGRS shall earnestly present the various suggestions to the answer to the problem to Royal Thai Government. It is our best intention to urge the government to take appropriate course of action without delay.

Some agencies under the Department of Land Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, were reported to have made announcements that the Army has transfer a token 5 Acres of land to the Ministry to build a Soil research Centre for Agriculture.

The problem is that this plot of land has been occupied by 10 families of villagers for many years. The area is part of Krok Phra District of Nakhonsawan Province. It was reported that since March 12, 1985 up till now, the Water-Ways Station Master, Kamol Sawanmook, had ordered his subordinates to trespass the property of 10 said families. his methods were transporting and loading down various kinds of building mater als into privately-owned land, bulldozed the cultivated plot to prepare for road-building, thus heavy damage were done to the crops belonging to the farmers. The officials were acting without any respect for the right of ownership of the private citizen, particularly their ownership of the growing produces in the plots.

The point to consider about this act of trespassing is the trespassed land was still in dispute and court decision had not been handed down at the time. No juristral judgement was ever passed to the government or its agency to claim the right to build road and destory private property in the process.

CGRS thus deems it necessary, based on our principle of solving conflict with peaceful means, to assist the villagers with basic fees for the lawyers, so that this matter could be settled peacefully in the court of justice.

CGRS shall keep all concerned individuals and organizations well-informed of the developments in the next issue of HRTTR.

Officer accused of murder spree

A HIGHWAY police officer and another man has been charged with a series of murders after they were arrested with a big arms cache, including war weapons, in Chachoengsao on January 4, 1985.

The two men, Lt Viroj Kripanich of the Highway Police in Prachin Buri, and Sommut Jinda, 50, were presented to the Press at the Crime Suppression Division police headquarters.

Police also displayed the firearms seized from the two, who police allege were professional gunmen responsible for a series of killings in Chachoengsao and other provinces.

The two were arrested by a special task force set up to investigate a spate of killings last year by gunmen using war weapons.

Police said they arrested Sommut on the Chachoengsao-Krabin Buri highway following a tip-off and found an 11 mm automatic pistol on him with a spare clip. They later arrested Pol Lt Viroj at a house in Chachoengsao's Phanom Sarakhom District the same evening and found an HK33 assault rifle, a .357 mm pistol and a .38 mm pistol, two shotguns and ammunition for the weapons in the house.

The two were charged with six murders in Chachoengsao, including the killing of Thongpai Putsuek and his wife Mrs. Chamnong in Samachai Ket District, Hoke (surname unknown) who was shot and then burned with car tyres in Phanom Sarakhom District, Mr. Tem Premchai and his wife in Phanom Sarakhom District, and Mr. Samorn Penprapha of the same district on December 9 last year.

Police said Pol Lt Viroj and Sommut were also implicated in a number of other killings in various provinces and asked those who could provide evidence to contact the police.

30 January 1985

An Open Letter to his Excellency, Javier Perez de Cuellar Secretary General, United Nations

SUBJECT : THAILAND PEACE '85 PROGRAM

On behalf of the academic and non-governmental organizations in Thailand, we wish to welcome you to the Kingdom of Thailand. We also wish to thank you for taking the time to look at the calamity befalling our brother and sister Asians in Southeast Asia for a good number of years.

We are a group of Thais from private development agencies, such as public health organizations; professional organizations such as the Social Science Association of Thailand and the Federation of Thai Students, and concerned individuals from various religious persuasions. We are planning a program called "Thailand Peace '85" to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki atomic catastrophe. To remind the citizens of the world about such brutal events is essential if we want to come to term with the present threat of nuclear war. Humankind cannot afford to experience another Hiroshima-Nagasaki. The destruction brought upon the Japanese by atomic bombs have left an ugly scar on human conscience. Today with a higher level of technological sophistication, the threat of nuclear war becomes even more terrifying.

As alva Myrdal has put it succinctly in her Noble Prize Address in late December 1982 in Oslo:

"The longing for peace is rooted in the hearts of all men. But the striving, which at present has become so insistent, cannot lay claim to leading the way too eternal peace, or solving all disputes among nations, so strong are the economic and political roots. Nor can it create a lasting state of harmonious understanding between men. Our immediate striving must be aimed at preventing what, in the present situation, is the greatest threat to the very survival of mankind, the nuclear threat."

We wish to create and expand the Thais' understanding of the nuclear problems through raising public consciousness for the respect of human lives, humanity as well as the right to life of all living-beings. Unfortunately, people in the Third World share belief that the nuclear threat is still a remote problem that is far less pressing than immediate problems such as poverty, social injustices and dictatorial curtailment of human freedom. But it is our contention that only by seeing the nuclear danger as the logical conclusion of a world nurtured by a belief in violence as the solution for world problems can the public be sufficiently informed and their desire for world peace be raised meaningfully. In fact, if a nuclear war does occur, as several highly respected scientists in the west believe it would before the end of this century, the people of the Third World cannot escape its destructive consequences.

Therefore, Thailand Peace '85 Program is designed to inform the public about the facts and figures as well as the consequences of the nuclear threat through the use of mass media. Activities such as academic seminar, movies for peace and peace concerts are being organized. This is a modest attempt to join hands with the international movement spearheaded by the U.N. Disarmament Program itself in the hope that our concerted efforts will put an end to the present arms race and improve the quality of life on this small planet.

Through this joint effort it is earnestly hope that the prospect for world peace is also enhanced.

In this difficult time, we would very much appreciate your support in any form. The road to peace is not paved by rose petals but it is our firm conviction that "There is no way to Peace, Peace is the WAY".

(.....)

On Behalf of Organizing Committee for Thailand Peace '85 Program Kothorn Arya, Coordinating Group for Religion in Society, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Subcommittee on Peace and Human Rights, Ministry of Education, Surin Pitsuwan, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, John Ungpakorn, Thai Volunteer Service, Chartchai Akaramanee, Students Federation of Thailand.



THAILAND

THAILAND PEACE '85

(40th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Catastrophe)

On August 6, 1945, the world was stunned by the 1st horror of atomic destruction of the city of Hiroshima. Only 3 days later, another atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki.

Though some historians have tried to justify the decision for bombing those two targets as an effective measure to end the war in 1945, this has not, however, altered the fact that the history of mankind has never recorded a more senseless destruction and the people of the whole world have never experienced such a threat to world peace.

From that point on, the world entered a new area of proliferation of nuclear war-heads for missiles and other weapons. The limits of destruction have gone through both qualitative and quantitative changes.

Up till now, not only the most advanced industrialised nations possess such nuclear armaments, but also some relatively poorer nations of the 3rd world have justified having weapons in their arsenal. As a result more than 40,000 nuclear war-heads and missiles have been produced and deployed for possible use in military conflicts and/or political crises. The destructive power of this nuclear stockpile is equal to 1 million times the 1st atomic bomb exploded on Hiroshima in 1945. It is a known fact that this stockpile of nuclear weaponry can destroy this human world 50 times over.

Under the imminent threat of the total destruction of the whole of civilization, it is necessary for all of mankind to be aware of the greatest threat from the nuclear arms race. It is only then logical for all to alter the man-made course to destruction created by the greatest war-mongers in history, so that real world peace may prevail.

This task could not be carried out by just one people of one nation, but is the responsibility of the people of the world. It is time for all peace-loving people including the Thai people to come together as one people under the peace banner.

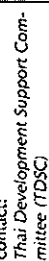


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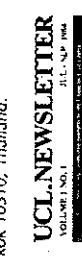


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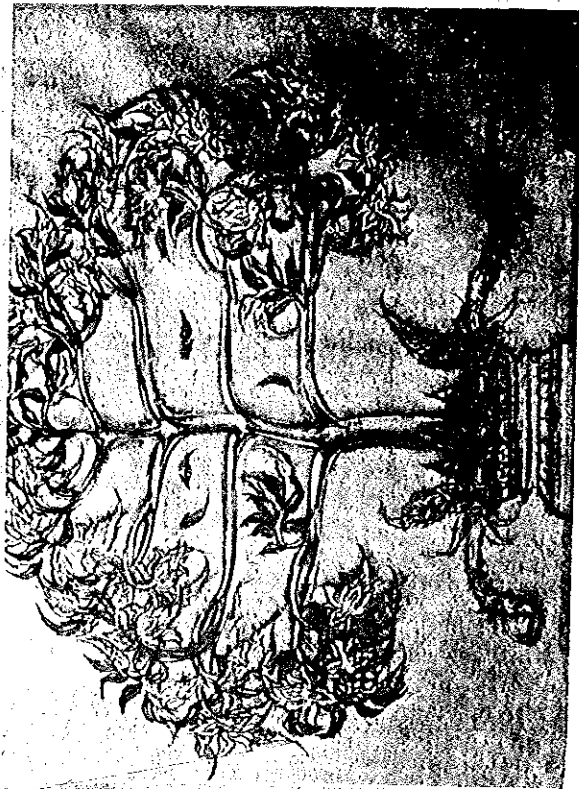
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