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Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS)

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# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT

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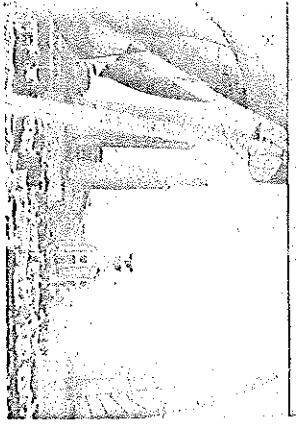


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OCTOBER 14th DEMOCRATIC UPRISING REMEMBERED!



(caption) Students and workers with banners proclaiming messages in commemoration of the October 14th Uprising rallying at the Democracy Monument.

More than 1,000 people on October 13th 1985, joined a march from Thammasart University to the Democracy Monument in remembrance of the October 14th Uprising in which a student-led demonstration overthrew the repressive Thanasornprasit Government 12 years ago.

Wreaths were laid at Kok Wua intersection on Rajdamnern Road in a ceremony presided over by House Speaker Uthai Pimchaisanon. Kok Wua intersection was the scene of bloody fighting between students, the police and soldiers on October 13th, 1973. Representatives from various human rights organizations and activist groups joined in the traditional march. Representing the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS), Dr Gotham Arya gave a commemorative speech at the site of proposed monument for the October 14 March.

Students, formal activists, relatives of the October 14th heroes, trade unionists, intellectuals and human rights activists including all democratic-loving people at the commemorative ceremony paid their respect for those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and democracy with one moment of silence.

Hundred of wreaths were laid in front of the monument site which has been ignored by the Thai government for 12 years. Students, formal activists, relatives of the October 14th heroes, trade unionists, intellectuals and human rights activists including all democratic-loving people at the commemorative ceremony paid their respect for those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and democracy with one moment of silence.



(Caption) Rain-soaked demonstrators march along Rajdamnern Road with wreaths which they later laid at Kok Wua intersection.

Later in the afternoon, the Thammasart Students Union organized a panel discussion on "Coup d'etat and Authoritarianism in Thai Politics" at Thammasart University

where exhibitions on the historical event were also held.

A religious ceremony was held earlier in the morning in the campus for relatives and friends of the martyrs who died in the uprising.

In the evening, stage performances and musical concert were part of the annual activities to remember the historical event.

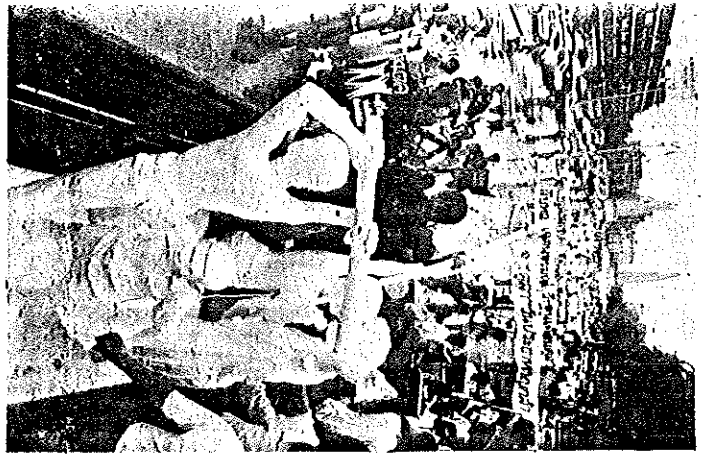
Panel discussions on related issues were also held throughout the 2-day event. A special discussion was open for the general public at the main function hall about peace and democracy. Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa and other distinguished speakers were the highlight of the evening of October 14th, 1985.

It is well unfortunate that the commemoration of the October 14th Uprising has never been officially recognized by the government.

GOVERNMENT URGED TO DECLARE OCTOBER 14 A PUBLIC HOLIDAY

A student activist of Bangkok University of October 14th, 1985 called on the Thai government to declare October 14th of every year a public holiday.

The student, identifying himself as Mr. Sakdumrungs Krittthong, said in a letter addressed to Premier Prem Tinsulanonda that Oct 14th, 1973 was a historical day which saw a significant political change when the student-led demonstration overthrew the repressive regime of Thanom-Prasit.



(caption) Photo shows students with statue built in honour of the October 14th heroes and heroines during the historical march from Thammasart U. to the Democracy Monument.

He said the premier should ask the Cabinet to consider declaring Oct 14th of every year a public holiday in remembrance of the day.

Exaggerating also attached a photo copy of an article in the Bangkok-based student bulletin which quoted House Speaker Uthai Pimchaisanon as telling a student rally at the university on Oct 1 that Oct 14th should be considered an important national day. He was also quoted as urging the students to ask the government to declare it a public holiday.



Question Suspected Bangkok member Tadachi, left, in front of Thai consulates in Bangkok, Thailand, is one of the suspects in the alleged Thai crime syndicate. He is alleged to have been arrested after his arrest by the Crime Syndicate Division.

**ALLEGED 'YAKUZA' MEMBER  
ARRESTED BY THAI POLICE:**

On September 4, 1985, Bangkok police arrested a Japanese suspected of being a member of Japan's largest organized-crime syndicate for allegedly recruiting Thai women to become prostitutes in his country.

The Japanese, identified as Takano Tadachi, 38, was arrested at the departure lounge of Don Muang Airport with four Thai girls whom he had allegedly recruited.

The arrest of Tadachi, who is said to be a member of Yakuza, the reputed Japanese organized crime racket, came after a long investigation by the Crime Syndicate Division (CSD).

The CSD police said Tadachi was waiting for a China Airlines flight to Japan when he was apprehended. The police disclosed to the press that they had received reports from the Foreign Ministry that many Thai women had been recruited by Yakuza members to work in Japan. The girls were reportedly promised high income but they ended up working as prostitutes. Some of the Thai girls were able

to escape and sought help from the Thai consulate in Japan.

The girls were quoted as saying that once they arrived in Japan their passports and air tickets would be confiscated to prevent them from escaping. They said many girls were physically assaulted when they refused to follow orders.

Though the Yakuza has been luring Thai girls into prostitution in Japan for many years, this is the first time that a suspected member of the crime syndicate was arrested.

Tadachi, who arrived in Bangkok on August 26 and stayed at Srikrung Hotel near Hualampong railway station, is charged with bringing Thai women out of the country for prostitution, organizing prostitution through intimidations and deceptions, and operating job service without permission.

Tadachi was holding a tourist passport when he was arrested at the airport. His arrest came as the purported leader of the gang appeared in federal court in Honolulu, Hawaii, to face drug, firearms and murder-for-hire charges. Yakuza is a Mafia-like crime syndicate. It is involved in illegal gambling, prostitution, loan sharking and other illegal activities in Japan. The word Yakuza means worthless or useless. Its members have also been

reportedly recruiting girls in South Korea and the Philippines for prostitution in Japan. Yakuza members cut off their little fingers to atone for blunders and extensively tattoo their bodies to prove commitment to the group.



**SUSPECT ARRESTED FOR RAPING  
3-YEAR-OLD GIRL:**

On September 2, 1985, Bangkok police held a 16-year-old boy suspected of raping and murdering a three-year-old girl in Thailand on August 30, 1985.

Pasicharn police indicted the suspect as Suvicharn Yotha, who makes his living as a scavenger.

Suvicharn admitted that he had raped the girl, Nuang Litagarn, before murdering her. He

CITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN AGAINST GARLAND CHILDREN

On September 1, Metropolitan Police launched a city-wide campaign at 36 major intersections to ban children selling garlands, newspapers and other items on city streets. But no arrests were made.

As one of the measures to warn the hawkers on the streets, loudspeakers were installed at major intersections in the initial stage of campaign which was designed to keep young children and young adults, mostly from slum areas off the streets and intersections. The campaign was also aimed at persuading motorists to buy garlands and newspapers at gas stations and other places designated by the Metropolitan Police. According to the authorities, the children would be safer if they would sell their garlands and newspapers at the gas stations instead.

"Both vendors and buyers will be liable to punishment in accordance with the traffic law," said Metropolitan Police Commissioner Pol. Maj. Gen. Sawang Phitrasawat.

During the period of August 10-30, the Metropolitan Police launched a public relations campaign warning that such selling is against the law and that the authorities would move from lenient measures to tough ones.

Vice Adm. Sanong Nisarak, Chairman of a House Committee on solving the problem of children selling garlands on streets, said on August 30, that the committee and the House of Representatives unanimously resolved that the ban should be enforced without arrests for the first phase. He also said that whether arrests would be made or not depends on the executive branch-meaning the police authorities under the Ministry of Interior.

When the suspect was taken by the police to the scene of the crime for remembrance of the case and murder on September 3, he was threatened by an angry mob of citizens in the neighbourhood.

After the first 12 days of attention pending the investigation of the local police, Siracharn was taken to the court on September 6th, 1965. The court subsequently granted

A permission for the local police to keep him in custody for another 12 days for investigation reasons.

According to the police, they were planning to drop his 12-year-old parents.

It was reported that the police officers, assistants, had no objection to the extension of the detention.

"We do not encourage the authorities to arrest the street vendors and we believe that if the authorities launch effective PR campaigns, tough measures will not be necessary. But we could not afford to ignore the problem because we are concerned about the future of the children selling garlands on streets instead of receiving an education," he said.

He said that he was sympathetic with poor people who are driven to make their children help them earn income by street vending. But poor people should not violate the law, he added.

As the result, Traffic Police and officials from Children and Juvenile Welfare Department were ordered to cooperate in the campaign.

However, Police disclosed later that children ignoring the warnings of police officials posted at intersections had been taken to police stations and held there until their parents came to take them home. It was reported that no fine were required as a gesture of leniency at this stage of campaign.

Some officials in the Police Department disclosed that they did not want to apply tough measures which would further aggravate the economic hardships of poor parents or may drive them to resort to crimes.

It is interesting to note that on August 29, it was reported in the local press that about 500 street vendors, mostly teenagers and their parents, staged a protest rally in front of the Government House to protest the order banning them from street intersections.

The demonstration came after they had met earlier in the same morning with Deputy Police Director General Pol Lt Gen Sunwan Rattasachuen at the Police Department.

It was reported that the meeting failed to satisfy the vendors and ended with a shouting match.

The Police insisted that the vendors sell their goods only on street pavements so that they would not risk their lives on the streets. Policemen must be assigned to major street intersections as planned to keep out the young vendors, Sunwan said.

The vendors, however, were dissatisfied and started shouting at him. They later marched to the Government House to air their grievance with Prime Minister Prem Uthulalanonda.

The vendors dispersed only after being told by an official at the Government House that an answer to their problem would be given in one month.

NUMBER OF JOBLESS UP  
200,000 YEARLY

The number of unemployed in Thailand is going up by an average of about 200,000 people annually, Labour Director-General Ohamarn Potchana disclosed recently.

In his interview with the local press on September 1, Ohamarn Potchana said that the number excludes another 160,000 seasonal unemployed people from the agricultural sector and new graduates.

He said there are currently about 1.6 million unemployed in Thailand. They include 50,000 university graduates and 120,000 graduates of vocational schools.

The Labour Director-General said earlier that the unemployment problem will worsen this year with another 34,000 workers expected to be laid off by financially troubled factories. Most will be in the textile and electric and electronic product industries.

Meanwhile, the Labour Department has been working on plans to absorb Thai workers who will return from the Middle East where their work contracts are beginning to expire and the current major construction projects nearing completion.

An informed source said the recent return of workers is not a major trouble as some can extend their employment contracts while others can still survive on their savings. The only significant influx of returned workers was caused by the Iran-Iraq war.

According to the source, the long-term measures to cope with returned workers are included in the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan. These measures contain the issues of overseas Thai labour market development, skills development, personnel resource application and probably the most highlighted ones, plan to support returned workers as well as public relations plan to prevent cheating of workers by job placement agencies.

Cheating of workers by job placement agencies, many of them are not registered legally with the Labour Department, are wide spread and reported frequently in local press. Many of the disputes between workers and the agencies have ended up with violent crimes.

Irregularities in overseas job placements and contracts are often found with illegal agencies which aim to take advantages of workers with very little educa-

tion or semi-literate from the countryside. The majority of these workers are naturally from the North-Eastern region. It is a known fact that many of the workers had to mortgage their family plot of land to pay for agency fee and various charges ranging from Passport Application Forms, Medical Certificates as well as other necessary documents required by laws.

Pending their hope on high wages in the Middle East, these poor workers are willing to jeopardise their savings and everything under their names for a placement in Arab countries.

It is understandable that when they are cheated by the exploiting agencies, they would react with rage and violence. It has been often reported in the press that groups of workers were denied their exit at Bangkok International Airport because their agents did not show up at the airport with their tickets, passports, etc. Those who have made it to the destined countries are considered the lucky ones even though the actual wages they are paid is not as high as they thought it would be. Due to certain deductions made by their employers in the Middle East, the wages stipulated in their original contracts signed in Bangkok.

It would be very challenging for concerned organization on the plight of these workers to conduct some extensive studies about the irregularities in the placement contracts and other illegal practices on the part of the job placement agencies as well as the sufferings of these workers.

CGRS would like to see some effective measures issued by the law enforcement agencies to deal with the situation.



CHILDREN PAINT AS CROWD FIGHTS FOR DONATIONS!  
Givers give up on giveaway of goods.

On September 7, 1983, more than 3,000 people flocked to Than Fah Hospital in Chinatown to receive Giveaway items, an annual event organized by the hospital foundation. A team of police and military police was deployed to regulate the

crowd, which kept pressing to gain entry to the hospital, and it was feared that another stampede, like the one that marred a similar event last year, might occur.

It remains clear in the public memory that many children were crushed to death early last year when an unregulated crowd trampled them in the rush to force their way into a foundation building in Thonburi.

A large crowd began to form at the entrance to the hospital in early afternoon. They came from various slums in Bangkok, Saphan Kwai and Chinatown areas.

The foundation had only 300 bags of rice and other edible items. After handing out the items for one hour, the number of people kept growing and the event had to be halted.

Those expecting to receive the free items brought small children with them so that they could get more. Deputy Manager of the foundation Sujin Kantabavorn said that the foundation wanted to hand out the items against presentation of house registration certificates. But many people came back many times to get more items.

The team of 30 police and military police was unable to regulate the crowd.

#### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SEEKS RELEASE OF THAI PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organization, has launched a campaign to seek the release of a former Thai activist who is being jailed for lese Majesty.

AI said in the July issue of its monthly newsletter that Samarn Kongsuphon, a former activist of the Democracy Federation of Thailand, and two others were tried under martial law provisions and a court constituted as a military tribunal, which allowed no right to appeal.

Samarn Kongsuphon was sentenced to eight years in prison in December 1983 and his co-defendants to two years each after their arrest in July the same year.

The three were adopted as "Prisoners of Conscience" by AI which urged world-wide appeals for their "immediate, unconditional release."

Samarn Kongsuphon and the two others were accused of printing and disseminating a critical history of the Royal Family.

AI said their access to legal counsel was reportedly restricted both before and during the trial which was held in camera.

#### The Democracy Federation of Thailand

is an organization of students, intellectuals, trade unionists and others whose programme opposed military dominance over the Thai political process, according to the newsletter.

#### ABUSES OF POWER IN NORTHEAST WORRY ARMY

Abuses of power by government authorities have become a source of major problems facing many provinces in the Northeast, a senior army official said.

According to the report published in the Nation on July 20, 1985, the source said these abuses are hindering the government's attempts to remove unjust conditions affecting national security.

Chief of the Civilian Affairs of the Second Army Region Col Prasong Huadprapai said the army received 318 cases of alleged abuses of power by government authorities in the region in the first six months of this year.

He said Commander of the Second Army Region Lt Gen Pisit He-mabutr is worried by the trend and has ordered an investigation into the matter.

"Several Kammas and village headmen have already been fired because of this", he said.

He singled out policemen and some prosecution officials as being among authorities who were accused of abuses of power.

It is interesting to note that the Government is apparently concerned by abuses of power by authorities since they were once a cause for the growth of communist insurgency.

Col Prasong said during the first six months of this year, the regional army also received 317 complaints about harassments by influential people and 113 about forest encroachments.

#### CLEMENCY PLANNED FOR 30,000 INMATES IN 1987

About 30,000 prisoners nation-wide are expected to be granted clemency on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's birthday in 1987, a well-informed source in the Interior Ministry said on August 11, 1985.

It was disclosed that the proposed clemency was planned before the riot at Bangkok maximum security prison on August 4th.

"It has nothing to do with the incident because it has long been planned in advance," the source said.

According to the source, about 10,000 inmates are expected

to be released as a result of the clemency.

He said the 30,000 inmates to be granted clemency are those with proven good conduct. They are categorized as inmates with conduct ranging from "fair" to "excellent".

The source said that the authorities concerned are now in the process of compiling the list of inmates eligible for clemency.

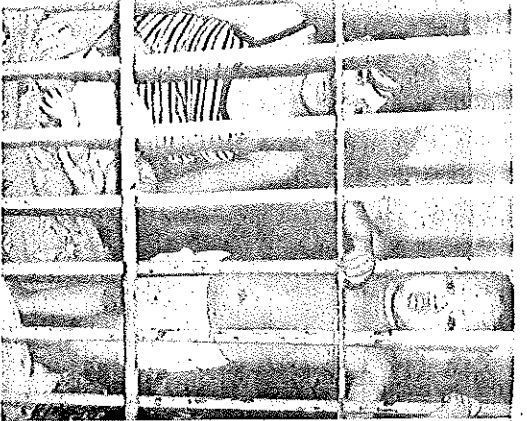
The same source also disclosed that three months before the riot at Bangkok prison, about 1,000 inmates there were relocated elsewhere.

He said currently there are 87,312 prisoners throughout the country. By 1987, the number is expected to rise to 90,000, he said.

The source said an average of 30,000 inmates annually have their status upgraded as having "fair conduct".

There are now about 50,000 inmates who are described as having fair to excellent conduct, he said.

#### ANGUISH BEHIND BARS:



For three long months, a young mother had to pay for the crime she had committed with not only with her own freedom, but also with that of her two young children.

Nit Puangrua, 19, was arrested in July this year with 3 packages of marijuana she was peddling among workers in Prachuab area in Nonthaburi. The

following month, she was sentenced to one year in jail or a fine of 20,000 baht (750 US Dollars).

Being poor, Nit opted for the first option and for more than two months she and her young children had to stay behind bars at the local police station in Pakkred District.

She has four children but two of them were too young to be left alone.

The two kids, one three years old and the other three months, had no place to go and no one to look after them. The cell at the police station suddenly became their home.

Chief of the police station Pol Lt Col Arun Narksen told the local press that the younger baby needed to be breastfed daily. "We give the kids some candies out of pity," he said.

He said the mother and her children were allowed to take a stroll around the police station daily.

Nit, the mother, said she was arrested only three days after she had given birth. "I simply had no money. Someone gave me three packages of marijuana and told me to sell them," she recalled.

She said her husband was also arrested on the same charge in mid-September.

Her elder son, Rang, was suffering from serious skin disease because of mosquito bites. The mosquito bites were evident on his forehead.

"The police arrested my mum. I want to go home with my mum," Rang cried.

Soon after the news of their ordeal was printed in the local press, two brothers, both lawyers, paid the fine of 20,000 Bahts with their own money in exchange for Nit and her children's freedom.

#### 340,000 CHILDREN IN NON-FARM WORKFORCE.

More than 340,000 children are working in factories and households in Thailand. About twenty-five percent of them are employed in Bangkok.

The children's ages range from 11 to 15, according to a report based on a seminar organized by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The results of the seminar will be used to set the guidelines on solving unemployment in the Sixty Economic and Social Development Plan.

The report says that about 70,000 of 340,613 children workers told in Bangkok and the other provinces. Of those 53,154 work in Bangkok.

Two-thirds of the children work in households, while the other third work in various factories, according to the report.

Sixty-four percent of the children workers come from north-eastern provinces such as Si Sa Ket, Buriram and Surin, the report says.

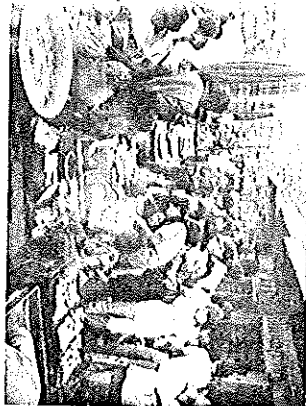
"There are more girls than boys in the children workforce, which proves that girls are by custom and tradition supposed to be heavily indebted. Income earned by the children are an indispensable source of revenue for the families, according to the report."

It says that most of the children work in sub-standard conditions: factories are overcrowded, wages exceptionally low and they work more than eight hours a day.

Most of the children interviewed in their homes appeared to be afraid that their employers would trace them down because they returned to their home villages before their employment contracts expired, according to the

P.T.O.

CITY TO ALLOW VENDING STALLS UNDER TIGHTER REGULATIONS



City officials have decided to adopt a compromise approach towards street vendors by planning to allow them to set up stalls on street pavements under certain conditions, a senior official of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) disclosed it on July 28, 1985.

Director of the City Police Department Paisal Chaimongkol said each of the 24 districts had been instructed to study the locations where the vendors can do their business.

He said the vendors will be allowed to sell on street pavements at certain times of the day and there will also a restriction on the types of goods they can sell. "They will also be required to maintain cleanliness," he said.

The compromise approach was adopted after many vendors com-

plained that they could not do business at places set aside for them by the BMA, he said. The same official disclosed that so far about 4,000 - 5,000 vendors have been moved into places, including those privately-owned, especially provided for them by the BMA.

It was, however, reported that many of the vendors are not happy with the locations which they claim are not good for business.

He said the new approach can start when all the districts make recommendations about the spots on street pavements where the vendors will be permitted to set up stalls.



(Caption) An angry vendor holding his son who suffered serious body burns after falling into a pan with boiling oil recently, hurls angry words at police officers during the meeting at the Police Department.

Paisal quoted the latest figures supplied by the 24 districts as showing that as of April this year there were 11,147 vendors with Phra Nakhon district topping the list with 3,430 vendors.

About half of the vendors, he said, come from neighbouring provinces to sell agricultural produce. The provinces, where most of them commute from, are Phetchaburi, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Sakhon, Samut Songkram, Suphanburi, Ayudhya, Nonthaburi, Saraburi, Chachoengsao and Samut Prakan.

Paisal said most of the vendors from these provinces travelled to Bangkok in the morning by train and returned in the evening.

Child from P. 13  
340,000 CHILDREN IN NON-FARM  
WORKFORCE

Some of the escapees are still missing and are believed to be making a living as prostitutes.

Despite the child labour situation, the seminar participants, which included academics and responsible officials, concluded that Thailand still needs child labour because it is a developing country and the children have to earn money for their families.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Kitana Theeravith, director of the Planning Division of the Labour Department, told the seminar that there was a need, though, to amend laws to help the children. The laws should be amended to benefit both employers and children workers, she said.

She proposed that the best solution of the problem would be to encourage employers to help child workers receive an education or training in skills while they work.



## CGRS URGES FAIR TREATMENT FOR RIFTERS

On August 2, 1985, the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society or CGRS handed an appeal to Minister of Interior Affairs Sittih Chiraroohana to treat the prisoners who rioted on August 4 at Bangkokwan prison within the framework of law and human rights.

The appeal was made in a letter submitted by Dr. Cothom Ariya, an engineering professor of Chulalongkorn University, who represented the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS).

The letter stressed the CGRS belief that violence is not the right way to solve problems and urged the minister to order that the inmates be treated fairly as human-beings.

It said when the inmates broke the prison's rules in the past they had no assurance that they would be correctly treated. It also said there were indiscriminate punishments to all the inmates in a zone so that the innocent were also punished along with the guilty.

The letter said that the August 4 incident in Bangkokwan occurred because the prison with 7,200 inmates is holding three times its capacity.

CGRS stressed the fact that the overcrowding inside the pri-

son has caused problems of depression, sanitation and nutrition among the prisoners.

Seven inmates were killed in the riot at Bangkokwan, a maximum security prison north of Bangkok. The inmates launched a 30-hour protest to demand amnesty.

### CGRS'S HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES..... (JULY - SEPTEMBER)

On August 31, 1985, CGRS organized a special meeting participated by representatives from both non-governmental and governmental organizations with the purposes of re-activating their commitments to the human rights programs earlier set forth by concerned human rights organizations in Thailand.

It was expected that this effort would bring about the establishment of Legal Aid Centre under the coordinating committee of Central Institute for Legal Aid.

The followings were organizations participated in the meeting:-

1. Union of Civil Liberty
2. Social Welfare Council of Thailand under the Royal Patronage.
3. Centre of Concern for Child Labour
4. Children's Rights Protection Centre

5. Friends of Women Group
6. Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS)
7. Legal Aid Office of the Barrister Council
8. Faculty of Law, Ramkhamhaeng University
9. Women Lawyers Association of Thailand

In the meeting, it was agreed that Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) should continue its effort, despite a brief halt, to assist this operation. It was also agreed that a full-time coordinator should be recruited to coordinating all activities in order to achieve the objectives.

The main objectives of Central Institute for Legal Aid are:-

1. Dissemination of basic legal rights, democratic rights and understanding of civil and human rights.
2. offering free legal consultation and legal aid to the general public and other legal disputes pertaining to human rights violations.
3. Conducting critical analysis on the human rights situations in Thailand as well as finding the ways and means to improve the situations where unjust laws need to be amended.

As the result of the meeting, it was discovered that there are more than ten legal aid organizations in existence. CGRS the fact that a large number of Thai citizens are still needed to be educated about their basic civil rights. The lack of basic knowledge about the existing laws is generally the key problem forcing the majority of the poor and uneducated citizens in the obvious disadvantageous positions. It is most important for these citizens to familiar themselves with the existing laws concerning directly their own livelihood.

Thus the effective coordination among the above mentioned organizations are urgently needed. With a paid staff responsible for such coordination should make it easier to disseminate fact and legal knowledge to the public.

This concerted effort from concerned human rights organizations should make it possible to pressure the government to improve the legal understanding level among the populace, particularly those living in the countryside.

Apart from this, on September 7, 1985, CGRS also arranged a meeting of lawyers and development workers in the Northeastern region at Roi-et province. Some participants in the meetings were appointed to function as networks and representatives for each province represented at the meeting.

In addition, some observers were invited to the meeting as well. There were teachers, local journalists, locally based lawyers and even Roi-et Province's member of Provincial Council. The total of 27 participants were registered.

According to the summary report presented to the meeting, the majority of the people living in each province of the region are still facing the situation where their basic human rights are often violated. In most cases, their rights are denied and violated by government officials, local authorities and bureaucrats. These officials vary often take advantage of the people who are ignorant of their basic human rights. The most vulnerable targets of human rights violations are the uneducated, the peasants and farmers. For example, the villagers in Nong-Hi Sub-district, Wapee-pathom District, Maha-sarakham Province are still forced to pay multiple interest rate which is clearly illegal under the existing laws on loan. When they could not meet the repayment, they almost always have to sell their land at the low price.

Another example of abuse of power on the part of local authorities is the practice of intimidating the suspects to pay bribe to the arresting officers. This practice is generally known fact among the local populace, but no

one dares to file a official complaint against the police officer for fear of their own safety. Details of these cases are being studied to find the way to solve the problem in the non-violent way.

The case study is well-known in many districts of Surin Province.

On August 4-5, 1985, there was a riot at the maximum security prison at Bangkwang of Northaburi Province. As CGRS reported in HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND REPORT Vol.9 No.2 April-July, CGRS strongly expressed its concern for the innocent prisoners who may have to face heavy retaliation from prison officials. It is possible that a summary punishment may have been ordered to discipline the inmates and at the same time to prevent future riot in the prison. CGRS firmly urged the authorities to act leniently towards the innocent ones and prosecute those found guilty with due process of law. Illegal beatings and inhumane treatments of inmates behind prison walls were often reported. One report in particular was published in Thai daily "Maitichon" on August 9, 1985. Following closely the development on the issue, it was reported that more than 200 alleged rioters had been secretly interrogated and each inmate may face heavy consequences. It was interesting to note that no mention was made concerning the

investigation and interrogation of prison officials who allegedly had murdered some alleged rioters in the said incidence.

On August 20, 1985, CGRS presented a petition to the Supreme Judicature of the Prosecutors' Office, Department of Public Prosecution urging them to prosecute, within the time limit, the police officers who were allegedly involved in a mass murder case.

Following the Appeal Court order to acquit the accused

Following the Appeal Court decision to acquit the accused 9 police officers from Chaibadarn Police Station, Lopburi Province, many concerned citizens and human rights organizations expressed concern about the time-consuming process conducted by the public prosecutors which may not allow them to prosecute the policemen on time. It is stipulated in the law pertaining to the prosecution, this case must be reviewed and prosecuted within the time limit, otherwise, the accused must be freed.

7 persons were reportedly found dead near the provincial highway in 1981. According to the police version of investigation, the victims were suspected of armed robbery. When they were stopped at the road block, they allegedly opened fire on the police officers.

(Caption) Exclusive photo of 7 victims of mass murder allegedly killed by local police in execution style with bullet wounds in each victim's head.



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claimed that they had to shoot them in self-defense and it was proper and legal to act as such in case of suspects resisting the arrest.

When the case was prosecuted in the Criminal Court, it was widely published in the newspapers. The Criminal Court consequently found the police-officers guilty of murder charges. They were sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment.

Later, the 9 police officers appealed the case to the Appeal Court and the Appeal Court decided to acquit the accused. Relatives of the 7 victims consequently asked CGRS to work for in the case.

Realizing that their dead relatives may have died without any justice done for them, the relatives of the 7 victims then voiced their grievances through the "Daily News" newspaper to CGRS. The Human Rights Section of CGRS then took the relatives along to

urg the public prosecutors to work with utmost efficiency so that the accused police officers would again face the charges in the Supreme Court. It is urgent that their appeal must be filed and presented to the Department of public prosecutors before September 25, 1985. Failing to do so, no action could be taken to bring the accused to the court of justice.

It is interesting to note that the public prosecutors' office officially accepted the appeal filed by the relatives with the consultation provided by the Human Rights Section of CGRS, but no more action could be taken until the due process of law requires them to.

CGRS considers this case as vital to the improvement of human rights situation in Thailand, since the relatives and CGRS legal consultants were assured by the public prosecutors that they would definitely prosecute the 9 police officers in the Supreme Court.

Development of the case shall be reported in the next Human Rights in Thailand Report to be issued at the end of the year 1985.

#### LEGAL AID SERVICES

The Human Rights Section of CGRS has offered its services to 3 cases of social injustice requested by citizens of 3 different provinces as follows:-

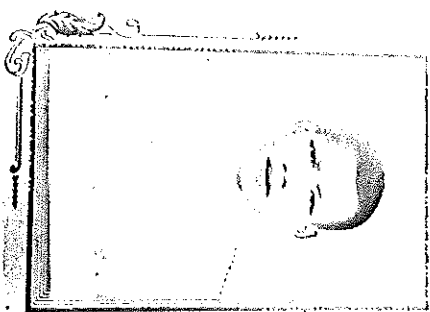
1. A case of Mr. Somjai Utaewichian, a teacher/social activist who was murdered in Buriram Province. With close cooperations from local human rights lawyers, Union of Civil Liberty, a Member of the House of Parliament from Buriram, CGRS has arranged to set up an AD HOC Committee to urge the public prosecutor in Buriram Province to prosecute the suspects involved in this premeditated murder in provincial criminal court.

Due to the fact that this case is rather complicated with some involvement of locally influential personalities, it is, therefore, crucial that the suspects must be properly prosecuted in the court so that those who had commissioned the gun-man may be exposed in the court.

It is also interesting to note that some local lawyers were too concerned about their own safety to handle the case. CGRS deems it necessary to take the case to the court of justice,

so that the victim would not have died in vain.

2. The case of Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao, 21, who was arrested and charged with murder and armed robbery in Prachaya District, Karbi Province despite the fact that at the time of alleged murder, he was with his wife when she was giving birth to their first child in the presence of several witnesses.



(Caption) Portrait of Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao when ordained as Buddhist monk at 21 years of age.

According to CGRS Human Rights Section preliminary report, the accused was wrongly accused by the local police authorities. He was originally charged with possession of marijuana and unregistered firearms (old and rusty rifle for

shooting birds), simply because they police could not find any evidence against him on the murder and armed robbery charges.

According to the defendant's witnesses, Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao was not even near the scene of the alleged armed robbery. Besides, the dead person and victim of the armed robbery was his friend and lived about 3 kilometers from his house. When the local police failed to apprehend the robbery suspects, they, for some reasons, seemed to believe that Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao was involved in the armed robbery and therefore should be taken in their custody pending further investigation even though they had not found a single circumstantial evidence against him.

Thus CGRS suspected that the reason why the police wanted to keep him in custody first, because they needed more time to gather evidence to press charges against him for armed robbery and murder. As it turned out later that the local police finally charged him with murder and armed robbery immediately after the provincial court ruled that the crime for possession of marijuana and unregistered rifle were only punishable by paying fine.

CGRS paid for the remain days in jail for Mr. Sutab Kaew yodkao, so that he could stand trial on murder and armed robbery only. Had it not been the fine paid by CGRS, Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao would have to stay in jail about 36 days longer than necessary.

Prior to the payment for the fine, Mr. Sutab Kaewyodkao had already spent about 3 months in jail for the 2,000 Baht fine he could not pay. Even when CGRS came to his rescue, the police immediately gressed murderer and armed robbery charges to keep him in jail. At the moment, he is standing trial for murder and armed robbery. CGRS has arranged some emergency fund for his family and has appointed a lawyer to represent him in the court with a portion of lawyer's fee and expenses paid for by CGRS.

3. The case of village leader charged with trespassing her own land presently in dispute with Thai military. Mrs. Grae Sorada, who has been active in Nakhorn-sawan land dispute case against the military, has been charged with trespassing her own plot of land which had been legally registered with the Land Department.

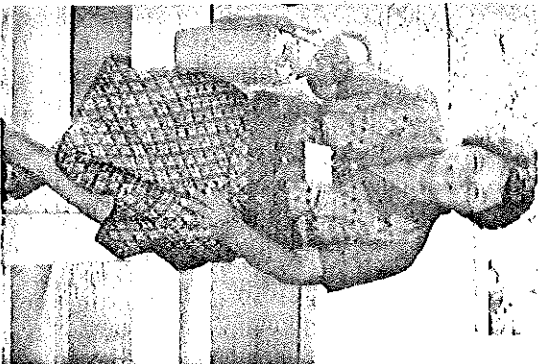
With proper land title on her 13 Rai family farm land, Mrs. Grae Sorada has now been charged by the local police for trespassing.

The disputed land between 6,318 families and the 3rd Army of the 4th Army Region covers about 146,000 Rai (2.5 Rai = 1 Acre), effecting the livelihood of about 56,000 people, threatening the removal of 21 temples and 30 schools.

Mrs. Grae Sorada's own plot of 31 Rai was claimed by the military and was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. Her land in question is still in the court of law due to the dispute. Since she is one of the most active member of villagers who refuses to surrender her land to the authorities, it is easily understandable why she is being prosecuted at the moment.

It should be noted that Mrs. Grae Sorada is one of the villagers who has signed the petition urging the government to be just and fair in taking over the citizens' land for military use. She has been singled out as hard-headed villagers who are determined to protect her own rights to private property under the law. She is one of the few villagers who dares to ask human rights lawyers to prosecute the authorities and the governmental agencies for seizing her land illegally. It is not surprising that now she is being prosecuted by the government prosecutor - re-

presenting the state as she is charged with trespassing the government property and causing damage to the government property in the disputed land.



(Caption) Mrs. Grae Sorada, the village leader who dares to win in the dispute against the Thai army.

CGRS has decided to assist her for the cause of justice and to find a non-violent way of solving this potentially explosive conflict.

4. Coordination of Human Rights Organizations and Development Agencies.

With an attempt to disseminate and promote human rights and development works in Thailand, CGRS and other organizations such as Union of Civil Liberty, Friends

of Women Group with strong support from the Committee for Development Disseminating and Promotion have been working on a documentary VDO piece on the works and objectives of human rights and development organizations in Thailand.

This is the first time that such project is being produced by NGO workers with professional guidance on the technical aspects.

The content of this documentary deals with cases of human rights violation and the causes and effects of the situation. Its target audience is the general public who have not been directly in touch with the works accomplished by the NGOs in the country.

It is expected that this documentary should be ready for viewing before the end of March 1986.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

This issue of HRHR focuses on the activities of the Human Rights Section of CGRS as well as some situations in Thailand for our readers who wish to follow-up on the situations in Thailand in general. We welcome any comments and contributions to enrich the content of this report.

In Solidarity & Friendship,

CGRS

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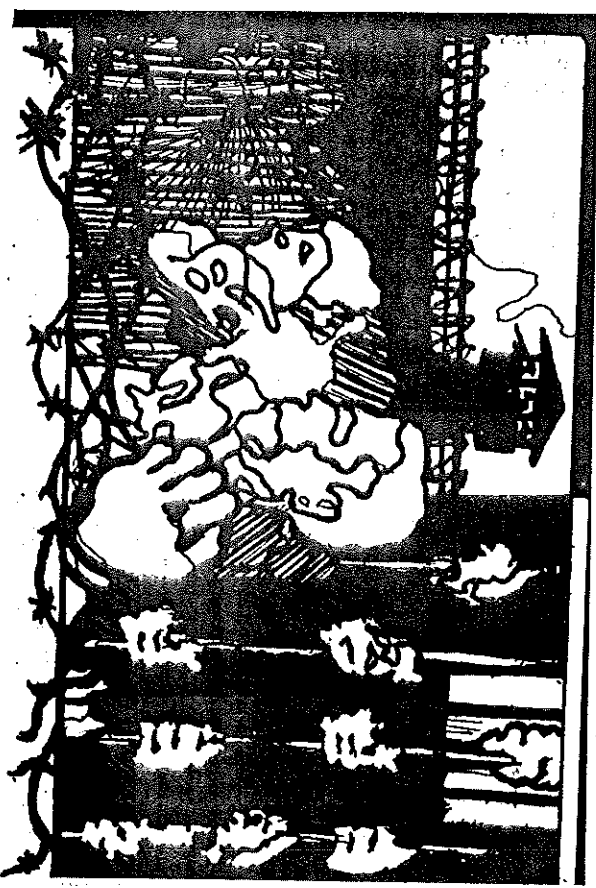
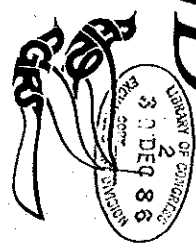
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