

arena bulletin

ISSN 0256-7520

ASIAN EXCHANGE

QUARTERLY
BULLETIN
OF THE
ASIAN
REGIONAL
EXCHANGE
FOR NEW
ALTERNATIVES



ON SURVIVAL

BHOPAL

SUGAR AND FAMINE ON NEGROS

THE INDOCHINA TRAGEDY

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Bhopal: The Imagination of a Disaster	7
3. Sugar and Famine: The Case of Negros Island	36
4. Indochina: The Continuing Tragedy	77
5. A Tribute to Senator Jose Diokno	128
6. Document: Reagan, God and the Bomb	134
7. Book Reviews: i) The Stones Cryout-A Cambodian Childhood	143
ii) Working Women in South-East Asia	146
iii) Food as a Human Right	148
8. About the Contributors	149

Introduction

This issue of 'Asian Exchange', focusses on what seems as three separate events, totally disconnected by geography and history. They are seemingly also not connected by any common thread of causality. We however have placed them together, almost as three sides of a prism, as part of 'one theme or discourse - 'On Survival'. To us, these three separate events, these three ongoing tragedies are only three examples that are intrinsic to what the world has come to accept as 'development'.

In looking at these seemingly three separate events, three tragedies, under a unifying theme of 'Survival', we also attempt to point to another important reality. This reality perhaps can be described as follows. On the one hand we have a situation where monolithic notions of modernity and progress, try to reduce all social, cultural, economic, ecological, political and historical reality into a simplistic, one dimensional view. Such a one dimensional view holds that development, history or at least the future for all societies 'must' or can follow only one way. On the other hand, counter processes that must attempt to understand and struggle against the danger and destruction wrought by such monolithic notions of modernity, of development, get equally uni-dimensional, fragmented, atomised and if one may say so, ridiculously simplistic. Much of our attempt in our work at ARENA, including the publishing of this bulletin has been to strive for a holism-- in the understanding of social reality and in the responses to this continually dehumanising process of so many small and big tragedies.

The first article on Bhopal in a way lays the philosophical framework of this issue of **Asian Exchange**, the contours of the critique of modernity. Bhopal, even among sensitive, serious and committed social activists has become just another disaster, to be documented, catalogued and filed. Bhopal encapsulates all the elements of a tragedy brought on by a vision of progress, of a vision of development that our societies and our rulers compulsively yearn for. Yet, the fact that Bhopal, like so many other tragedies and violent events has become one more event, that grows more distant in memory, has also to do with the constant splitting of vision that occurs even among social activists and others critical of the processes of dehumanisation. A splitting of vision which present day economics and economic growth patterns fundamentally engender.

Voluntarism or voluntary activity of whatever genre, is

inescapably also, a victim of this split vision. Thus it is not surprising if it is demanded, that Bhopal or other similar events, whether dramatic or ongoing, must fit the apriori frameworks of voluntarism; it must fit into some box of 'human rights' or some such similar category or else be consigned to forgetfulness along with its victims. In this process even voluntarism constantly faces the danger of routinization. Some examples of the more vulgar and dishonest forms of routinization is in the repetetive and meaningless use of terms such as 'human rights', 'grass roots', 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' till they have lost all meaning and power. What the authors of the article on Bhopal say, in relation to government bureaucracies is sadly also applicable in many circumstances to bureaucracies of voluntary organizations, particularly international organizations and some of the much vaunted champions of human rights at the regional and international level. The authors put it very succintly when they write, "this splitting of vision is seen not only in the assembly line. It acquires a more lethal form in the everyday perceptions of bureaucrats. By dividing, by banalizing, the mind can control what threatens it. Catastrophes get serialized into files and are thus domesticated."

Such analysis of course need not lead us into a kind of cynicism about social activism and intervention. There is all the more reason for sharpening and consolidating critical social perspectives and firmly resisting the bureaucratic vision. Here we are not without hope. There is hope in the fight of people for holistic knowledge and information that empowers them. A fight that is important in middle class dominated societies as in Asia where a deep rooted anti-intellectualism is so easily espoused by bureaucrats and that too in the name of the "people". Contrary to the loud proclamations and the ignorant assumptions of urban middle class arrogance, the people are always eager to learn, to know and to transform social reality. Thus, there is hope in the struggle against not only the brutalisation of people but the routinization of that brutalization by the bureaucratic vision. The tragedy in Bhopal offered simultaneously this kind of hope. As the authors show, in Bhopal, members of middle class professions such as doctors, lawyers and journalists made exemplary contributions. A role sharply distinct from their normal roles and which make people, particularly the poor, percieve members of these professions as vultures and vampires. In Bhopal, the activists of voluntary organisations also, truly rose to the occasion inspite of the massive problems they faced both within themselves as well as from the structures of power.

The focus of the second article is on the famine, starvation and death that continues on Negros Island in the Philippines. It has many threads that weave and connect it to Bhopal. The events on Negros engendered by mono-cultural plantation farming, that brought wealth to a few and starvation and death to many, shares the same paradigm in which 'modern development' operates. A paradigm that was also responsible for Bhopal. It is not accidental therefore that mono-cultural plantation farming is rapacious on the poor, the workers and the ecology and natural resources of the island. It is also not accidental that the greed and rapacity which cash-crop farming generates, resulted in large scale famine and pushed large numbers of people struggling for survival beyond survival. Yet, the fact that hope and humanity could still re-assert itself, is demonstrated by the programmes, that emerged as alternatives, by other social actors, under other social spaces, as for example in the programmes initiated by the federation of sugar workers. There is something ruthless about the the ideology of 'modernity' and 'progress', and they engender so much tragedy and suffering that they do look overwhelming in their power and sweep. To talk of alternatives, to resist, to criticise, to counter, in short to hope seems almost foolish.

The story of struggling to hope, of humanity continually trying to reassert itself is the story of Indochina. It is the story of humanity re-asserting itself inspite of the decades of brutalization that it was subjected to. Indochina is a case where the brutalization of a people, was and is being sought to be erased from memory, by routinizing the tragedy in the manipulation process of global power politics and inter-state machinations. This routinization is the ultimate tragedy of the human spirit in the contemporary era.

Indochina came onto the stage of world history, portrayed as a struggle against right and wrong, as a struggle between the forces of evil represented by communism and the forces of good represented by distant Christian powers. Forces of 'good' that tried to wipe out an entire people and ecosystem to establish 'good' over 'evil'. Humanity had to be destroyed to 'save' it! A perverse logic of salvation and righteousness that was and is still used by powerful nations in shaping their relationships to smaller, weaker nations. A logic which gives powerful nations the 'moral' right to continue to engage in conflicts in different corners of the world. Yet, in Indochina a powerful big bullying nation was brought to its knees; not only because of the unbending resistance of the Indochinese

people to the bullying and terror but also because significant sections of the American people showed their opposition to the totally immoral way in which their nation conducted itself in a far away continent.

More than a decade after the end of the war in Vietnam, the suffering of the Indochinese people continues. The Jewish Diaspora seems to have been in contemporary history followed by that of the Palestinians and now by that of the Indochinese. Saturation bombings, terror and genocide paved the way to the creation of a new category of suffering humanity called the 'boat people'. The Indochina article in this issue, may at one moment strike as being just a long and patient cataloguing of this grim tragedy. In a way it is and that is also necessary. But more importantly, it tries to situate the tragedy, within the conflicts of global power politics and within the conflicts engendered by the denial of a people the right to choose their own path of development. It points to the denial of autonomy to a people and they consequently becoming the unfortunate, innocent victims of global power arrangements and bloc politics. Arrangements that are subjected to purely the will of the state parties to the conflict with no reference at all to the people of these countries and non-state actors, resulting in the prolongation of the peoples' victimization and suffering. Viewing the problem from only the perspectives of the states embroiled in the Indochina conflict can and will never bring Peace to Indochina. Sadly however most commentators on Indochina have been unable to offer perspectives other than those of the state parties involved in the conflict. Discussions on Indochina have got further puerile and devoid of any humanity by trying to view the problems from perspectives of supposed ideological purity and the "correctness" or otherwise of the different parties to the present conflicts. The article on Indochina in this issue of the Bulletin tries to present the complexity of the Indochina tragedy without seeking to find out who is right and wrong in the continuation of the tragedy and on whom blame should be apportioned and how much. The author had a very difficult job to do and we trust that you will agree he has done it very well.

Indochina, Negros, Bhopal, are but part of the same spiral of contemporary violence, inevitable in a monolithic vision of progress, that promises to bring salvation and happiness to all people but can deliver only violence, misery and death. Indochina was freedom, progress, democracy, salvation from socialists and communists. Negros was wages, survival under feudal auspices to export-commodity wealth to economic growth to enlarged prosperity to money and goods for

all. Bhopal was jobs, pesticides for agriculture, greater food production, greater industrial growth, better living standards. Ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

The people in all these three situations know better what they ultimately inherited. All three situations are centrally linked to the denial of autonomy and autonomous space for development. In all three cases, there was a notion of how development should proceed and under what kind of economic, political and social arrangement, which then paved the way to each of the continuing tragedies. A process which the editors of 'Lokayan', in an issue that looked at the same theme of 'Survival' within their national context, had written, "In a sense, development is an ideological project, a conscious process through which the powerful with resources impose upon the others often the majority populations, their will. They shape society not only for their benefit, but in their own image. The weak, powerful, and 'invisible' are then converted into mere objects of history, to be manipulated and kept in their place."

Sharing a common perspective as that of the Editors of Lokayan and inspired by the Lokayan issue 'On Survival'; we have tried to look at the theme of 'On Survival' from a regional and macro perspective. **Asian Exchange** is one of the means through which ARENA relates to and serves its constituency and network. ARENA as a regional body constantly and actively derives inspiration from the community of social researchers and activists from differing national contexts. Thus as a regional effort it attempts to provide the needed macro perspectives at the Asian regional level. Perspectives that in turn can inspire, motivate and allow for more creative interventions, at the national, micro or grassroot level. We therefore acknowledge all those who have helped in realising this issue of **Asian Exchange**, particularly the contributors but also the interactive network that in a symbiotic sense moulds and shapes the work of ARENA as an organization and as an authentic community. We, hope that you find this issue of use, of relevance and providing fresh insights and inspiration to address the problems we face in each of our societies in Asia.

Lawrence Surendra

Bhopal :

The Imagination of a Disaster

Shiv Visvanathan & Rajni Kothari

The history of the twentieth century has been marked by violence. Among the numerous examples, one immediately thinks of Auschwitz and Treblinka, Hiroshima and Guernica, My Lai and Pol Pot's Kampuchea. To this glossary of violence, we can today add a new name - Bhopal.

Bhopal has been dubbed the world's worst industrial disaster. The MIC leak of 30 tonnes on December 3 claimed over 3500 lives and left more than 225,000 people and animals maimed and injured. To the census of the dead and injured, we have to add the still unfolding impact on pregnant women and fetuses and also on animals.

The Bhopal disaster encompassed two distinct episodes. The first was the spectacle of the gas leak itself and the second the banality of its aftermath. If the first act was blown up as an international media event, the aftermath has been marked by silence and erasure. To understand this, it is necessary to grasp what Susan Sontag has called the imagination of a disaster. We can describe it as the collective representations, the myths, the symbols, the allegories, the images - secular and religious - available for the understanding of catastrophe. Such a notion also implies the innovative manner in which groups, both dominant and oppressed, act to increase or limit the availability of such an imagination. We wish to use this approach to go beyond a mere political economy of Bhopal. What we wish to show is that the very structure of modern industrialism encodes the understanding of the catastrophe. It involves, in the case of Bhopal, the bureaucratization of the catastrophe and its links with the wider images of modernization.

II

There is a strange lacuna about modernity. As an event it lacks creation of myths. There is no equivalent of the biblical seven days or the Purushartha sacrifice. The poetics of such a cosmology yields to an ersatz view. We shall call these the myths of manufacture. The term itself emphasizes the difference. Creation is an act of God; manufacture, the work of man. Also in the latter, the inaugural event appears as an artifact, as something contrived, built and constructed.

The myths of manufacture include Thomas Hobbes's version of the social contract, the Cartesian discourse on method or Adam Smith's commentary on the pin. In the Hobbesian contract, society is invented like a theorem. With Descartes, the world itself becomes a machine. The resurgence of the clock inaugurated and symbolized such an event. Adam Smith's essay on the pin translates this vision of the world as a contrivance in the specific case of manufacture. The fable of the pin is succinctly captured in the following paragraph.

"One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head; to make the head requires three distinct operations; to put it on is a peculiar business, to whiten the pins is another."(1)

The fables of management theory tend to emphasize the enormous efficiency of this process. They also tell us how management controls the work process through the strategy of divide and rule and the split vision it engenders. This vision found its staggering climax in the production of the atom bomb. People working on it never realized what they were producing. No doubt there was secrecy, but it was facilitated by the division of labour.

This splitting of vision is seen not only in the assembly line. It acquires a more lethal form in the everyday perceptions of bureaucrats. By dividing, by banalizing, the mind can control what threatens it. Catastrophes get serialized into files and are thus domesticated. Hannah Arendt has shown how the banality of Eichmann accounted for his violence.(2) What she was referring to is the Eichmann in every bureaucrat. Such a view is crucial in analyzing Bhopal as a catastrophe. The splitting of the vision was not so much in the manufacturing process but the manner in which the disaster was processed and consumed. The catastrophe was localized and controlled into a series of humdrum acts. As one doctor put it, "the victim had to be processed, carved out and milked and everyone of the little bureaucrats, the government doctors, the policemen, the tehsildar, the ration shop owner, social worker and political goon had to have his cut. It

was the remnants that went to the victim." The mind itself was put on the assembly line.

The routinization of the catastrophe begins with the office file. Initially, the trauma of the catastrophe, embodying to many victims the end of the world, gets analytically broken down into the minuter traumas of the bureaucratic system. Each problem is then separated off into little modules, to be discussed ad infinitum. It is not just the corruption of the clerk one is talking about, but the ritual procedures of coping with disasters embedded in the bureaucratic grid. In fact, one could even contend that all the little corruptions domesticated and marginalised the sheer enormity of the disaster. To counter this, one must attempt to see it all through the eyes of the victim.

Initially, the victim realizes he cannot be a victim till the bureaucracy says so. The first problem begins as a numbers game; the controversy was over the total number of dead as the next of kin are entitled to compensation.

According to government estimates, only 1700 people died. The government stuck to this figure as it was based on certified deaths in hospitals. Activists questioned the computation on the basis of the following observations. They pointed out that in Muslim graveyards each grave was filled up with at least four to five bodies. This fact had been independently confirmed by reporters, eye-witnesses, and by many who volunteered to dig graves in those days. Yet only one slip of paper per grave was issued by the graveyard authorities. In the words of Anil Sadgopal, "The government has seen to it that the data does not contradict the slips issued by the graveyard authorities".(3)

Other informants added several additional bits of evidence. People, they said, died in public places, unregistered hutments, on roads. To this we have to also add the four or five hundred who slept or spent the night in railway stations. A railway station is a miniature city. There must have been at least a hundred beggars asleep that night. All these people were picked up by government trucks, especially by the military during its scavenging operations and dumped into the Narmada river or the forests outside Bhopal. Volunteers have collected a number of affidavits from people considered dead and thrown into the Narmada.(4)

Beyond the initial problem of the census of the dead, came the problem of estimating the quantum of relief and identifying the affected people. Here, arbitrary bureaucratic norms determined the reality of relief. For example, during Operation Faith, the government produced a map marking sharply the

geographical zones affected by the gas. People were advised to evacuate the areas. Today, activist-volunteers claim that the government refuses to recognize the existence of such a zone. This has introduced an element of arbitrariness into the evaluation and mapping of affected areas for the distribution of relief.

In this context, one notices the awesome power of bureaucratic censuses and surveys. Absence from them can be warrants of death; inclusions, virtual certificates of survival. The government made the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) survey the basis of its relief allocations. Yet, the bustee (slum) people had hard-hitting critiques of this exercise. The surveys were conducted by students, "Maharashtrians and Gujaratis, who hardly understand our Hindi". Many of the bustee occupants who fled the city after Operation Faith were not listed in the survey. They complained that they had to run from pillar to post to prove their existence. Only a bribe could short-circuit this process. The Morcha activists in their statements had a suggestion in this context. They recommended that bustee-wise census lists be prepared and posted on the walls. This, they felt, would allow the locality people to check lists and control corruption. They pointed out that many bustee people had to spend months rectifying the defects of the survey to obtain a ration card. There are many others who are still struggling to obtain a ration card eight months after the catastrophe. In Bhopal, a victim cannot be a victim without a ration card.

The bureaucratization of the catastrophe brought with it the reign of the certificate. Only a governmental certificate determines what is real. People, many of them illiterate, run around from place to place, pathetically clutching certificates. The government decrees of compensation have become doles, transforming the victims into beggars. The government had decreed Rs.10,000 for the nearest kin of every dead person, and Rs.1,500 to those earning less than Rs.500. In one of the bustees we met a woman who had already claimed Rs.30,000 and yet was begging for the remaining Rs.1,500. The belief has grown that lives can be market-evaluated for compensation. One sensed a feeling that the government is auctioning off pieces of the catastrophe to the nearest kin with Rs.10,000 as the price for forgetfulness. As a cynic remarked "catastrophes have helped consolidate vote banks during the elections".

Another effective method of breaking the victim has been localization. One has to read it both as an act of commission and omission. At one level the government has refused to exercise discrimination. It has offered free rations to 600,000 people in Bhopal when the sum of affected people was 225,000.

This sudden surplus has become a bonanza which many celebrate. Simultaneously, it has divided the victims into two groups. It has awarded Rs.1,500 to everyone earning less than Rs.500 a month. It has never disclosed how it arrived at this. Yet there are many just above that line who were affected drastically yet offered no relief. Many of them spent a fortune when they fled the city.

There is one point we must make in this context. The news on Bhopal has alternated between a statistics, Guinness Book of Records style and a teratological episode in Ripley's Believe It or Not. The magic and controversy of numbers has covered deaths, injury, relief, number of ration cards, number of medicines, the magnitude of compensation. But as numbers, they have become remote from the catastrophe. A Guinness Book of disasters is strangely impersonal. A Ripley's Believe It or Not of aborted babies, deformities, is teratological and strangely distant. Between the two extremes is the banality of everyday relief and the everydayness of repression. It is into this space that the bureaucratic discourse has thrust itself forcing everyone to speak "bureaucratese". Any debate soon appears like a war between two clerical factions. The latent consequences have been devastating. It has rendered the victims tired, inarticulate and speechless and voluntary activists shrill. The pain of their protest sounds more and more like noise, discordant to the picture of "an increasingly normalizing Bhopal".

III

On the last night of our stay in Bhopal, we went to the Oriya (people from the eastern coastal state of Orissa) bustee, a small illegal strip of migrant hutments along a railway line. After the general complaints of police and other bureaucratic harassment, there was a slight pause, when a woman lifted up her baby. He was born on December 3 and she had named the boy, Jahar Das (servant of poison). Another girl, born the same day, was called Gasmati..... The names reveal the irony, the poignancy and the concentration camp humour of their lives.

To the victim, the catastrophe has to be seen at different levels. Firstly, there was the manner of dying. Bodies were cremated anonymously. Many women felt guilty that last rites could not be performed. There was a sense of void, of a ritual cycle that has been aborted. For many, the gas leak was humiliating in a very special way. Many children complained that in the panic of the gas leak, their parents had abandoned them. But what was emphasized was the physical helplessness. A worker in the Oriya bustee confessed that he had not resumed work for eight months. He relied on his wife who sold vegetables. Several daily wage workers from the textile mills complained that

ICJIB

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN BHOPAL
A network of seven groups campaigning on behalf of the Bhopal victims

- **ASIAN REGIONAL EXCHANGE FOR NEW ALTERNATIVES**
A4 2F, Gr-Bank, Hong Kong Bay Centre
104 RB Baker Street
Hong Kong, Kowloon
Hong Kong
- **BHOPAL ACTION RESOURCE CENTER**
Suite 9A, 777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.
- **BHOPAL DISASTER MONITORING GROUP**
Osaka People's Research Institute on
Environment and Energy
3F Bunkyo Kaikan
7-26-24, Shinjuku
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160
Japan
- **BHOPAL NEVER AGAIN ACTION GROUP**
Oudegracht 36
3517 AP Utrecht
Netherlands
- **BHOPAL TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY GROUP**
Os Transnational Information Centre
9 Petard Street
London W2N 3DG
U.K.
- **BHOPAL VICTIMS SUPPORT COMMITTEE**
Os Southside Monitoring Group
Top Floor, 20-22 King Street
Southall, Middlesex UB2 4PB
U.K.
- **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF CONSUMERS UNIONS**
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 1045
10500 Petaling
Malaysia

It has been over two years since the Bhopal disaster took place, yet large number of victims are continuing to suffer from a variety of serious health and socio-economic problems. Medical and relief measures for the victims have undoubtedly been inadequate and its provision has been slow. The case against Union Carbide is now in the Indian Courts. The legal process may run into years in the context of a complex litigation of this kind of disaster. Moreover, many critical questions (related to technology hazards, international laws to regulate TNC operations in host countries, ecological and environmental protection etc.) remain unanswered.

A review of the above issues pointed to the urgent need to set up an informal network of public interest groups to specifically address the continuing plight of the victims. Seven non-governmental organisations have on the occasion of the 2nd anniversary of the Bhopal disaster in 1986, collaborated to form the International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal (ICJIB). Other than ARENA, participants include Bhopal Action Resource Centre (USA), Bhopal Disaster Monitoring Group (Japan), Bhopal Never Again Action Group (Netherlands), Bhopal Trade Union Solidarity Group (UK), Bhopal Victims Support Committee (UK) and the International Organization of Consumers Union (Malaysia).

So far, a mass signature campaign aimed at exerting concerted and sustained international pressure on Union Carbide and the Government of India has been carried out from Jan, 1987 up to now. 1,420 signatures have been received from eleven countries around the world. The replies from the two parties are being processed. In addition, an independent research related to various aspects of the disaster generally on technology hazards is near completion, and a document to provide a code of ethics for professionals particularly the lawyers is being prepared. We hope to release a document for public information, dissemination and action.

Continued concern over the issues thrown up by the tragedy is badly needed. We call on all our readers to lend support to the activities on the issue.

they were able to work only 10-12 days a month. The cotton and the heat of the factory ate into their lungs and made breathing difficult. They were given the standard pills and asked to resume work by doctors who did not understand them. It is this physical incapacity that startled the men and altered in a deep way the sense of their self. In a way, physical competence becomes an index of all other forms of self activity. One worker told us, "after coming back from work I could fill buckets of water from a handpump. Today I just lie back in bed tired and exasperated". Another said, "I could carry two people on my cycle, today I can hardly pedal". The repeated suggestions made by the men was for some kind of work more suited to their present physical condition. Such work was not merely a form of employment but as an activity which would help protect their self esteem. It is in the bustee that one senses a real sense of defeat, of what Praful Bidwai called "a sense of psychological squalor". The women, especially those who were pregnant, face the prospect of deformed babies. A mere technical recommendation of Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) is not adequate. One has to understand the agony of that choice and the pain of living with it. Many women are also suffering from vaginal discharges. In addition, there is the problem of the children, many of whom face shortened life spans. Doctors have also reported the occurrence of gas traumas. Survivors still sense the smell of gas, several months after the catastrophe, and go into panic.

What is worse is that they have to confront a medical establishment which is convinced that the working classes cannot have psychological problems. The problem of deformed babies, gynaecological discharges, the sense of physical inadequacy among the men are problems which will exist for years. Already one hears statements that neighbours do not want to marry into the bustees of Bhopal.

However, there is a deeper issue we must consider here. There is something about man-made disasters that human memory finds difficult to retain and comprehend. A flood or an earthquake is easily internalized into the calendrical cycle. The language of myth and religion is easily available to conceptualize it. Man made catastrophe seems unmetaphorical and aridly secular. It is subjected to quick erasure, to a kind of amnesia that not only denies to the victim the basic compensation but even the right to remember. Attempts at restitution or remembrance meet with repression. The classic case is that of Hiroshima. The survivor or Hibakusha were literally subject to silence and complaints of pain were treated as hypochondria. The victim or survivor became an outcast. Many hid their pain to avoid being stigmatized.

Bhopal is producing a similar syndrome. Doctors, especially

those associated with the government hospitals, have begun insisting that effects of the gas have cleared and that patients - many from the slums - are suffering from chronic ailments. One attempt is even being made, to show that patients' complaints is only asthma and that the cases number a mere 6,000. They then go on to explain that six thousand cases in a population of 6 to 7 hundred thousand is statistically normal.

In fact, the double-bind situation extended even to the reality of being a patient. As a patient, the victim seeks an understanding of his pain and longs for a diagnosis of himself as a person. But the structure of the modern clinic is such that he can obtain relief only as a part of a pre-structured catalogue of symptoms. The victim, especially the poor victim, obtained treatment only by opening himself up to the gaze of the modern hospital.

IV

The genealogy of the lie called Bhopal can be traced further back than the gas leak. As early as 1975, M.N.Buch, an IAS officer, had demanded that the Carbide plant be shifted as it was surrounded by residential colonies. In 1981, there was a leak in the phosgene plant in which an operator, Mohammed Ashraf died. In October 1982, there was another massive leakage which sent the residents of surrounding colonies scurrying in panic. That same month, in three consecutive issues of The Rapat, journalist Raj Kumar Keswani warned that an explosion in Carbide would turn Bhopal into a necropolis. All these warnings were ignored or read as noise. There was a monumental fixity to the Carbide plant. When the matter was raised in the Assembly in December 1982, the Labour Minister replied, "There has been an investment of Rs.25 crores (2.5 Billion). It is not a small stone which can be removed just like that." (5) It was the slums around it that was transient. Yet, even slums are caught in a strange double-bind. As dirt they "ought" to be displaced but as possible vote banks, they must be consolidated. In anticipation of the elections of 1984, the Chief Minister Arjun Singh conferred title deeds on the bustee dwellers around the plant. One has to admit, that a certain technological blindness "views" these plants as fail-safe systems and that it is not only ministers who feel so. Immediately after the gas discharge of December 3, when an ADM rang the works manager, Mukund, he remarked, "The gas leak can't be from my plant. Our technology can't go wrong, we just can't have a leak". Partly it is this technological "piety" that reduced all these warnings to mere noise.

The voluntary groups that rushed to the city in December did what they could but were faced with a paucity of information.

The treatment of the victims was difficult because there was little knowledge of the effects of MIC as a gas. There was no direct access to operational safety manuals or occupational health records. The doctors who were treating virtually one patient a minute, followed symptomatic treatment. The desperate population consumed vast quantities of corticosteroids, bronchio-dilators, pain-killers and vitamins without any concern for side-effects. The well intentioned iatrogeny added to the macabre nature of the situation. The ignorance of the doctors was aggravated by the disinformation from the authorities. Dr.L.D.Loya of the Carbide plant was glibly telling doctors and journalists that the gas, being a minor irritant, was neither lethal nor fatal. In fact what Loya suggested as an antidote was the application of a wet towel to the irritated eye. Yet Dr.Loya must have been aware that the company's own MIC manual warned that "eyes exposed to MIC or concentrated vapour are likely to be seriously injured or even damaged."(6)

The controversy over sodium thiosulphate treatment was even more revealing. Thiosulphate injections were first advocated by Hires Chandra of the Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal and also confirmed by Max Daunderer, the German toxicologist, who had been invited by the Government of India. Chandra's studies were based on systematic autopsies in the mortuary. The symptoms of cyanide were obvious. Hires Chandra advocated sodium thiosulphate as an antidote. In fact, he became his own guinea-pig by administering the first injection on himself. In addition, many of Chandra's students and colleagues took the injections and found immediate relief. Yet the success of 'hypo' injections confirmed the presence of cyanide, a fact that Carbide officials and some government doctors found embarrassing. "In an unusual step, the Director of Health Services issued an official letter banning the use of sodium thiosulphate."(7) The order was only lifted after the evidence became overwhelming. One can only speculate on the lives lost during the period of the ban from December 11 to February 3. Even now, despite the recommendations of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) regarding sodium thiosulphate, the availability of injections has been restricted to a trickle.

The voluntary groups who tried to obtain more information were also confronted by a science that had become captive to the State. **Science rather than being public knowledge had become a criminal network of lies, ignorance and silence.** Firstly, it was obvious that Indian scientists were virtually ignorant of the effects of the gas, its chemistry, or its toxic effects. For example, the Regional Research Laboratory at Bhopal was totally ignorant of the Carbide process for the manufacture of insecticides such as Sevin or Aldicarb. When Dr.Vardarajan of CSIR assumed charge of Operation Faith, he imposed a total clamp-down on all information. It reached such extremes that

when Dr. Sircar, Additional Director-General of the Meteorological Department, was requested to provide information regarding windspeed, temperature and humidity on the fatal night, he refused contending that the matter was sub-judice. When he was reminded that the meteorological department was a service organization, he disclaimed any such status. (8) What is even more disturbing is the secrecy surrounding the Department of Environment Report which proved through an analysis of air samples that gas was still leaking from the factory as late as December 5 and that there were traces of cyanide present.

While Indian scientists were behaving like inverted Coomar Narain (a New Delhi based businessman and key figure in a recent major Indian spy scandal), the multinational was pretending to be Mother Teresa. Warren Anderson's first offer was to build an orphanage for the children of Bhopal. Quick to action, he also offered to convert the company guest house into one, until a more permanent structure was built. Ironically it was this very building that Arjun Singh and other party functionaries used for their activities. However, within a short time, Carbide blocked any probe into its manufacturing secrets. It stated before the enquiry commission that it could not be compelled to disclose the manufacturing process of methyl-isocyanate as it was a trade secret. Carbide lawyers were indifferent to the argument that its right to secrecy threatened the very right to life of a people.

Underlying the horror of Bhopal as an event is a structure of propaganda, erasure and amnesia. Normally one would have expected the professional communities, doctors, lawyers and scientists to respond to the crisis through adherence to professional codes of integrity. Instead Bhopal has revealed the bankruptcy of the professions, both locally and nationally.

The following interview with one of Bhopal's leading doctors and an advocate of sodium thiosulphate is revealing. He remarked, "The facts are there. There is a fifty to hundred per cent improvement within hours. People who were bedridden, have walked. People who were gasping for breath were doing twenty dands and baithaks (physical exercises). Bhopal is full of witnesses, these are my living certificates. I ask the government, why do you not insist on administering these injections? They had imposed family planning quotas for doctors, but when it comes to this they are hostile and silent." What was moving was the strain to which a few official doctors who advocated sodium thiosulphate injections were subject. Caught in their commitment to professionalism and peer-group evaluation, they feel exasperated with their colleagues. "These are facts, empirically proven. Yet the state government has issued a regulation forbidding the administration of thiosulphate

injections. The government doctors are constrained by official rules but why can't the private doctors administer it? All these doctors are becoming commercial doctors. The injection costs 12 paise. Yet in Bhopal it is priced at Rs.50 an injection. Where is the question of ethics? There is only Swiss Franc ethics and Dollar based ethics."

"These foreigners think Bhopal's tragedy is God's gift to them. The Union Carbide research group claims that it is confining research work to insect pests, that there is no research on mammalian groups. We can guess that this information is passed on to the U.S. and further tests conducted elsewhere.... and what is this nonsense of NRI's (Non-Resident Indians) setting up a hospital. It is all a Carbide game. They are doing research here, collecting data, while Indians need permission to administer thiosulphate. Ofcourse, the doctors are afraid. The government can stop their increments but if Bhopal does not have courageous people, we must import them."

The collapse of the legal community was equally worrying. Indira Jai Singh of the Lawyers' Collective, observed, "Why can't we file suits in India? People believe that U.S. justice is quick, but cases there can take 10-15 years and even then, many have got a pittance. We have been criticising American lawyers as vultures, as ambulance chasers, but what has the Indian legal system done about it? The disaster occurred here and why have we not filed suits and tried to improve the system here. Union Carbide has not one, but thirteen plants as property here. Why can't we ask Union Carbide to cough up here?"

At the local level, the response of the lawyers has been 'miserably cold'. A local lawyer, one of the most sensitive of them, explained it thus, "Even the counsels engaged by the Government of Madhya Pradesh come from Indore. One reason is that Bhopal does not have a High Court. So the quality of the bar is not upto par. Also many of the successful lawyers depend upon State patronage. Bhopal houses about 40 state corporations and most of them have one or two lawyers on payroll. They have a steady income from it and finally the biggest lawyers are the criminal lawyers and the leading ones are employed by Carbide".

There is something deeper and inarticulate here, expressing something latent in all of us. Something about Bhopal is different. It is not that we are unused to catastrophes. We have had the Bombay plague, the Bengal famine; floods are part of the ritual cycle of our imagination. Yet, Bhopal, industrial, robotic, does not fit our universe of perceptions. It is not the wrath of our Gods or even our local viruses and demons. It is alien to our norms, like a huge piece from some other jigsaw. The scale, the sheer alienness of the size of compensation sets

it apart, as something that can only be expressed in the language of the American stockmarket. Indian lawyers somehow feel that the Carbide plant is not a machine in Vishvakarma's world. It is so American, let us enact it out in America. Our legal texts lack precedents for this. Yet Indira Jai Singh's warning that we might have to ready ourselves for such battles is not something we can ignore.

The performance of the scientists is also depressing. There was something pretentious about Operation Faith. Projected as an attempt to restore the prestige of Indian science, it turned out to be a piggy-back ride on the practical efforts of Carbide engineers who actually converted the gas. It is the behaviour of Dr. Varadarajan that is intriguing. One witnessed a man with impeccable professional credentials and a reputation for integrity alternatively playing Barnum and Hamlet. Journalists, whom he escorted around the plant, complained that he behaved like a Brahmin priest guarding the sanctum-sanctorum. The screen of jute bags around the plant, the helicopters hovering in the air during Operation Faith, contributed to an air of gimmickry.

In fact, Operation Faith was an act of exorcism, which demanded that Bhopal be purged from memory. It claimed that Indian scientists had exorcised the ghosts of the leak and all that remained was for people to return home and forget. It was an attempt to reconsolidate the legitimacy of scientific expertise. What the scientist and the State actually wished to suppress was the Gandhian dictum that every man had to be his own scientist and every village a science academy. One witnessed the sheer inability of the scientific community to generate public debate on Bhopal. It was voluntary groups like the Medico Friends Circle (MFC), the Patriotic People's Science and Technology group (PPST), the technical cell of the Morcha, the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP- Kerala People's Science Movement), Eklavya, who kept up the debate, while the science congresses pontificated elliptically around it. The badgering enthusiasm of these small groups foiled one act. They prevented Bhopal from being transformed into indifferent space, which could then create a vivisected table. The invasion of vultures on Bhopal was not of the legal variety alone. These grassroot groups by emphasizing the priority of healing over research, prevented Carbide from creating the full equivalent of the Atom Bomb Casualty Clinic.

Probably the finest performance was from the journalists. They did much to keep issues alive. Because of their reputation for integrity, many of them were not only able to sustain dissenting professionals in Bhopal but offer constructive critiques of them. However, much of the local press succumbed to government propaganda and indulged in the systematic maligning of

the activists of the Zaherili Gas Khand Morcha (Poisonous Gas Disaster Struggle Movement), the leading voluntary group working among the victims, with front page allegations of CIA and foreign finance. For example, when Alok Pratap Singh, a Morcha activist, was talking to the DIG after the unprovoked lathi charge on a procession of victims and activists on June 26, 1985, the District Collector came up with a bottle of red liquid and claimed it was acid brought by the demonstrators. Alok Pratap Singh challenged him on the spot and on examination it was found to be cough syrup. Yet several of the local papers still reported it as acid.

But there is a deeper failure in the reports on Bhopal both oral and written. Either they reified Bhopal, in all its specificity or left it nebulous. What they lack is a clear metaphor, one ironic image around which the conflicting imaginations can be brought to play. Bhopal is still a catastrophe in search of a metaphor, a vision that is both within and beyond Bhopal. An event like Bhopal should have created a sense of concern for all the littler Bhopals in our lives and yet be fluid enough to sensitize us to the destructive aspects of science and industrialism. Even a label like 'Bhopaishima', while being telegraphically quick is unconvincing as a metaphor. There is a need for poets here.

The objective of propaganda in Bhopal was to impose a structure of normalcy. This no doubt involved an act of erasure. But it must be emphasized that this is not only the conspiratorial amnesia of a company town. Underlying it is the logic of industrialism itself as a form of memory.

To the elite and even to the trade unions and parties, the location of the Carbide plant in Bhopal was the harbinger of things to come. It offered employment, pictured the possibility of industrialism to a state which was regarded as a tribal or dacoit belt, 'the real epicenter of laterism as a 'disease'.' The State could not but put an enthusiastic if illiterate thumb print on the transfer of technology contract. This resembles the logic of many Third World countries which have been inviting pollution-prone industries to locate themselves there. A certain logic of choice is built into this. The damages caused by these industries is regarded as affordable as long as the impact is on the village or the slum. The late Minister of State for Labour, Dharam Bir, once commented that ILO standards of safety cannot be allowed to strain economic development. Even trade unions in Bhopal were somnolent because such a loss is seen as part of the package of industrialism. Such amnesiacal memory is a part of industrial progress. There was also an unconscious element of triage in the administration of thiosulphate injections. The elite had access to them, officially or in black and then imposed

an embargo on further dissemination.

One knows today that the modern market is also anti-ecological. The market has no memory of ritual time. As memory it is indifferent to the past as tradition or even the rights of future generations. Its only concept of compensation is contractual. Once it offers a piece of money, it feels it has redeemed itself. All that it is capable of doing is withdrawing one drug or pesticide, coining a new brand and continuing amnesiacally forever (counting always on erasure of past memories). The market also behaves as if the logic of number is the calculus of pain. The marking of compensation at Rs.10,000 a human being reflected this. Underlying this, is also the assumption that human beings are also items of manufacture and can be priced and priced differently in different markets. One realizes now that the compensation offered is not the price of a life but of forgetfulness. Underlying industry is also the logic of clock time, of mechanical time. Mechanical time is empty and reversible. It is in fact the logic of the laboratory time of vivisection. Like clock time, it is empty of history or even the memory of pain. It is only the logic of such clock time that can explain the enthusiasm of some scientists who saw the event as an experiment. Vivisectional time is indifferent and all it knows is a fractional increase in knowledge as a prime value. All such forms of obsolescence as "memory" encode the processes of development. Propaganda expresses these deeper structures of modernity. But its power is real. This was brought home to us as we were leaving one of the bustees. One of their men ran up to the car and said "sahib, one more thing. Have you seen the Rahat (Tapan Bose's) film? I have a full twenty minute role in it." Somehow the cinematic drama has become more real than the traumas he and his children suffered on December 3.

In fact, Bhopal as a disaster has yet to graduate into a tragedy. A disaster is an objective event, something out there. It becomes a tragedy when human beings respond and there are flaws in the response. At the level of drama, this humanness is still missing. In fact, almost ironically, the two most tragic figures appear to be Mukund, the works manager who believes his machines don't fail and Varadarajan, who acts as if the cosmos like a machine can be mended.

V

Between the muteness of the victim and the propagandistic erasure of the State stands the voluntary organization.

Voluntarism attempts to create an ethical space, an ecological niche where the victim as survivor marked by the stigma of the disaster can grieve, mourn, remember and recover.

But the voluntarist is more than a mourner. He realizes that the victim becomes in the aftermath of a catastrophe, the focus of a grid, the huge apparatus of health and social welfare seeking to diagnose, survey and map him out. He seeks to humanize and even alter the structure of such an expertise. One example of such an attempt is the effort to alter the relation between doctor and victim in Bhopal. The voluntarist realizes that much of the formal language of medical expertise is caught in the mechanics of cause and effect. He seeks to transform the idea of a clinical gaze, where the patient is spread out like a table of symptoms, into speech with its more encompassing concern for signs, symbols and symptoms. Through this he hopes to articulate the victim's conception of his own pain. One strategy adopted in Bhopal was to move the site of the analysis from a formal organization like a hospital into the bustee itself. In the hospital, the patient is an isolated unit. Now he is a part of the community. Rather than being based on a formal reading of symptoms, cure and relief now become part of the socio-drama of a community. The doctor listens while the patient enacts out his pain amidst a chorus of familiar actors. Typical of such a strategy is the work of the Medico Friends Circle of (MFC).(9) Its report completed in May 1985 is probably the most sane, compassionate piece of scholarship on the problem of relief in Bhopal.

The MFC describes itself as a circle of health interested professionals united by the belief that the medical system is skewed in preference for the rich. It seeks to demystify medical expertise, decommercialize medicine, emphasizing community orientation of health care. Its basic survey was undertaken between 19-25 March, 1985. Its aim was three fold. It sought to uphold the idea of an expert as trustee, of science as publicly available knowledge. It articulated the pain of the victim and his/her idea of relief into a more integrated plan for medical rehabilitation. Thirdly, with true anthropological reflectiveness, it shows how conceptions of the patient, ideas of cause and effect, diagnoses and cure form an integrated consciousness, a gestalt as it were.

The survey began by studying the impact of the gas and in pursuing this they faced two sets of problems. Firstly, little was known about the properties of MIC and secondly, what little was known, was kept secret. It obtained with difficulty, Carbide's manuals which showed MIC to be a toxic gas undergoing runaway reactions when contaminated. The voluntary groups publicized data available in such manuals. The MFC also launched a survey of the literature available. The doctors realized that the information available in them was incomplete and flawed. They referred to lung fibrosis and corneal damage as the only two long range problems of survivors. The voluntary groups also

realized that government research, despite the fanfare, was sketchy and unsystematic. The ICMR's research appeared as "twenty or so vertical programmes, without integration into a wider conception of epidemiological-community based endeavour". What was missing was a systematic rationale for detoxification by Sodium Thiosulphate.

It was in this context that MFC with the aid of other groups planned a community survey. It included a people's perception of medical services. The doctors also decided that a summary of findings and technical recommendations would be handed over to each person in the sample. The surveys of the MFC and those of the Delhi Science Forum and the Morcha showed the enormity of the crisis as a social situation. The studies of Jai Prakash Nagar showed that income levels had fallen drastically, that rates of interest were high. They proved that compensation was inadequate, even though at the high point of the crisis, it was the only source of income for many disabled people. The report argued that doles were not enough. The mechanical hydraulics of the dole could not return the community to its original condition. What was required was an imaginative scheme of occupational rehabilitation. Such a scheme could not be based on the wage that was earned before the exposure as indicator. It had to take into account long range physical disability, the mental traumas, the persisting sense of insecurity.

The MFC and other groups were thus challenging the restrictive notion of health articulated by the government. The latter seemed to read the disaster in mere physical terms. What it refused to see was the psycho-social dimension of the disaster. "Thousands of people have experienced mass death, mass morbidity, mass migrations, disruption of family and social life, escalation into an acute socio-economic financial crisis and literally a loss of moorings in society. Such an experience is bound to manifest itself in psychological, somatic and psycho-social morbidity whose long term management will probably be more crucial than treatment of physical ill health and disability".(10)

The doctors of the MFC were true listeners, sensitive to the word and the sheer detail with which patients outlined these problems. The importance of this is brought out in the report: "The words and examples used by the patients while describing their symptoms clearly showed the gravity of the symptom as well as its effect on the person's day-to-day work. The different manner in which the symptom was described also showed that the person was informing us of a problem based on his/her own experience and not just vague hearsay expression. This is particularly important since in the absence of signs in the same proportion as symptoms, doctors attending on these people in busy

government hospitals were often passing of these symptoms reported as 'compensation malignering' or 'not of clinical significance'. We have very reason to believe that those symptoms were real expressions of physical and mental ill health and many should be accorded the same significance as the use of patterns of cough with or without expectoration on the diagnoses of Chronic bronchitis or the use of Anginal history in the diagnosis of Ischaemic Heart Disease".(11)

The conception of disease as a problem of the community, of the patient as diagnostician in his own right, contrasts with the conventional notion of the doctor as the sole interpreter of signs and symptoms, to which must be added the attitude of many doctors who perceived the behaviour of patients as malignering or compensation neurosis. These doctors prescribed "whole plates full of colorful capsules in a routine manner". The MFC survey eventually shows how such contrasting perceptions quietly link up to two separate views of diagnoses and cure.

The two basic theories were the Pulmonary theory and the Cyanogen Pool theory. The Pulmonary theory is based on the current literature available on MIC, which indicated that fibrosis of the lungs and corneal damage are the only long term effects to be expected. The impact on an any other system is, it holds, due to secondary effects. The Cyanogen Pool theory contends that the impact is not one of Pulmonary fibrosis alone but a deeper cellular one, not merely confined to lungs. What is important for the analysis is the style of research underlying the two theories. The first operates in terms of the direct mechanics of cause and effect, the second in terms of deeper relations. The mechanistic theory of pulmonary impact is advocated by the establishment and government hospitals. The cyanogen pool theory finds its advocates among voluntary health specialists and dissident doctors.

But what is most fascinating is the manner in which text and context are related. Voluntary health specialists have repeatedly advocated that the focus of study should be suffering in the community, rather than the patient as an isolate in the hospital. The first they argue, leads to a holistic view of disease while the latter propagates a reductionist view of illness and an atomistic view of the patient. The latter view which underwrote the pulmonary model, is based on numerous vertical studies rather than an integrated search for interconnections. In a telling paragraph the MFC report suggests, "The approach of examining say 200 eyes or 200 lungs and so on independent of one another lacks this integration. Strange it may sound, but it seems to derive the rationale - unconsciously - from the pulmonary model, wherein toxic gas directly hits the target organ (lungs, eyes, etc.) to produce

damage without any intrinsic connections - which is at the heart of the 'Cyanogen Pool' model".(12)

It is this anthropology of gestalts that is fascinating about the report. What it offered were two clusters which deserve further exploration.

1. Patient as an analytical grid	Patient as Person
2. Clinical gaze of the doctors	Victim's speech aids diagnosis
3. Focus of diagnosis is the hospital	Focus of diagnosis is the Community
4. Diagnoses as mechanics of cause and effect	Diagnosis as an analysis of inter-relations
5. Pulmonary Model	Cyanogen Pool Model
6. Anti Thiosulphate	Use of Sodium Thiosulphate as a critical tool

But documents by themselves remain inert. Facts need actors to enact them out. If the MFC represented the power of voluntarism as 'counter-expertise', the Morcha added to it the dimension of political protest. By its sheer courage, expertise and obsessiveness, the Morcha, along with the NRPC has dominated the imagination of the struggle. It was established on December 7, 1984, as a nucleus of 30 individuals, primarily from Bhopal.

The Morcha, in its discussions to formulate its strategy immediately confronted two facts. It realized that the scale of the disaster was so enormous that no voluntary groups or even a collection of voluntary groups could provide more than a modicum of relief. Only the State had the machinery for such an operation. Secondly, the Morcha and the NRPC (Nagrik Rahat aur Punarvas Samiti- Citizens Committee for Preservation and Rehabilitation) was the first to recognize the connivance of government officials with Union Carbide. It was within such a context that the Morcha's strategy of struggle has to be understood. It realized that political protest was the only effective way of pressurizing the government and also of keeping Bhopal as an issue alive. Its calendar of protest included dharnas (sit-in strikes/protests), processions, street plays, solidarity marches with other voluntary organizations and chakkajam. The initial impact of the morcha was tremendous. As one informant in the basti remarked, "we were deep in defeat and the Morcha gave us back our voice". What was particularly noticeable was the success of the morcha in organizing women in

the bustees. In all meetings, they were informed, decisive, realistic, full of an irreverent humour.

Beyond the drama of protest lay the Morcha's attempt to systematize an alternative information base, both on the technology of MIC and the methodology of relief. It appealed to the government to be more rational in its methods of relief. It provided information based on its own surveys showing gaps in government relief operations. It asked the government that mohalla-wise list of victims and compensation be published to avoid corruption. People in each locality could then easily check its veracity. When the district magistrate said that this was not possible because there already was a huge computer print out, the Morcha offered services of two computer scientists who would provide a programme to help sort out mohalla wise lists. The government refused to accept such suggestions. The campaign of the Morcha and the MFC report indicating the presence of cyanide was fast eroding the credibility of the government. The Morcha was soon branded as anti-national, naxalite, and an agent of the CIA. The behaviour of the government regarding relief is still puzzling. It has passed an ordinance deeming itself to be the sole representative of the Bhopal gas victims in all legal matters. Yet it has dragged its feet on relief and rehabilitation. It is an established fact the courts use the amount spent on relief as an index in determining the final quantum of compensation. Investment in relief, viewed even as a callous business proposition becomes profitable.

What irked the government was that the Morcha was challenging not only its political credentials but its scientific competence. The Governor, whom we and the PUCL and PUDDR met in this context, provided one of the few quotable quotes of his life when he said "The Morcha is agitationist and violent.... Questions of high science and technology cannot be settled in the streets of Bhopal." This in fact was the essence of the Morcha's crime. While a technocracy was attempting to take the issues of science and technology outside of the public domain, the Morcha was returning it to political forums. The presence of Anil Sadgopal in Bhopal was historically apt. A molecular biologist from Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), a leading exponent of science education, who initiated the Kishore Bharati experiment, he constitutes a part of the radical margin of Indian science. Critically admired by the scientific elite, his long and brilliant harangue on Bhopal was to draw its unmitigated ire.

The government retaliation was swift and subtle. It persuaded a few scientists from the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics at Calcutta to issue a statement that Bhopal's intellectuals were not with the Morcha. Secondly, it spread the canard that the Morcha was anti-national and that its demand for

information was sinister as it was an attempt to pass it on to Carbide and other foreign scientists.

Simultaneously, the government sought to split the Morcha through a policy of divide and rule. Two bustee leaders with a substantial following were invited and offered representation on government relief committees. They fell for the bait and started splinter groups of their own. The confrontation between the government and the Morcha was to climax with the Sodium Thiosulphate controversy and the establishment of the Public Health Clinic.

Faced with the powerful propagandist onslaught which was whittling down its support, the Morcha's political rhetoric became even more blaring. It grabbed a several-acre strip inside the Carbide factory premises and dubbed it an Azad Kshetra or liberated zone. A foundation stone for a clinic was laid in the presence of gas victims and other local citizens. The ceremony was performed by Sunil Kumar Rajput of Jai Prakash Nagar Basti. This twelve year old boy had lost eight of his family members in the disaster.

Along with other leading voluntary agencies working in Bhopal - the NRPC, the Trade Union Relief Fund, etc., the Morcha founded the Jana Swasthya Kendra (People's Health Clinic) which proclaimed the following rights to health:

1. That the affected people have a right to know what have been the effects of the toxic gases on their bodies and why;
2. That the people have a right to know what is being done¹² or not done on their bodies during investigation and treatment;
3. That the people have a right to voice their demands concerning their health and influence decisions that will have an effect on their bodies;
4. That the people have a right to scientific examination and treatment coupled with adequate nutrition so that they can regain their health as it was before December 3, 1984.(13) And a pilot detoxification programme was inaugurated.

Yet behind the rhetoric of rights and liberated zones was a quiet desperation. It is revealed in a brief letter, a leading doctor of the Medico-Friends Circle wrote to her colleagues in Calcutta and Bombay. The latter requested them to come to Bhopal "to loosen up the atmosphere of fear among the junior doctors of Bhopal."

The work of these doctors offers insights into the problems

or relief six month's after the gas leak. In an interview, one of them remarked,

"When I landed here one May 15, I was surprised. I realized that the morcha rather than being a movement meant only five or six people. Ofcourse, there was a huge supportive mass.

"Bhopal was literally in the dark. The struggle for relief had gone for six months without any fruit. There was little hope.

"When we arrived we decided the clinic should not be confined just to the MFC or the Morcha but should be something of a wider programme. We began with about 60 injections a day. Initially the government provided it freely and soon we were giving up to 200, sometimes 220 injections a day.

"Gradually it became the meeting place for activists as well as victims. It provided a sense of hope. A lot of political activity did take place in its vicinity. Tapan Bose showed his film there. Some days all of us sang songs. A basis for the movement was created again. The clinic was an information pool, both political and medical and the government was afraid the movement might get started again.

"Probably it was tactically wrong to mix medicine and politics. Practically it was difficult to separate the two. There was shortage of manpower. Ofcourse, there was also a touch of romanticism. We had captured a field in the Carbide factory and called it a liberated zone. It was a symbolic gesture, something foolish but true. When the clinic started giving larger doses of injections, it became a threat."

The effectiveness of these injections proved the existence of cyanide poisoning, something that Carbide and government were keen to deny. The repression of June 24 and 25 brought to a standstill the work of the clinic.

The facts of the repression have already been chronicled by the Delhi Committee on Bhopal.(14) We shall just make a few observations. The arrests on the night of June 24 was an Emergency like swoop to prevent the success of the rally. The police violence at the rally was amazing. Many observers referred to the sheer glee with which they beat up the protestors. Photographs taken then testify to this. The government's tactic was obvious. It had transformed a politically threatening event into a 'law and order' problem, fully exploiting the situation. Simultaneously it raised the bogey of outside interference as if to claim that protest in Bhopal was the work of professional agitators. It threw a whole

gamut of false charges against the activists. This ensured that they would spend more time disentangling themselves in court than engaging in protest. The violence too was a psychologically effective tactic. It frightened away numerous volunteers, especially teams of doctors from different parts of the country who wished to join the relief work in Bhopal. What is more revealing was the attack on the Jan Swasthya Kendra. Not only was the clinic closed and the premises returned to Carbide but according to some doctors, there is reason to believe that some officials of the government may have made over to Carbide, the medical registers, as well. Voluntary work, especially relief in Bhopal, is now literally at a standstill. Like all moments of retreat, it is a time for retrospection. In what follows we shall provide a constructive critique of the Morcha primarily through the responses of other voluntary agencies.

There was unanimity that the Morcha with all its warts was crucial to any effort in Bhopal. Yet its 'mistakes' must be analysed for any appraisal of voluntarism in Bhopal. Many groups and individuals responded through their own particularist lenses.

One obvious point that many made was that unlike in Delhi, where an umbrella organization like the Nagrik Ekta Manch, existed like a friendly hypothesis, providing the unity glue which allowed groups to work and quarrel together, no such companionship of difference was available in Bhopal. The Morcha, especially through its charismatic leadership, dominated all other groups. Some, as a result, felt crowded out. A few discerned what might be dubbed a Jewish streak in the Morcha. It behaved as if it had a monopoly over protest in Bhopal though many added that it has become more open ended after the repression in June.

The other criticisms were related to the Morcha's attitude to science. At one level both the Morcha and the scientific elite belonged to the same discourse. The Morcha mimicked the scientism of the establishment. In their commitment to science Varadarajan and Sadgopal rather than being opponents adopt substitutable positions. One is not debating about the social organization of science but about science itself as a mode of perception. The nature of the question then alters. Is vivisection central to science or a part of its pathology? Is a commitment to pesticides an intrinsic part of modern reductionist science? The question that becomes fundamental is whether modern science can absorb a comprehensive ecological attitude or is it condemned to remain merely 'environmentalist', in a functional sense, i.e., having a special science to mop up the diseconomies of the modern technocratic system. The real opposition was between the two Bhopals, tribal Bhopal and Carbide Bhopal. And some attempts should have been made to contrast the diverging views of science underwriting these two separate ways

of life. Catastrophes should bring about paradigm changes within science and one felt that the voluntary groups could have philosophically addressed themselves to such questions.

But even environmentalist groups had reservations about the Morcha's strategy. The Bhopal gas leak was an opportunity for a pedagogic act a long range research commitment to environment as an issue. In this context many felt that the Morcha was not scientific enough. They claimed that in the initial stages, the Morcha rushed to the press with every suspicion regarding the nature of gas and lost as much credibility as the government. Others added that it tended to downplay evidence that might be read favourably vis-a-vis the government. For example, it ignored studies which showed the water in Bhopal to be safe or that the gas had little teratogenic effects on plants. The gas leak in Bhopal, like the Minamata tragedy, provided an "auspicious" moment for sustained scientific research on environmental issues. It was the right time for the establishment of a people's science laboratory. The Morcha, by spreading its energies, had frittered away an opportunity.

Some voluntary health groups feel that the Morcha must maintain separation between political work and medical relief. They insist that it should at least enact them out in separate spaces. Others, particularly some journalists, feel that relief must receive priority over politics in the next phase of activity. The Morcha's confrontationist stance they contend had got it into a logjam with the government. Such a critique underlies the formation of organizations like the Bhopal Relief Trust.

Finally, for the record, one must quote an old Congressman. "This is the work of amateurs. No political party, the BJP, the Janata, the CP would have got itself into such a mess". In the complacent glee of this old politician might be the ultimate accolade to the innovativeness of the Morcha.

Sadgopal and other Morcha activists did respond to some of this criticism. They added first that politics was essential, that health today was a political issue and it was naive to believe that the right to health could be guaranteed without struggle. The thiosulphate controversy was not merely a professional debate but a political battle. It was struggle alone that had kept in the public consciousness the importance of thiosulphate injections and the danger of the gas to pregnant woman. Sadgopal added that even those groups who begin primarily with relief will have to take a political stand given the nature of the State. In fact, he felt that even the Morcha was a step behind and that what was necessary now was more political organization. It is in this context that the Morcha had to

differ with some people's science groups. These groups felt that their responsibility ended with the creation of an alternative information base. Sadgopal insisted that facts alone are inadequate. One had to struggle to bring them into the public consciousness and force the government to change its direction. We believe he has a point there. The facts of sodium thiosulphate were placed by Hires Chandra and accepted by ICMR. Yet it needed the drama of the Morcha to drive it home. One is reminded of a parallel example from the famous Liege trial. The facts about thalodome remained of little consequence as long as it remained at the dispassionately scientific level. It took the hysteria, the publicity of the Liege trial to drive it into public eye to bring about action and protest.(15)

VI

The experiences of the MFC, the Morcha and other groups demand that this has to be located within a wider political context. The problem of voluntarism has acquired a dramatic focus within a span of two months. The November riots and the December gas leak created a new objective situation which has to be understood within the theory of the State. The 'riots' in Delhi saw the formal emergence of the State as terrorist. The Bhopal gas leak revealed the complicity of the State in an act of industrial genocide. In both cities, the traditional corporate groups - the trade unions, the political parties, the universities - failed to act as a cushioning medium between State and the people. In Delhi, it was the civil rights groups, along with a network of feminists, journalists, university teachers and Jesuit priests which brought analytical clarity to the violence of the State and even provided relief to the victims. The situation in Bhopal was similar.

Caught in the grid of modernity, which sees industrialism as good and inevitable, the traditional corporate groups saw the victim as an embarrassment. We must add however that political parties like the CPI did gingerly conduct a few demonstrations. Some student wings of leftist groups responded by conducting surveys and providing some medical relief. But one felt a whiff of self-congratulation here, as if a few dozen injections has transformed them to the status of a Kohnis. Most pathetic were the trade unions. So startling was the disaster, and yet so used were they to negotiations with the management, that they refused to see that the normalcy of collective bargaining was inadequate to this situation. Eventually Carbide declared closure of the factory, offering the workers a nominal compensation. To add to this, the railway unions had failed to claim even workmen's compensation for the railwaymen who died on duty on December 3. The Railways passed the buck to the factory and vice versa. But the Workmen's Compensation Act is clear on this: the victims are

entitled to relief irrespective of the source of damage. Such lethargy was typical of almost all the corporate groups as organisations, even if some of the individual members discarded these routine scripts.

The voluntary organizations had to substitute for these groups though one must add that few were self consciously equipped for such a task. Voluntarism in this context required a double responsibility. It had to redeem not only the traditional idiom of power but also the repressive nature of modern knowledge. This point is crucial. As mediators between the State and the people they are not only refractors of power but proponents of an alternative ecology of knowledge. It is not only the victims as politically defeated people that they had to protect but also their voice, their memory, their right to their own vernacular of pain and distress.

One fact needs highlighting. There is a distinctive quality about voluntarism in these new contexts. The voluntarism of the old Sarvodaya-social service kind no longer occupies a central place. In Bhopal certain church groups, the Ramakrishna Mission and the SEWA did perform important service but stuck grimly to traditional styles. They accepted the official procedures of medication, basically symptomatic treatment, including use of steroids and antibiotics and looked to the leadership of the government in all these activities. The Health Secretary's question "why can't the Morcha be like the SEWA?" sums up this traditional and dedicated style. These organizations work as extensions of government relief and avoided confrontationist stances. The litmus test for such an attitude in Bhopal was the Sodium Thiosulphate controversy. All the above mentioned groups refused to administer these injections. The point we wish to make is that the new voluntarists were not content with relief. What they also sought, seek was justice for the victim. In this, the importance of socially conscious professionals became obvious. In the Delhi riots, university social scientists, researchers and journalists provided an enormous data base which the State has found difficult to refute. In Bhopal too, the role of the professional as 'counter expert' has been crucial. These include health groups, environmentalists, lawyers' collectives and peoples' science movements.

VII

We shall conclude this essay with a few terse reflections on the relation between civil rights, ecology and development.

Bhopal was not an act of war. It reflected the slower genocidal violence of peacetime, of death through obsolescence brought about by current models of science, technology and

development. It was not merely the violence of industry which saw nature as something hostile, needing to be dominated. Complementing it was the violence of science as a vivisectional experiment. All too often this is disguised behind the anti-septic models of the transfer of technology. One witnessed it earlier in the PL-480 insecticides scandal. One will see it again in the new centres for genetic engineering and in our atomic plants. These technologies, many of them obsolescent, are literally death warrants of the emerging laboratory-state. It has brought to the forefront of politics the crucial issues of ecology and survival. Political movements are realizing today that ecological concerns are not a luxury but crucial to survival. The right to a healthy environment has become a fundamental human right. Political activists have realized that civil rights is a hyphenated term, that the notion of rights must broaden with the stresses to which civil society is subject.

We have to confront today the issues of civil rights against a scientific establishment. We have to also face the problem of the rights of future generations. This has become even more fundamental with the storage of various kinds of poisonous wastes. One must face the possibility of granting the right of survival not only to distinct human groups, not only also to other species and forms of life, but to the whole of nature itself, because we have come to realize that the destruction of Nature eventually involves the elimination of human and other communities associated with it. And also, indeed for its own sake, for without such a basic ecological attitude, the norms and values needed for survival will just not endure. This realization is implicit - or ought to be - in the activities of the KSSP on Silent Valley, the Chipko in protecting forests, peasant movements in Karnakata against planting of eucalyptus, the tribal movements against the Koel-Karo and Narmada dam projects. The struggle in Bhopal is a part of that consciousness. It is a struggle against a State which openly wishes to dilute even ILO safety standards in the pursuit of development.

But rights, as conceived within the discourse of western political theory, will not do. The notion of rights has emerged basically within the ideas of equality and liberty and both of these have been captive to the mechanistic metaphor. Liberty has fallen prey to atomism, reductionism and individualism. The notion of equality has become mechanistic by connoting uniformity and standardization. Equality has become equalization and has failed to understand the grammar of plurality or difference. Fraternity remains the silent term of western politics. It emerges occasionally in the idea of the organism but then the organic model has become part to the modern cybernetic revolution. In this, power not fellowship of a wide-ranging community is central to the system. There is a need for a wider

notion of communities and it is here that ecology must play a role. Ecology must not be restricted only to man's attitude to nature but must simultaneously encode both nature and culture into a cosmic notion of plurality. It has to go beyond the market mechanisms of compensation, diseconomies, cost-benefit and mechanical efficiency. It has to understand the right to life of other people, other creatures, worlds and cosmologies. Viewed in these terms, the prevailing models of development are monocausal, anti-ethnic and anti-ecological. We have to work on a new idea of rights within a pantheistic idea of a fraternity. Rights, within the mechanistic knee-jerk responses of a western contract state, are inadequate. We wish to emphasize that a mere search for compensation for Bhopal's victims in western courts, no matter how much, is something obscene. It demeans the victims without redeeming the oppressor.

The final observation we wish to make is this. Disasters like triangles have three sides. The arguments all too often have emphasized the relation between oppressor and victim. However there is also the spectator as participant. The other accused is ourselves. As a spectacle, Bhopal has left behind a psychically numbed audience. Television might have created an electronic village but no one rushed to help his neighbour. Bhopal was seen as noise but noise as a wise man once said is unwelcome music. What we find unwelcome about Bhopal is that it challenges our way of life. It reminds us that our life-styles will determine other people's life-chance. Opting for chemical pesticides as necessary for growing adequate food crops might mean opting for Bhopal. One realizes that certain forms of consumerism allows and legitimises certain forms of repression. It is a package. It is this that we and development advocates are reluctant to remember. It is not surprising that soon after Bhopal it was the gentle Dracula of the Green Revolution, Norman Borlaug, who warned that any weakening in the will to pesticides would endanger the Green Revolution. Bhopal must occupy a central part of the political imagination. It cannot be forgotten. Years ago the Russel-Einstein Manifesto mobilized our minds to the danger of nuclear war. More than a decade later, the struggle in Vietnam occupied such a central place. The slogan then was "Amar Nam, Tomar Nam, Vietnam" (Our name, your name, Vietnam). Today your name and ours has to return to Bhopal to ensure that a hundred small Bhopals occurring all over India and elsewhere should be put an end to. One must grasp the bitter irony of the Union Carbide Company motto - "Today something that we do will touch your life", and act on the message implied in it for all of India, and for humanity as a whole. We leave Bhopal to fend for itself only at our peril!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was based on two trips to Bhopal, one as a member of the Delhi Committee on the Bhopal Gas Tragedy and the other as a part of a PUCL-PUDR team. It owes much to conversations with Anil Sadgopal, Jyotika Virdi, Sadhana Karnik and Sati Nath Sarangi, Alok Pratap Singh, Tapan Bose, Indira Jai Singh, Anant Grover, Meera Shiva, Tapas Roy, Jyotirmoy Samajdar, Ramana Dhara, Vinod Raina, Ramesh Billoray, Hires Chandra, Ritu Priya, Rakesh Srothi, Vibhuti Jha, Rana Kaushal, Ashish Kothari, Manoranjan Mohanty V.M.Tarkunde and George Fernandes (the latter three were part of the PUDR/PUCL team). Sangeeta Chattoo, Ashis Nandy, Girdeshingkar, D.L.Sheth and Susan Visvanathan offered critical comments on the first draft.

The two editors of the Lokayan Bulletin were helpful and encouraging as ever, even though they recognised that at places the text may be a bit terse or abstract for some of their readers. This paper can be referred to as Working Paper I of the Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures Programme on Bhopal.

FOOTNOTES

1.Harvey Braverman, Labour & Monopoly Capital, Monthly Review Press, 1974, p.77.

2.Hannah Arendt, Eichman in Jerusalem, Penguin Books, New York, 1977.

3.Interview, Anil Sadgopal.

4.Interview, Ramesh Biloray.

5.R.Keshwani, Bhopal's Killer Plant, Indian Express, 9.12.85.

6.Radhika Ramaseshan, Will the Coughing Ever Stop?, Sunday Observer, 3.2.85.

7.J.Bajaj, The Bhopal Tragedy: The Responsibility of the Scientific Community, PPST Bulletin No.8, May, 1985.

8.Ibid. p.8.

9.Medico-Friends Circle, The Bhopal Disaster Aftermath - An Epidemiological and Socio-Medical Study, Delhi 1985, (Mimeo).

10.Ibid, section 6.

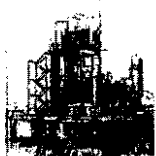
11.Ibid, section 5, 4.3.

12.Ibid, section 8.6.

13.Jan Swasthya Kendra, At Six Months: A People's Health Initiative in Bhopal, 1985, p.3 (Mimeo).

14.Delhi Committee on Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Repression and Apathy in Bhopal (Pamphlet), August 1985.

15.Jacques Ellul, The Political Illusion, Vintage Books, New York, 1967.



THE BHOPAL TRAGEDY

**What Really Happened and
What It Means for
American Workers and
Communities at Risk**

by
Ward Morehouse and M. Arun
Subramaniam

**A Report for the Citizens
Commission on Bhopal**

Available From ARENA

The Lessons of BHOPAL

**a community action
resource manual on
hazardous technologies**

International Organization of Consumers Unions



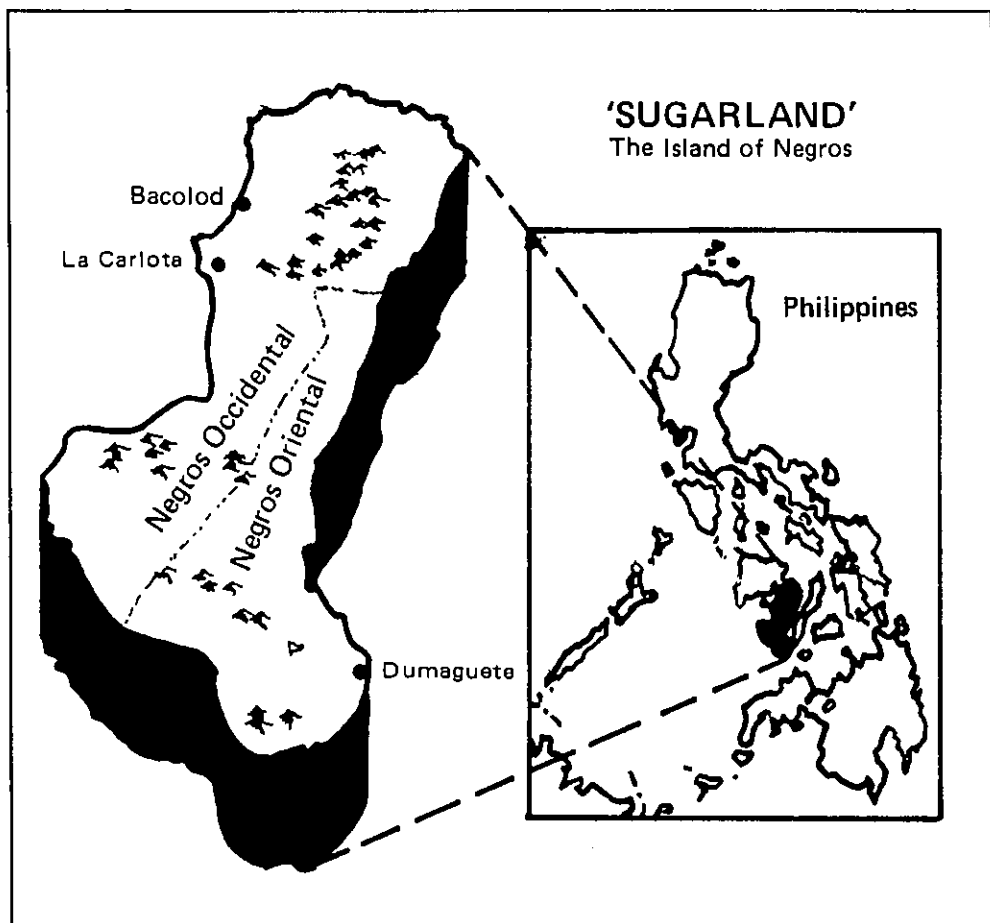
**Bhopal:
Industrial Genocide?**

Sugar and Famine

– The Case of Negros Island

Tsui Lai Si (Maria)

The island of Negros is situated in the central Philippines; Bacolod - the provincial capital of Negros is forty-five minutes by air from Manila. In the old days, the elite of Negros, the plantation owners and sugar barons who had amassed their wealth through sugar would often charter a plane and fly to Manila for a candle light dinner and fly back. Negros island is generally referred in terms of two areas - Negros Occidental where most of the sugar plantations are and Negros Oriental which consists largely of virgin lands and forests. Negros Occidental historically has been the largest sugar producing area in the Philippines. The collapse of sugar prices in the world market in recent years, coming upon the long years of the corrupt and profligate rule of Marcos and his cronies, coupled with an exploitative production system, so characteristic of plantation agriculture in the Philippines, has given rise to serious



famine in Negros Occidental. Famine situations similar to that of Ethiopia, images of which have been assualting the senses in media reports of Ethiopia. Only, in the case of the Negros the media has not carried it with the same sense of urgency as Ethiopia. The tragedy has been going on for years, yet the news was deliberately hidden particularly in the latter period of Marcos' rule. On a visit to the Philippines in 1985, I remember, a Filipino tourist guide in Manila when asked whether people went hungry in the Philippines, retorted, "Hunger? It's nonsense. Our Philippines is full of resources. People can be full just by chewing sugarcane." The bitter irony of that reply came back to me, when visiting the Philippines and going to Negros in August, 1986.

Contd.

I arrived in Bacolod, the largest city in Negros Occidental, and went to the Western Visayas Regional Hospital. The hospital was full of patients. It was ironical these were all people "suffering" from hunger and malnutrition, and were being treated in the hospital. The hospital was badly over-crowded. Even the hallways and the area near the registration counter was packed with wooden benches arranged as makeshift beds, a "malnutrition ward" was erected in a small backroom. A number of white cribs occupied by emaciated children suffering from third-degree malnutrition filled the room. Some of the impoverished mothers were also in the ward asleep on chairs beside the cribs.

Dr. Socorro Gonzaga, one of the doctors in the Hospital told me,

"Children don't have three meals a day. They suffer different degrees of malnutrition, anaemia and marasmus, a disease caused by calorie deficiency that eats away the brains and muscles. Some are admitted to hospital for other ailments such as diarrhoea, typhoid fever and other diseases. Malnutrition robs them of their strength and resistance to disease and makes them vulnerable to infection."

Argirrellea was a five year-old girl whose weight has been 7.7kg. (the normal weight should be 18kg.) for the past three years. She was suffering from third degree malnutrition with marasmus, hypovitaminosis A and nutritional anaemia. Her stomach was distended and her dull eyes bulged. Ribs bulged from her chest. Her hair was thinning and tangled, and her forehead and mouth were perpetually wrinkled in apparent misery. She moved in slow motion, rising on wobbly legs with great effort. She appeared too weak to keep her eyes open. At other times, she appeared too weak to eat. She just kept drifting in and out of sleep. Her mother was sitting beside with a sad look and added, "I have five children. There is one inside here (she's pregnant). My husband is a carpenter (a casual worker). We earn only 50 pesos (roughly US\$2.50) week. We have nothing to eat sometimes."

But no matter how miserable life maybe for Argirrellea, she was lucky. She was still alive. But even if children do not die, they will be physically and mentally handicapped. Generally their brains get irreversibly damaged and thousands of children on Negros will grow up like this. The hospital

scenes were just incomplete pictures of a more extensive and grim phenomenon. Most people never reached the hospitals, or even attempted to go there, and they died in their villages. Perhaps as other visitors to Negros have found, the deaths on Negros could be computed better through the funeral parlours than in the few small hospitals on the island. Anyway, it is one more irony that famines and hunger caused by totally man-made circumstances have to be "cured" by modern hospitals.

(Contd.)



Joel Abong died on July 4, 1985.

To many who have never been in the Philippines and Negros, the stories as well as the images of famine on Negros were perhaps conveyed by media reports that carried a picture of a sad looking, malnourished Negros child - Joel Abong. International media attention, ephemeral and shifting as it is prone to be, for a brief moment however, when it decided to focus on the suffering of the people on Negros did so through an image, a photo of a malnourished, poverty stricken child and which was published in several papers and magazines in the region and elsewhere. The world came to know of famine in Negros through the picture of Joel Abong. Little Joel much as his own sad figure and image served to convey to the rest of the world the suffering on Negros, he himself did not survive. He joined the ranks of the countless others who had died of a famine that could have been avoided. The parents of Joel Abong were migrant sugar workers living in one of the urban slums in Bacolod. I decided to search for his parents.

Joel's family were living in a coastal barangay (name in tagalog for an administrative unit) called 'Banago'. His mother, Concepcion Abong recalled to me how in fact, before Joel Abong's death on July 4, 1985, her sixth child, three year-old Juliet died. In a short span of two months, she had lost two children. Since early 1985, Concepcion has known no rest. Pushed out of their village, (originally, she had seven children but the third child Josie had died on November 11, 1983) because of no work in the farm, she and her husband were constantly on the move in search of casual work such as repairing fishing boats and catching shells. They had no peace, being constantly faced with uncertainties of finding jobs and food, their biggest anxiety was that their other children should survive.

Survival was what the workers had sought on a hacienda 45 km from Bacolod, which I had visited. They were locked out and had been out of work since August 1984. The field all around was lush green with sugarcane, the soil was all so fertile. It was already lunch time when I arrived. Men without any work were lying along the riverbank eating bananas for their lunch. Their work was just to dig up sand from the riverbed and to wait and hope that government officials would come and purchase the riverbed sand. The price was P20 (roughly US\$1) per ton but one had to work three days in order to get that P20. Children hiding behind the sugarcane were chewing sugar. I was told that they would be punished, if discovered by the men of Lacson, the landlord who owned the hacienda. In a hut, I found a family cooking

gabi (food for pigs). The two dishes of gabi would feed a family of six. In another hut, the family of Razalina and Erlinda were busy preparing a lunch of non-milled rice borrowed from their relatives of another hacienda. They sometimes ate frogs and toads that they could catch. This day, they would instead lunch on gabi and corn. The two had seven children. Most of them were very seriously malnourished and the malnutrition was eating away the children's limbs and brains.

Arcelio, a mother of eight children, told me their stories. "It was off-milling season. There was no work and consequently no food. Lacson failed to feed us. We requested him to sell his fertilizers in his store room and lend us some money. We sent one overseer to go to Bacolod to discuss with him. Time after time, no answer. At that time - August 1984, the daughter of our neighbour, Gina who was one and a half year old, died of high fever since the parents could not afford the medicine and the doctors had shown no mercy just as landlord Lacson!"

"If Lacson had lent us money, Gina would have survived," Arcelio went on. "We were extremely angry. We are poor not because we are lazy. Our ancestors and we have contributed our whole life for the hacienda. What can we get back? We are not greedy, we just keep hoping that our children will not die of hunger. We later forced open the fertilizer store and seized 20 bags of fertilizer which we sold. We bought rice, fish and medicine for our 26 families. While we were eating, more than 20 militiamen arrived and arrested us."

Later, Lacson suddenly declared a lock out and threw all of them out of employment. Before the lock out, Arcelio and her husband together earned P110 a week by cutting cane points. But even then they could not afford the basic food for a family of eight. Such situation coupled with the grinding poverty, hunger and famine in the rural areas has only accelerated the migration to the urban areas. There are about 450,000 sugarworkers (both field and mill workers), not less than 175,000 have been locked out. 78% of the children are suffering from malnutrition and need immediate care. 30% are suffering from third degree malnutrition or "manarum" and they have little chances of surviving. (Contd.)

Historical Background

The Colonial Antecedents

Negros was once made up of virgin forests. The opening up of these areas started in the early 19th century during the Spanish colonial rule and was done strangely by the British. At the time of conquest of the Philippines and in the first two-centuries of colonial rule, Spanish colonialism was largely of a mercantile capitalist nature. Spain was an agricultural country, and the driving power behind Spanish colonialism were the merchant capitalists who were only interested in trade.

According to historical accounts, it was the early Chinese traders who introduced the sugarcane plant to the Philippines. At first the concentration was in Central Luzon and only later it was introduced to Negros Occidental. Historically, Chinese traders were already conducting commerce with the natives of the Philippine islands long before the arrival of the Spaniards. The Spaniards saw in the Chinese an important economic partner in colonizing the country since the Chinese were an important commercial link between the native producers and the Spaniards. So, the Spaniards explicitly encouraged greater Chinese participation in the development of agriculture such as introducing new methods of planting sugar in the Philippines. Still, the sugar crop was not a commercial plantation crop at that time. Dominated by a merchantilist policy, Spain's own interest in its distant colony in a strange continent like Asia, peopled by 'pagans' and 'non-believers' and not Christians, was very unclear.

Around the same time the industrial revolution in Britain had led to manufacturing industries which needed foreign markets. Britain thus also became the key power that pressurised the Spanish colonial regime to end the isolation of the Philippines from international commerce, and to allow for the exploitation of the rich natural and agricultural resources. Britain which had emerged as an industrial power, was keen on the one hand to directly exploit the rich natural volcanic soil of Negros Occidental. On the other hand, the need to find markets for the textiles that English textile mills were then producing in big quantities made them to pour cheap textile products into Panay, a nearby island of Negros Occidental. This dumping of cheaply produced textiles killed the small cottage textile clothing industries of Iloilo and the other Panay provinces which had supported the livelihood

of 60,000 people including small businessmen and self-reliant weavers there. People were forced now to search for other sources of livelihood by migrating to nearby islands. The opening up of Negros Occidental was part of this history and started in early 19th century by Nicholas Loney, a British entrepreneur. Loney, the architect of the clothing industry in Iloilo at that time, ruined by British dumping encouraged the people to exploit the rich volcanic soils of Negros to grow sugar. Developed primarily by external interests, sugar in the Philippines thus became very quickly an international commodity. With it came the generation of commercial plantation agriculture and extensive mono-cropping and all the perils attendant upon such cultivation.

The sugar industry in the Philippines accordingly has experienced several transitions resulting from its relationship to the world market and each transition has brought rapid changes in the internal organisation of production. During the 1850s and 1860s, the Philippines developed its exports to the world market through Anglo-American trading firms based in Manila. With the increasing world demand for sugar, the sugar industry in the Philippines underwent a rapid transformation from small farms with animal-powered mills to large haciendas equipped with British steam mills of six to twelve horse power. The investment of local and foreign capital in the Negros plantations led to changes in the production process particularly in the extraction of sugar from cane and refining, through the introduction of new technology (centrifugal mills) and in infrastructural improvements such as ports, roads and railway system.

Though the commercialisation of sugar changed the extraction and refining stages of the production of sugar, there was little impact in terms of the cultivation of sugar cane in the plantations. The use of migrant labour was an important feature of employment in the plantations. Unlike in other share-tenancy farms and landholdings where the tenant still possessed some means of production like farm animals and simple tools, most of the workers in the sugar plantations were completely dispossessed and had nothing to fall back on, except the wages from the plantation.

Sugar cane cultivation is labour-intensive and in order to attract and to retain migrant labour, the hacienda production system was practised. Within such a system, houses and other basic necessities were provided. Haciendas, which were the direct offshoots of the promotion of export crops,

were frequently tilled by hired workers paid on either a daily or contractual basis. Thus the Negros plantation economy evolved into a social system without parallel elsewhere in the Philippines. Unlike the tenanted sugar plantations of Central Luzon, Negros haciendas were cultivated by paid workers in teams under the supervision of a foreman, almost like factory workers. The wage relation however was inseparable from a system of debt which in effect tied down the workers to the land. Thus the hacienda owner could routinely exploit them by non-wage means. The hacienda system was a very feudal set up characterised by coercion and terror and workers were completely at the mercy of the hacienda owners. Parallel to this was the rapid concentration of land for export commodity production which was facilitated in Negros Occidental by employing the following means: 1)outright purchase of small peasant plots; 2)foreclosure of usurious mortgages incurred through very high interest loans; 3)violent expropriations or by fraudulent titles;and 4)religious sanction. As a matter of fact, in the 1850s, the Spanish Governor-General Sarabia collaborated with the Recollect Missionaries to liquidate the small tribes through a combination of diplomacy and cruelty.

The British and the Spaniards worked like a team in building the island's sugar industry and institutionalising the feudal system. Loney and Sarabia were good examples of colonizers, who belonged to the same boat and represented two sides of a colonial carrot and stick policy. Religious missionaries also contributed much, in perpetuating such a system by working with Spanish officials. The haciendas were usually owned by religious corporations, as well as big land owners. These were then maintained through a system of debt and slavery. The owners of haciendas fettered the workers in perpetual slavery by imposing high interest rates on the loans they lent them.

Contd.

Subscribe to Asian Exchange

Annual subscription rates (four issues):

Japan,Australia and New Zealand	US\$ 30.00
Rest of Asia (Individual)	US\$ 10.00
(Institutions)	US\$ 20.00
USA and Europe	US\$ 50.00

The Beginnings of Dependency on the US

A Colony in the Making

Although Britain started to systematically establish the sugar industry, it was the US, a growing international power which was actually extremely interested in capturing and exploiting Philippines resources. According to historical records, Philippine sugar trade with the United States started in 1876. Thus even before the American occupation of the country, the US was already the principal market for Philippines sugar. Sugar production rose steadily throughout the latter part of the 19th century until the destruction of farm operations brought by the Spanish-American War and the Philippines Revolution of 1896 - 1902.

Among the most influential sectors of the US economy which advocated the colonisation of the Philippines was the Sugar Trust, or the American Sugar Refining Company, that in the 1890s was the sixth-largest US corporation, controlling 98% of the Philippine sugar refining industry. Its political fortunes was considerably boosted when William McKinley, one of its strongest supporters in the US Senate, was elected to the presidency in 1896 with of course the aid of the Sugar Trust's generous contributions to his campaign funds. It was President McKinley who decided that the Philippines would become a US colony.(1)

The turn of the 20th century immediately following the war was one of considerable hardship for the sugar industry. Leading planters saw access to the US market as their best means of recovery and lobbied successfully in Manila and Washington for a duty-free quota. In 1909, the US Congress passed the Payne-Adrich Act which removed the tariffs on the products of both countries but placed certain limitations on the amount of Filipino exports that could enter the US. Under such act, the Philippines was granted 300,000 short tons - an America unit (approximately 330,760 tons) of duty-free sugar.(2) By 1913, the US removed all the quantitative restrictions through the Underwood-Simmons Acts. In effect, giving Filipino producers unlimited access to the U.S. Market. This led to 60 years, till the 1970s, of access to and dependence upon, the American sugar market.

However, over-dependence upon one single market in the US totally subjected the Philippines to the vagaries of US policy. In 1930, the US started to consolidate its 'sugar

empire' which encompassed Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Cuba, the Philippines and the US mainland. In 1934, the U S Congress passed the Jones-Castigan Act, imposing quotas for sugar imports to regulate American sugar production and to protect American sugar growers from stiff foreign competition. Competition for a share in the market of refined sugar was also felt from Indonesia and Cuba where centrifugal sugar mills were operating. This situation forced the Philippines to modernise its milling facilities.

The Philippine National Bank (PNB) was established in 1916 by the US Colonial administration, to extend cash loans to finance the new industrial requirements of the Philippine sugar industry and to maintain its foothold in the American market. In a span of 20 years (1911-1930), 47 mills were constructed, and 18 of which were in Negros Occidental. The four biggest mills were American-owned.

Contd.

Some important dates in Philippine History

- 1519 - Maghallanes' expedition sailed from Spain, resulting in the "discovery" of the Philippines and the opening up of these islands to Spanish colonisation.
- 1569 - Miguel de Legaspi landed in Cebu.
Image of "The Holy Child" was found on Cebu shore.
Cebu became the capital of the Philippines.
- 1571 - Manila became the capital of the Philippines.
- 1880 - The Hong Kong-Manila submarine cable was laid.
- 1896 - The Tagalog Rebellion opened. (Aug. 20)
Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippine patriot was executed. (Dec. 30)
- 1898 - The Spanish-American War began. (Apr. 23)
General Aguinaldo returned from exile in Hong Kong to Cavite. (May. 19)
The Constitution of the Revolutionary government was promulgated. (Jun. 23)
The US conquered Manila. (Aug. 13)
Malolos became the Revolutionary capital. (Sept. 15)
Paris Treaty of Peace between the US and Spain. (Dec. 10)
The beginning of US colonisation of the Philippines.

"I speak not of forcible annexation because that is not to be thought of, and under our code of morality would be criminal aggression." - President McKinley's message to the US Congress, December 1, 1887.

"The Philipines are ours as much as Louisiana by purchase, or Texas or Alaska" - President McKinley's speech to the 10th Pennsylvania Regiment, August 28, 1899.

The second world war however brought a widespread destruction to the sugar industry. It resulted in chronic underproduction and continuous inability to meet the increase in domestic consumption and also fill the quota for the US sugar market. Under such circumstances, the US devised several measures to revive (in other words, 'control') the post-war Philippine economy.

A US Philippine Trade Agreement known as the Bell Trade Act of 1946 was signed. This new trade agreement tied the peso to the dollar, granted the American businessmen "parity rights" in the exploitation of natural resources and operation of public utilities and other businesses, and continued the pre-war free trade arrangement between the two countries. This agreement provided for the continuation of duty-free trading for eight years. It was this kind of free trade that had exerted decisive impact on the general development of Philippine agriculture. The prominence of the sugar firms and families that had been dominant before the war was restored. This original eight-year free trade agreement was subsequently extended for another two years, while the progressive application of duties was later modified by the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1955 whereby Philippine duties on Philippine products decelerated. As was the case during the American Colonial period, it was such free trade agreements, worked out more with US interests in mind that was mainly responsible for making the country dependent on the US.

Sugar production in fact was under the control of the Philippine Sugar Quota Administration created in the 1930s. Sugar was classified into different types as follows: 'A' sugar - raw sugar exportable to the US. 'B' sugar - sugar for domestic consumption, 'C' sugar - sugar in reserve for the US, domestic and world market; and 'D' sugar - sugar for the world market. Given the continued postwar shortage of sugar especially for the U.S. market, the Philippine Congress adopted resolution in 1952 to prohibit the exportation of

sugar other than to the US, on the ground that the failure to fill quotas for the US market would open the way for the reduction of such quotas to the consequent detriment of the national interest. Moreover, since 1952 all sugar producers, quota or nonquota, were ordered to mill for export and only later to fill the shortage in domestic allotments.

Sugar in the Period of Marcos

In 1961, the US prohibited sugar imports from Cuba, and demanded more export from the Philippines after that. The Philippines government began to move for expansion of sugar production primarily for export to US and secondarily for domestic consumption. Based on the new policy, President Macapagal had earlier permitted to put up two new sugar mills in Negros. Succeeding the move for expansion of sugar production in the Macapagal period, President Marcos promised government assistance and urged the setting of more sugar mills. New mills terminated the post-war monopoly of the old mills. The policy that prevailed in the late 1960s, of establishing new mills only in the existing sugar producing regions namely Negros Occidental, changed, to the development of new producing areas in the 1970s. This was significant in the context of the dissolution of the traditional structure of the sugar industry.

In February, 1974, President Marcos created the Philippine Sugar Commission (Philsucom) as a single agency, whose objectives to be carried out in stages, were to implement the policy of the state to promote the integrated development and stabilisation of the sugar industry. It was to 'modernise' the sugar industry in order to earn more foreign exchange from sugar export. Such overall control of sugar trade, was seen by the government as an essential measure in promoting its policies in relation to sugar. However, with the subsequent rise in world market prices, Marcos moved quickly to expropriate the windfall profits. Instead of waiting for the new body to establish itself, he invested in a hastily-formed PNB subsidiary, the Philippine Exchange (Philex), to exert direct control of the sugar trade. Philex was solely responsible for fixing the buying price from millers and planters, and the selling price to domestic and foreign traders; it was instrumental in simplifying the sugar trading with other countries, when the Philippines had to diversify its export to countries other than the US after the expiration of the Laurel-Langely Agreement in 1974 and in facilitating the return of loans to PNB or foreign creditors of PNB. In 1974, the year the

Laurel-Langley agreement was to expire, an unusual development occurred in the world market. Sugar beet in Europe was badly damaged and a world shortage of the commodity caused the price of world sugar to skyrocket. From US 16 cents per pound in January of 1974, the price of sugar increased to US 65 cents per pound in November of the same year.(3) The government kept on withholding sugar from the market even when it was 36 cents a pound, hoping that the rates would rise, which it did towards US 65 cents a pound in December, 1974. As long as sugar prices remained at record levels, PNB bureaucrats inspite of their incompetence were able to make a substantial profit in world trading.

However, in the second half of 1975, the world sugar market began its crash. Sugar price dipped to US 7 cents per pound in 1976-77. The reasons behind were not only because of the higher output of other sugar producing contries but also owing to increased production of synthetic and alternate sweetening agents such as high fructose corn syrup. The plummeting of the sugar price was catastrophic for the industry since the Philippine production cost was between US 8 cents to 10 cents per pound.(4) Under the control of the corrupt Philex, with the world prices at record levels in the first half of 1975, the nation's crop were sold at the world market for 50 cents a pound while the producers were paid only an arbitrary 'liquidation price' of US 14 cents. The difference between the two, totalling about one billion pesos, was remitted to the Philippine government. Worst hit, of course were the sugar workers.

The policy of trying to withhold sugar till the prices were really high, led to a situation in which, Philex found itself holding some two million tons of sugar with an industry-wide warehousing capacity of only one million tons. Throughout the year, mills continued to produce sugar with as yet no buyers, forcing Philex to store it in schools, swimming pools and open roadways.

The drop in world market sugar prices brought the Marcos government, to suddenly find unity with other sugar-producing nations in working towards the stabilisation of sugar prices. Though it soon became clear, as with other commodities that the developing countries were dependent on, the US and other, developed capitalist countries were least interested in stabilising the price of sugar. Cheap sugar was beneficial to giant sugar consumers like the confectionary and soft drinks transnational corporations. According to 'Capitalism in the Philippines' by Rene E. Ofreneo, a news report stated

that the biggest US consumer was Coca-Cola whose principal legal adviser, Charles Kirbo, was a close friend and confidante of Carter on the sugar price question. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) convened the International Sugar Conference in Geneva in April-May 1977 to stabilise world prices of sugar. After seven weeks of deliberations, the conference was bogged down owing to the almost impossible demand by big sugar importers led by the US, for sugar exporting countries to build buffer stocks of about a half million ton. This was an impracticable requirement for sugar-exporting countries most of which belonged to the Third World, because it required heavy investments in storage facilities as well as tremendous financial sacrifices since they would not immediately realise revenues for their product.

In September 1977, the sugar producing countries hammered out the International Sugar Agreement (ISA). ISA was a price stabilization measure, through the use of both export quotas and reserve stocks assigned to each country. It was designed to maintain the world price between 11 and 21 US cents per pound. If the prevailing world price was at the bottom one-third of this price range, export quotas were in effect meant to drive the price upward and producing countries were required to build reserve stocks up to 2.5 million tons. If the price was in the middle third of the range, that is, between 15 and 19 cents, the quotas were suspended. If the price exceeded 19 cents, then the reserve stocks were released.

As the world's fourth largest sugar exporter, the Philippines played a crucial role in the conclusion of the 1977 ISA when it gave up a portion of its quota to overcome an impasse which developed over Cuba's refusal to reduce its quota in accordance with the size of its sugar industry. The Philippines was also the first to ratify the agreement. But ISA became operational only two years after the ISA conference. The main reason was the US administration's delay in ratifying the agreement, since the US bought about one-fourth of all sugar traded in the world market and as it was also a major sugar producer, American ratification of ISA was essential to guarantee the implementation of the agreement.

In fact, the Common Market countries of Western Europe were following the US in keeping sugar prices low. The European Economic Community was though also an sugar exporter, its exporters had an advantage over Third World

exporters since the former received high subsidies from their governments. The EEC dumped 2.3 million tons of sugar in 1977 and more than 3 million in 1978. It also earmarked over \$600 million just for subsidising their sugar exports.

The World market price for sugar has continued to drop due to over-supply since 1980. World market prices have plunged from a high of 28.66 US cents/pound in 1980 to 3.5 US cents in 1984. As of January 1987, the expected price per pound is 4 US cents. Prices are expected to remain depressed for another 3 to 4 years. The production cost of sugar in the country is more than 10 cents per pound. From a quota of 342,000 metric tons (336,614 tons) in 1985, the 1986 US quota for the Philippines was reduced to 271,000 metric tons (266,732 tons). The quota will be further reduced to 185,000 metric tons (182,087 tons) in 1987. In addition, the domestic consumption dropped to less than 1 million metric tons (984,252 tons) during the last 2 years due to economic recession. Crop year in 1984-85 saw the most drastic difference in area planted and area harvested in the history of the sugar industry, specifically in Negros Occidental. Of the 224,000 ha. planted, only 135,734 ha. was harvested due in large part to shortage of finances. The medium term picture for sugar in the island up through milling season 1986-87 does not look bright.

In an article such as this which tries to situate the suffering and survival politics of the poor of Negros, it may not be possible to give a complete diagnosis of all the reasons for the failure of the sugar industry in Negros. The reasons for the failure include colonial history, total dependence on the US market, persistence of feudal relations based on over-exploitation of cheap labour with the profits being squandered on luxurious life-styles, and the predatory policies of Marcos combined with a total lack of coherent government policy in relation to cash crop cultivation.

Other analysts would perhaps, also point to the fact, that among the underlying causes for the failure of the sugar industry in the Philippines should be included the failure to adopt more rational and efficient production methods like mechanization. To substantiate this, examples may be given of the sugar industry in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Accepting certain frameworks of dependency and a global division of labour as given, some of these analyses of the failure of the Philippine sugar industry can be said to have some validity. Even there, studies of technical change consistently point out that even technical changes in particular industries,

such as mechanization of sugar plantations is very much a function of social change.(5)

However, more fundamentally one can perhaps say, not so much with hindsight, that cash crop monocultures are inevitably rapacious both in relation to the labour that is needed for it and in relation to the ecosystem. This rapacious nature of cash crop cultivation, does put countries and populations dependent on them in a continually precarious state. This was the case in Negros. It is therefore not surprising, or again at the risk of sounding tiresome, inevitable, that the survival strategies that emerged in Negros to deal with the hunger, famine and suffering were oriented to food multi-cropping that were also intrinsically ecologically balanced.

Workers' Situation

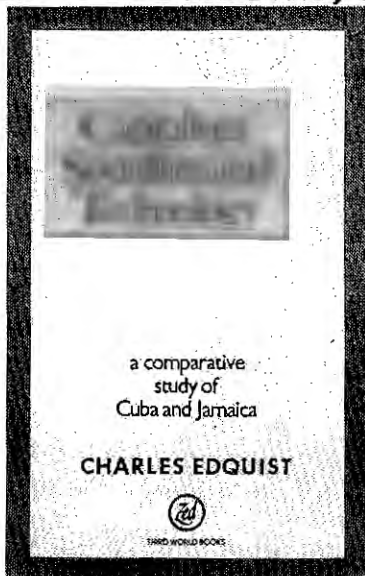
At the receiving end of the crisis of the collapse of world market prices of sugar and an exploitative production system on the plantation were the workers.

There are two general types of workers in the industry: those who work in the fields and those in the mills. The latter constitute the over-whelming majority and are further classified into the permanent and the seasonal migrant workers or the sacadas who are the most numerous and the most exploited.

(Contd.)

Available from Zed Press, 57 Cal

9DN.



Orders can also be placed with ARENA.

The sacadas are usually hired by the hacienda owner just before the start of every milling season. In general, they are exploited not only by the hacienda owner but also by the contratistas or cabos, the intermediary, who recruits them for the hacienda owners. It has not been uncommon for the intermediary to get a commission from both sides. He also defrauds the sacadas by not informing them of the actual monetary terms the hacienda owner has agreed to pay them. Those who work on a pakiaw basis, i.e., those paid by the weight of cut and loaded canes, are usually cheated in the weighing. As for accomodation, they are housed in quarters called quartels, which are long and crowded nipa huts. Some landlords even make the sacadas buy food in the landlord-operated stores at exorbitant prices. The permanent workers or dumaans, generally receive better treatment and are assigned higher work in the haciendas. However, they get lower wages than the sacadas.

During the better years, workers can work for more than 120 days in a year. However, at present, many work for less than 120 days because of production cuts, rotation and mechanisation. Mechanisation has resulted in severe displacement. A mechanical weeder makes redundant as many as 59 workers. With the aid of a planting machine, 6 workers can perform the job of 20 conventional labourers. The mechanised weeder has also taken over the weeding task performed mainly by women and children. Men's labour continues specially in land formation activities. At least, they have the status as permanent workers. Permanent workers are mostly men.

In practice, most worker are not paid on daily basis but on piece-rate basis especially for cutting and loading of canes, weeding, fertiliser application etc. As in daily basis, the legislated rates for piece-work are often violated by the planters. To cut the working time, workers usually bring along their children to speed up the work. Women and children are permitted to work on the hacienda since it allows the planters to keep the males' wages low. The social organisation of the hacienda is dominated by the owner of haciendas. They are absentee landlords and do not always visit their farm. They just wait for their profits at the end of the milling season. Overseers are employed to run their haciendas. Usually free housing, extension of credit and free use of some hacienda resources are allowed. But everything belongs to the hacienda. There is no constant tenure of service. In fact, most haciendas can give employment only 180 days per year because that is all the time the crop needs caring. Almost all arable plains and

hills of Negros are planted with sugarcane. Thus there is no other source of income except the sugarcane fields. If one works in another hacienda, he risks losing his priority of employment in his own hacienda. This means he could be ejected from the hacienda and from the housing provided by the hacienda. Thus one is forced to suffer in the hacienda. After years of living in one hacienda, the owner of a hacienda may give rice on credit during the off-milling season. The pay is not always enough to pay these debts. The workers are perpetually in debts. One does not have enough even for one's burial when one dies. One is born in debt and then dies in debt.

Having no access to land, lacking education and skills for others jobs elsewhere, workers look to the hacienda as their 'total life-support system'. Paternalistic and feudalistic ties bind the workers and the planters. Workers depend on the owners of haciendas not just in material terms but also in relation to their thinking and decision-making. The system has robbed them of their person. They operate on the basis of a worldview that renders them willing to trade off low earnings for security of working inside the hacienda. They are fully dependent on the generosity of the owners of haciendas who in turn demand subservience, loyalty, obedience and hard work as highest virtues from the worker. Within such a system, labour laws and minimum wage laws are never enforced.

It is very difficult to get the workers unionised since many of them have been content with their dependent relations with owners of haciendas. Moreover, employer-controlled unions and repressive measures are designed to curtail independent unions by employing the following means: (i) giving less work assignments, (ii) threats to life (iii) actual imprisonment, (iv) lock-out, and (v) withdrawal of rice rations.

The worst hit of the sugar crisis has therefore quite naturally been the workers. The wages of sugar workers have been pegged to a very low level and much lower compared to other agricultural workers in the country. The legislated wage for sugar farm workers is P32 a day (P22.5 basic, P9.5 emergency cost-of-living allowance). But even this rather low minimum wage is not paid to, most of the sugar farm workers. Two years ago, the government of the province admitted publicly that only around 20% of the planters complied with the minimum wage. Survey shows that the average daily wage which sugar farm workers get is around P15 to P20.

There are still documented cases of farms where workers are paid P4 to P6 per day, especially Northern Negros.

The social amelioration bonus and the 13th month pay are never given on time and many workers never receive it. For example, for crop year 1974-5 to 1976-77, social amelioration bonuses worth P74.88 million were given to some 1.25 million workers, which means that an individual worker received on the average about P60. And yet, not all workers benefited from cash bonuses, since the compliance rate of millers and planters in the social amelioration fund never exceeded 90 percent for any crop year.(6)

Many sugar workers, especially the unorganised ones, are not clear about the procedures of computing such benefits. As a result, only a few pennies are left in the hands of the workers after their debts have been deducted. In reality, many sugar workers and their families were not in a position to eat three square meals a day. They have to quite often feed themselves by eating unripe bananas, wild root crops, frogs and shells gathered along the river banks. There are those who have to satisfy themselves by chewing sugar cane for breakfast, lunch and supper.

Militarisation

The collapse of sugar price in the world market, the delay in sugar payments which finally stopped by the first two months of 1984, has as described earlier led to an unprecedented socio-economic crisis. The economic crisis leading to mass starvation and hunger on Negros also happened amidst a ripening political crisis and crisis of authoritarian legitimacy in the Philippines. The struggles against Marcos' authoritarian rule had been going on for over a decade, since martial law was declared in 1972. These struggles further intensified, gathering widespread support against the rule of Marcos, with the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in August 1983. These events had their impact on Negros also. A protest rally in the last quarter of 1983 on Negros, protesting the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, for the first time brought a number of the landed gentry to march alongside with the poor. These were new developments. The island became the site of numerous rallies and mass actions reaching 50,000 participants at the height of street protests just prior to the February 23, 1986 uprising that led to the downfall of Marcos.(7)

Widespread hunger combined with the inability of the

provincial government to respond quickly and effectively to the worsening economic crisis, which peaked in 1984-1985, were major factors for the rapid politicization of the Negrense poor. The politicization of sugarcane workers, displaced peasants and marginal fishermen led to many of them being turning to the ranks of the Communist New People's Army and the NPA establishing 'red liberated zones' especially in the South of the island.

Fearing the growth of the NPA, the planters, inspite of suffering from serious liquidity problems in 1984-1985, pooled enough funds to support the creation of the special Civilian Home Defense Force units (CHDF). These forces were particularly supported by large planters in the South and were trained for three months at the expense of private associations, usually affluent sugar planters. All this set off a classic spiral of militarization accompanied by arbitrary violence in which most often the only victims were the poor. Each planter subscriber had to pay a monthly expenditure of P1,000 per CHDF militiamen for his farm. The planters were willing to pay large sums for "self-defense" but not spend anything on the workers' wages. In the North, particularly in the Victorias-Manapla-Cadiz regions, CHDF militiamen were maintained from an enforced 'levy' of 1% from the sugar proceeds of the planters, collected under the control of Armando Gustilo, a notorious political warlord of Cadiz.

The military in the Philippines has tended to close its eyes to the presence of these private armies, since in the view of the military they were seen as helping "solve" the insurgency problem. But over a period of time, these special forces have become a problem even for the military, instead of solving "the insurgency problem" that the military hoped these private armies would help solve. In Northern Negros, the CHDF Militiamen have now quite smoothly transformed themselves into a private army of long time Marcos loyalist, Armando Gustilo, while in the South they have become the security guards of the vast sugar, coconut and coffee plantations of Marcos' cronies, Eduardo Cojuangco and Roberto Benedicto. Gustilo is being linked to the infamous Escalante Massacre in 1985 where atleast 28 farmer protesters were killed by civilian militiamen.

Militarisation in Negros Occidental has led to gross violations of the rights of the poor and further victimisation piled on people already reeling under starvation and famine. According to the data provided by the

provincial office of the Task Force Detainees, Negros had in 1985 a total of 96 documented cases of death from salvaging, massacre, strafing and other forms of killings believed to have been committed by the military and the CHDF, 25% higher than that in 1984.(8) This had effects on a broader scale and led to a worsening crisis of peace and order in the countryside as a whole, resulting in waves of migration into Bacolod city to escape from trouble. Many of the workers have either sought to migrate to the capital city, Bacolod, or pursue a step by step migration i.e., moving to some nearby towns first and then seeking to make the final move to Bacolod. 20% of the provisional list of heads of household who have moved are former sugarcane workers. 12.5% are displaced semi-skilled sugarcane farm workers like truck drivers and 10.3% are mill workers.(9)

It was found out that the migrants are commonly from areas where the "insurgency problem" is the most acute. The migrants from the rural areas move to inner city settlements and usually close to shopping centers, bus terminals and markets where it is easier for them to get casual or contractual jobs. Yet, most of them find themselves in an worse state in Bacolod. The common lament of such migrants is that they have to pay nearly for everything, and without money they can eat nothing. As one migrant from the village expressed to me, saying, "In rural areas, even when you have no cash, you can find sugarcane or gabi to eat. In Bacolod if you have no money, you will be hungry. For everything including water and electricity, you need cash to buy."

Cities in parasitic economies are parasites on the rural hinterland. Bacolod is no exception. It was a city built on the fortunes made on sugar. The collapse of sugar in the world market has signalled not only the dying of an industry, but a city built out of its fortunes. Bacolod was a city born with the establishment of sugar as the country's main export crop during the American colonial regime. Its upswings and declines were determined mainly by the movement of sugar price in the US market. Yet, in its time of prosperity, the city fathers never expanded the industry, trade and commerce to other commodities and the city remained a parasite on the sugar industry; as just one more expression of the parasitism that a commercial export agriculture dependent on a monoculture - sugar had spread, as an ethos and way of life among the elite who lived by it. While the city has shown no growth in vital areas such as industry, trade and commerce, yet the rural poor, affected by the worsening misery in the rural area and directly or indirectly by the escalation of

the conflict between the military and the New People's Army, have swelled the city's widespread depressed areas. The extremely meagre and whatever piece-meal social and health services, that Bacolod city is able to or tries to provide, of course cannot support the sudden influx of migrants.

A cursory survey of the resources, industry, trade and commerce in Bacolod further reflects the city's economy as being dependent on sugar and its fortunes. Out of its total area of 16,145.83 ha., only 138.92 ha. or 0.86% are utilized by the industrial sector. The major portion of land around Bacolod is still devoted to mainly sugarcane, comprising about 6,000 hectares in 1981.(10) The industrial sector only employs 6.3% of the city's population. Though a number of unlicensed informal industries exist in the city, the extent of their operations and production are limited to native wine-making, basket-making etc. Since the start of the sugar crisis, the last quarter of 1983 up to September 1985, a total of 601 business firms have been closed, further increasing the rate of unemployment in the city. As a result of the slump in commerce and trade, the city government in 1984 incurred a deficit of 4 million pesos in its tax collection.(11) Opportunities for employment in regular, salaried jobs within Bacolod for migrants is almost nil. The majority of migrants fall into the "non-formal" sector of employment and manage their subsistence by raising chickens and ducks and fishing in coastal puroks.

The new migrants end up living in makeshift shelters, or under cramped quarters with city relatives or close-friends in quasi-communal settings at the periphery of Bacolod proper. For most households, housing is limited to temporary and semi-permanent structures ranging from payag (makeshift) to kubo (nipa house). Such dwelling units are normally one-room structures on stilts with a very small floor area. Despite their congested settlements, a majority of the households utilises wood for fuel. Water for cooking and drinking is fetched from 'communal' artisan wells or bought from existing pipelines in their site. Water from the city's waterworks is sold at P0.50 centavos per pail. Waste disposal systems, either for human waste or garbage is virtually non-existent. In the coastal areas, high tides usually lead to flooding of house yards with a flotsam of human debris and garbage. There is widespread incidence of communicable diseases such as broncho-pneumonia, gastro-enteritis and tuberculosis.

Contd.

Selected Demographic Data for Negros Occidental

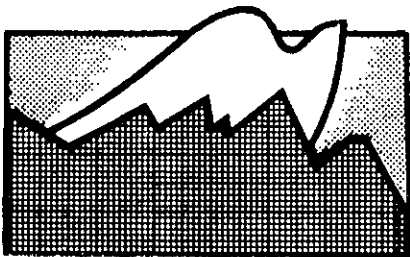
Land Area(sq.Km)	7,926
Population, 1986	2,242,275
Age group	
0-14 yrs old	997,620
15-64 yrs old	1,178,493
65 yrs old or over	66,162
Population growth rate(%)	
1980-1986(average)	2.31
No. of Cities	6
Population in rural areas, 1980(%)	66
Employment Structure, 1978(%)	
Agriculture	52
Industry	10
Services	38
Sugar Migratory Workers Employed in Negros Milling Districts (% to total population)	
1976-77 (Year of Sugar boom)	0.94
1985-86	0.26
Sex Ratio, 1980(%)	
Rural area (male)	50.3
(Female)	49.7
Cities(Male)	48.4
(Female)	51.6

90% of the barangays in Bacolod have been identified as depressed areas. 64.5% of the total household population of Bacolod falls below the poverty threshold.(12) That means a majority of households are unable to satisfy a minimum diet to sustain their living and maintain its members for productive work. Many of them especially children suffer from severe malnutrition - the most visible symptom of the sugar disaster.

For infants and toddlers, the synergism of infections and malnutrition are responsible for the incidence of the high morbidity and mortality rates. According to the mortality and morbidity review of the Department of Pediatrics of West Visayas Regional Hospital in Bacolod, there were 821 children patients suffering from third degree malnourishment of protein calorie in the malnutrition ward in 1985 and 221 children died of it. The 1985 figure of deaths as compared with the previous year's rate represents a 180% increase from 79 to 221. The above figures of course, as also mentioned earlier must be taken together with the fact that a lot more children suffer and die without ever being sent to hospitals. Hospitals record only what passes through them. Due to absolute poverty, the sick are often left to chance. The poorest among the poor are actually left with no choice but to just slowly watch their sick kids deteriorate slowly to death. Even for the burial, with no cash at all, the poor just rely on the good graces of graveyard diggers to bury the dead without any permit of the concerned government department.

Added to all this misery and starvation, is the venality of public authority, in relation to distribution of whatever relief is available to them. Thus many malnourished children are deprived of the yellow cornmeal and powdered milk distributed to them as part of government relief measures. Corrupt provincial government officials sell these relief items delivered to the children to pig owners for feeding pigs. As in so many other similar situations, corrupt civil administration has aggravated the situation.

(Contd.)



IBON Facts & Figures

ISSN 0115-8007

The Philippines' most authoritative
independent fortnightly on the state of the nation
Essential reading for anyone interested in Asian Affairs
Subscription: US\$15 (individual) US\$30 (Institutions)

IBON DATABANK PHILIPPINES INC.
4427, INT. Old Sta Mesa, Manila
P.O. Box SM-447, MANILA, Philippines.

Are There Ways Out?

Today, Negros encapsules the problems of the Philippines its suffering and tragedy. But the lessons it holds out from its massive suffering and tragedy are completely missed by those in power. What are the ways out? Has the new government brought along any new hopes and concrete solutions to the problems. At the forefront of Negros's reconstruction, is 39 year-old shipping executive Daniel Lacson (different to the landlord Lacson referred to earlier), whom Cory Aquino after the February Revolution has chosen to be the acting governor of the province. Lacson's recovery program centers on a formula he calls 'Negros rehabilitation of all sugar-based areas which could make Negros a model province'. The solution of poverty is seen as the strategy against counter-insurgency. Aside from land reconstruction, Lacson's scheme will also entail debt-restructuring for sugar planters, about 70% of whom are heavily indebted to the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and Republic Planters Bank (RPB).

According to this plan, Negros' sugarlands will be allocated as follows: 60% will be retained for sugar, 30% for crop diversification and 10% distributed (mandatory for those who are in debt). Under the plan, 40% of the sugarland will be bought by the PNB and RPB but its payment will be offset against the planters debts. About 90,000 ha. which represents the 30% will be used as 'nucleus estates' and will be diversified to other high-value non-food crops. The nucleus estates will be a joint venture between the government which now owns the lands through PNB and RPB and any private cooperative, multinational or local corporations engaged in agriculture. Agri-processing and industrialisation of agricultural crops will be promoted.

About 30,000 ha. will be distributed to the workers. Each family will have 1,000 square meters to be used for their housing and small farm lots for cultivation of cash crops for their livelihood. These workers will then be tapped to work in the nucleus estates during the off-season (from May to December) for sugar. The scheme will increase sugar workers' income and productivity since it will eliminate idle time.

"It (the program) will hurt (the planters) but we have to do it. I must have a formula which could take care most, if not all, of the needs of every sector," Lacson explains.

"With their present conditions, no banks would like to refinance them," he said. "It is a better strategy. At present the industry's capacity stands at 60%. While the other 40% remains idle. In this case, the planters will lose nothing even if they give up 40% of their landholdings, since they have already lost it to the Bank." Lacson (Business Day, Philippines. 27th Aug, 1986)

Lacson, however is faced with several obstacles with his plans. First, he should get the approval of several ministries - agriculture and food, agrarian reform, finance, labour and employment and other agencies like the Central Bank, National Economic and Development Authority, PNB and RPB.

Second, a minority of the planters (those with no substantial debts from the banks) are still hesitant to partake their lands with the workers.

Finally though Lacson has got foreclosed land of 9,000 ha. only 400 ha. are under cultivation because of lack of capital and fertilizers. One can see the difficulties of land reconstruction in a poor country. Apart from these difficulties another substantial criticism of Lacson's 60-30-10 programme as it is called, is that the programme skirts the issue of land redistribution, though it may offer immediate benefits to hungry tenants.

The Constitutional Commission approved provisions on agrarian reform on 15th August, 1986 and laid the constitutional base for land reform. However, the details of the content and the implementation (still unknown) should be examined. 1. The scope covers all kinds of crop. 2. Land 'retention limits' will be disqualified to landlords. 3. Seasonal farmworkers will be disqualified from becoming land transfer beneficiaries. 4. 'Just compensation' for landlords it is believed will be equated with 'market value' of their lands, though it is still unclear how 'just compensation' is to be operationalised.

As far as sugar lands are concerned, there are 100,000 tenants and 500,000 labourers. Of the latter, sacadas (seasonal farm workers) out-number dumaans (regular plantation workers) by about five to one. Other problems also arise. Who will be responsible for paying compensation to the landlords? Usually it is the 'beneficiaries'. Judging from the existing situation, workers have no money to pay.

The lessons of land reforms under Marcos tells us that the high cost of amortization prevents peasants from becoming owners of the land. The existing debt situations shows that it is quite impossible for the government to pay. Who will then pay remains a question if compensation is to be made.

The die-hard conservative landlords do not share the theory that redistribution of large estates will bring the desired socioeconomic improvement in Negros. The argument is posed that there is no tenancy in Negros and workers are not justified to land ownership on the one hand, and are not equipped with the knowledge to farm independently on the other hand. Another argument is that dividing sugar lands into smaller plots reduces their productivity, though this argument has been debunked by a number of authoritative studies. There is also the argument that some people who have been educated, are not inclined to be land tillers and they should be provided with an alternate occupation that will provide a living wage and a certain amount of security for themselves and their children, instead of land.

The landlords usually put the blame on population size and say that once population growth is not checked, no amount of land fragmentation will suffice to meet the basic needs of the population. Rather than accepting land reforms which would result in some degree of structural change and shift the power base, the landlords prefer other ways. In their opinion, new industries on a small and medium scale should be introduced with earnest and full support of the government and with assistance in financing, technology and marketing. Since the country lacks savings and capital accumulation, foreign participation should be encouraged to accelerate this socio-economic development program. Government can assist the private sector in joint venture schemes for which foreign investors will provide the capital, technological expertise, management and marketing outlets. Many of this landed gentry, of course still expect 'generous help' from the US by increasing its quota. One of my interviewees, the Chairperson of the New Alliance of Sugar Producers, Ms. Hortesia L. Starke has conducted a foreign trade mission to survey the potential for joint venture schemes and to request the US to increase the quota. As we can see in the 'Report of Hortesia L. Starke on the Sugar Mission to Washington D.C. and London, April 20 to June 2', 1986:

"We were told by Senator Melchar and by the office of John Keny that Ministers Ongpin and Mitra had already been in Washington and had expressed that the Philippines

was not seeking an additional sugar quota because it had a program of diversification and that the sugar quota would only be a crutch. I had to call Fred Elizalde in Manila to ask him to please tell Jimmy Ongpin not to say these things as they were creating the wrong signals in Washington and causing a conflict and inconsistency in our Philippine position to request for this additional sugar quota We said that Marcos is now gone and that the quickest way to help the Philippines and to solve the problem of insurgency in Negros and Panay is to give us this additional quota."

Perhaps the landed interests as represented by Ms. Starke, are not that naive in continuing to ask for increased quotas from the US and being dependent on it, inspite of what has been their recent experience. To them, with the new administration of Cory Aquino in place, asking for increased quotas would help postpone the structural reforms that have been long overdue and which have some chance of being done under Cory's government. Such postponement of course would give them more elbow room though the poverty, hunger, unemployment and suffering for the poor would continue.

The National Federation of Sugar Worker, Food and General Trades (NFSW-FGT) is in the meanwhile attempting other ways of solving the problems that Negros faces. They are running a cooperative Farms project called the 'Farmlots Programme'. It is a project to provide short-term solution to meet the urgent needs especially food and at the same time to serve as a constructive means to more long term solutions. The program was started in the dead season (referred to in Negros nowadays as 'death season', the season when many babies died) of 1984 when sugar workers had no work in the farm. NFSW-FGT issued a call to the planters who could not pay just wages (agreeable to both parties), to lend their vacant lands to their hungry sugar workers and expressed its willingness to sign guarantees that the land would be returned when the crisis was over.

The response of the medium and small planters was encouraging. Many sugar planters, after dialogues initiated by their workers agreed to lend part of their vacant lands to their workers to plant crops at least for subsistence. Today, NFSW-FGT membership has in its common possession over 4,000 ha. where it assists financially and technically around 200 projects covering a total area

(Contd.)

Life After Marcos

However Marcos may leave the political scene, whoever may succeed him, whatever role technocrats and the military play in the transition and afterwards, the successor government cannot ignore the basic problems of Philippine society: the inequity of its social system and the maldevelopment of its economy, which together have bred poverty, injustice, and the rebellions of the Muslims and the dispossessed. There is no military solution to these problems, except genocide which would in any case be self-defeating. There is no solution either in following the same prescriptions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that Marcos, Virata and other technocrats have been pursuing. It is clear that the successor government must find its own way to solve these problems. There is no pattern it can follow, no model it can copy. If experience has taught Filipinos anything, it is that every country is unique and must forge its own future in its own way. But the primordial condition for doing this is that we free ourselves from the control of the US government. We could restore freedom to the Philippines. We could re-establish democracy. But unless the successor government can transform our society and change the structure of our economy, freedom and democracy would count for very little.

When we think about the Philippines after Marcos, when we contemplate the different political scenarios, let us not forget that what counts most is what will happen to the people. Whether it be a successor to Marcos arising from his death or resignation due to ill health, whether it arise from the opposition, whether it be a military government, the Philippines after Marcos must be a country for the people. The task is not going to be easy and it is not going to be quick, and we are going to need the best help that we can get from all the talent that could be made available. We may well fail and fail miserably, but we have to try. We will try, and I am certain that however it ends we will be a better people for having tried.

-Senator Jose Diokno, in a talk given at the University of Sydney, long before the fall from power of Marcos.

of 1,000 ha., with 2688 families as beneficiaries.

To provide food and subsistence crops and thus working collectively against the debilitating commercial monoculture, they also contribute to the diversification of crops which are grown for consumption needs of the members of the collective. The most common crops being produced are rice and corn, vegetables, mangos and peanuts depend on the workers. The program is not limited to farm workers only but also includes mill workers who also face hunger and poverty. The most common projects among mill workers are swine raising and cooperatives. The program has been geared to also transfer appropriate and more needed technology to the workers especially in crop diversification, animal husbandry, vermiculture, aquaculture, soap-making, etc.. Presently, the NFSW-FGT provides farm lots on soft term loans as also providing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, work animals, and helping with mass education.

Contd.

KASARINLAN

Philippine Journal of Third World Studies



Volume I Number 1 3rd Quarter 1985



A Quarterly Publication
of the Third World Studies Centre
University of the Philippines

A Quarterly Publication of the UP Third World Studies Centre

Annual Subscription: US\$ 20 for individuals

US\$ 30 for institutions

**Available from Third World Studies Centre, P.O. Box 210,
University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City,
Philippines.**

Conclusion

In the new Philippines, behind the proud proclamations of 'People Power' in Manila are the haunting faces of the dead and dying children on the island of Negros. The scenes at the over-crowded hospitals in Bacolod are painfully reminiscent of Ethiopia. Famine, hunger and people dying of starvation very tragically and ironically caused once again by man-made situations and not due to any natural causes.

The human tragedy in Negros cries out for attention. Not only because the people continue to face famine conditions and hundreds of thousands of children are suffering from serious malnutrition and need immediate care, but also because Negros raises important questions about the future of the entire rural Philippines, where 70% of the people live in abject poverty. The events and policies that have led to the crisis on this island signal the need for a change of direction in the Philippine economy.

Addressing the root cause of poverty is not merely an act of justice. It is an economic necessity for a country with a P2.2 billion balance of payment deficit and \$28 billion foreign debt. The new Philippines does not have much time. It has to harness the massive popular forces, which helped to bring the country back from the brink of disaster, that a decaying dictatorship was hurling it towards. The longer the Aquino administration takes to move in a direction that coincides with its popular mandate and continues to play hide and seek with the deeply entrenched forces within the military and landed interests, it only is speedening the processes of definitive ruination and sorrow for the country.

Externally also its manoeuvrability is limited, if it blunders into seeking solutions, only within the straitjacket that is provided so patronisingly, by the international investors and financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF. As much as the people had the creativity to create the democratic space, that made it possible for Cory Aquino to take the leadership of the Philippines into a new era, they have the possibility to create "other" spaces to deal with the problems they face.

As the experience of Negros shows, the people who

have just managed to subsist, have been pushed to starvation and death, they have been pushed beyond survival. Ironically, it is while living between survival and death, while trying to survive, they have once again come up with collective responses. Responses such as the NFSW farmlot programme, responses that private greed and profligacy had no response to. The farmlot programme has shown pointers to, not only making survival possible for the people but in so doing, to preserve the ecology of the island, to move away from suicidal monoculture, to multicropping of more important food crops. The NFSW attempts are but pointers to solutions. Will governments lost in their grandiose visions learn that they have to start somewhere else? This is the challenge to the Aquino government which wants to make a new beginning for the Philippines, but cannot make a new beginning by traversing the same flawed visions of its predecessor and dancing to the tune of the same mentors in the World Bank and the IMF. Famine, starvation and ecological destruction, are not the concern of these august world bodies, only growth rates. The trouble is that people cannot eat growth rates, neither can the sustainability of natural systems be measured by growth rates.

The misery caused by the dying sugar industry in Negros is but the tip of the iceberg that hides another long term nightmare. The complete devastation of the forests and serious soil erosion, which will irreparably harm the ecology and environment and ultimately the livelihoods of people, for a very long time into the future.

During the heyday of the sugar industry boom, the rich landowners extended their land towards the steep slopes and hillsides, uplands and mountains, former corn and rice fields to greedily spread the monoculture of sugar. The landless were forced to farm in marginal lands by slash and burn cultivation. The cutting down of trees persisted, notably by illegal loggers and charcoal makers, aside from the usual kaingeros - the slash and burn farmers.

The future looks very dim for Negros forest cover, which has been reduced to just 6.3% of the island - way down the minimum 30% required to maintain ecological balance. The island faces the prospect of massive erosion of its fertile soil. Every time it rains heavily, flash floods devastate croplands, also causing

top soil erosion, while occasional droughts dry up irrigation canals and farm lands are wasted. The absolutely reckless use of water resources, the literal mining of water to cultivate the sugar lands has led to rapid lowering of the water table at Bacolod. The principal culprits of forest denundation has been monocultural plantation agriculture and the victims are those people living at subsistence level and who depend on the soil and who have to bear the consequences of the long-term destruction of their soil.

The crisis and the solutions it has thrown up, has shown that there is an opportunity to be availed of, to avoid in the long term the kind of problems Negros has faced and is facing. There is opportunity, to stop the reckless ecological destruction and start the regeneration of the ecological balance of Negros. The children of Negros can be left a different legacy than what they have experienced. The task cannot be left to governments alone; that is another lesson of Negros, popular majorities must unite and battle against the prevalent ideology of developmentalism that consigns people to death and misery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was based on a trip to Negros Occidental in August, 1986. The trip owed much to the help of Jun Tellez, Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers, Hong Kong, and conversations with the friends at the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Kairahan (Community Organisation for Urban Poor); Dr. Socorro Gonzaga, Western Visayas Regional Hospital, and Edgar Cada Gat, Action News & Services. The paper has also been enriched by comments received from Ma. Teresa Diokno and Clarence G. Pascual of IBON Databank and Lawrence Surendra.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Feudalism and Capitalism in the Philippines, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, Philippines, 1984.
2. Political Economy of Philippine Commodities, Third World Studies Program, University of the Philippines, 1983.
3. Rene E. Ofreneo, Capitalism in Philippine Agriculture, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1980.

4. *ibid.*

5. See particularly, 'Capitalism, Socialism and Technology: A Comparative study of Cuba and Jamaica', by Charles Edqvist, published by ZED Books, 1986, London.

6. Rene E. Ofreneo, Capitalism in Philippine Agriculture, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1980.

7. *ibid.*

8. Violeta Lopez-Gonzaga, Crisis in Sugarlandia, La Salle Social Research Centre, Bacolod, Philippines, 1986.

9. Violeta Lopez-Gonzaga, Crisis in Sugarlandia: The Case of Bacolod, La Salle Social Research Centre Monograph Series, No. 3, 1985.

10. *ibid.*

11. *ibid.*

12. *ibid.*

OTHER REFERENCES:

- (1) Filomeno V. Auilar, Jr. The Making of Cane Sugar, La Salle Social Research Centre Monograph Series No. 2.
- (2) Program in Community Communication Series No. 1, Jan 1986, Action News Service, Bacolod.
- (3) IBON Facts & Figures 135, Mar 1984, Manila
- (4) Sugar: Honey for a Few Blood And Sweat for Many, National Federation of Sugar Worker, 1984.
- (5) Far East Economic Review, Oct 1985 & Sept 1986, Hong Kong.
- (6) Asia Magazine, Oct 6, 1985, Hong Kong.
- (7) Yoshiko Nagano, the Philippine Sugar Industry in An Export-Oriental Economy - A Thorny Road to Modernisation, Philippines in the Third World Papers Series No. 12, Third World Studies Center, Sept, 1978, Manila.

World View, Ideology or Paradigm?

Interview with Ms. Hortesia L. Starke, a hacienda owner and Chairperson of the New Alliance of Sugar Producers.

Maria: What do you think are the problems existing in Negros Island?

Ms.Starke: Too much population. Over half of the population are under 18. I don't know why people don't stop giving birth! They've no job; they just keep stealing money.

Maria: In your opinion, what are the causes of poverty?

Ms.Starke: It's Marcos' fault. He monopolised trading, committing corruption. The officials were robbers. The bankers showed no mercy to us. I was one of the victims. In 1984, a flood damaged 65% of my crop. The banks refused to lend me money to buy fertilisers. No fertilisers meant low yield. But I still had to pay wages. The interest accumulated to P6 million after two years.

Maria: Do you have any suggestions to solve the problems of poverty, for example land reforms.....?

Ms.Starke: Land reform? Absolutely nonsense! Is it fair for someone to grab your ready-made dress already put on your body? You've sacrificed your money, time and labour to design and make it. Land reform is exactly like this. You see, my grandfather opened up the land for sugar with all his intelligence and effort and bought lands from the farmers. He was so intelligent that he didn't need to go directly to see whether a land was suitable for growing but based on a sample of the soil of that land, he could immediately make a decision. During his time, there were no schools, roads and no jeepneys. He was willing to suffer and sacrifice in order to open up the lands. So, why can't the landless go to explore new lands? They just say, "We don't want to go there!" It's not because it's impossible but because they lack such motivation. Everyone wants to become a millionaire overnight! In fact, they don't need to grow sugar. They can grow what the soils are suitable for, e.g., pineapples, mangos, bananas. In fact, there are no tenants here in Negros, no big landowners. So, there is no need for land reform.

I tell you, the answer to the existing problems is not nationalisation. In Marcos's time, it was

overnationalised. Now, privatisation is the key. Introduce more joint ventures to grow pineapple, fish ponds etc. To provide employment for the people.

The government should built up infrastructure to facilitate the opening up of the lands. You see, there are so many islands all over the Philippines. The new government should conduct an aerial survey to see how many hectares of idle land there are. Bring in loans from the World Bank, ADB (Asian Development Bank) etc. Give them capital and teach them scientific management. Just like me, I'm educated in New York. I succeed because of practising scientific management and I'm equipped with a liberal, flexible mind. Let people stay where they've been and let those landless build a new community.

What I propose are following five points. First, to reduce sugar production to fill up the quota, local consumption and retain a little reserve e.g 100,000 tonnes/ year so that it will be sold in case of a rise in price. Second, to control price as high as P300/picul and sell to US at P300-350. Third, to lower cost of production, to lower interest rate from the existing 36% to 12% and to cancel the production tax (3%). Then, the cost of production will be reduced from 10 cents/lb to 7-8 cents/lb. This will directly increase our competitive power. Fourth, to build bilateral agreements with the ASEAN countries, the four little dragons, and the Middle East countries. The last point is to produce by-products/finished products of sugar, like Brazil to produce alcohol, perfume, plastics etc.

Maria: Do you participate in building up private armies?

Ms.Starke: My land is in the CHICKS area (composed of the six towns of Candoni, Hinobaan, Ilog, Causagan, Kabankalan and Sipalay) right at the margin of the mountain range where the NPA is. It's dangerous. But I myself will not employ CHDF (Civilian Home Defence Force i.e.the private army) which will just be a point of attraction to the NPA. You know, the NPA will appear to grab the CHDF arms for themselves. This can only help the insurgency. As a matter of fact, CHDF are not professional soldiers, not educated, not disciplined. They don't know how to use guns. Once they get drunk, they may probably shoot their own enemy. The NPA - they are young, idealistic, not bad people, just that they have chosen the wrong path. They are brainwashed by

communism. They use violence to work for change in the system. I also advocate changes but work through the ballot, not the bullet.

Maria: People always say that hacienda is an exploitative feudal system. Do you agree?

Ms. Starke: (She shows me two photographs. One shows a urban slum area and the other is that of a family working in her hacienda.) Frankly tell me, where do you prefer to live in? In a feudal, well protected society or a non-feudal urban slum area? In my hacienda, provide them medicine, loan, funeral service. I give them P25/day. This family shown in the photo, the father is an extremely lazy fellow. He has ten children. His wife died when she was giving birth to their eleventh child. I've told them about family planning. But I don't know why they still continue to have so many. Recently I've helped them to get one child to be adopted by an American in the US. I take care of all their livelihood. You see, in this non-feudal urban slum, people live in dirt and filth. I tell you, not only I, but nearly all landowners are treating workers very kindly. I love my land. My grandfather has 16 children. Ten of them got married and develop ten tribes. I have been raised with strong kinship with other sugar planters. I'm raised here. I love my workers. If they keep on striking, I'll close my business. I'm also poor. I can't increase their wages.

Maria: As the chairperson of a planters' association, how are you going to contribute?

Ms. Starke: I sit in the Consultative Committee of WB-IMF and the Banking Corporations. I'll continue to supply them the correct opinion - once again, privatisation is the key.

24th August, 1986

Postscript

After the interview, I decided not to go to the sugar farm as planned but to visit Starke's farm. The farm is in the CHICKS area, 97.6km far from Bacolod. I learned from one of the overseers, that she is also an absentee landlord visiting only once a week or twice a month, taking a 90 minute car ride from Bacolod.

She did not pay the minimum wage rate of 32 pesos to her workers, instead she paid only P24. The benefits she mentioned, were provided on loan basis. Usually workers

could not receive bonus because loans were deducted. They could hardly eat three meals a day. A 74 year old man I met had to work in the farm since no retirement benefit was provided. I could see many malnourished children with swollen bellies.

I visited the family of the "lazy" man she had mentioned. When I asked about their feelings towards the adoption of their newly-born family member, I could sense that they could hardly control their own fate and were totally dependent on their landlord.

Anyway, the workers seemed to like this paternalistic landlord. But Starke's son had gradually taken over the management of the hacienda. Since he is of a mixed race, American-Filipino, educated in US, with an American outlook and being incapable of speaking fluent Tagalog, the Filipino language, he can hardly understand the worker's situation. By strictly enforcing the so-called "scientific" management, he has made the life on the hacienda even harder. - Tsui Lai Si, Maria -



Discounts negotiable for bulk purchases of 10 copies or more.
Available from Institut Masyarakat, 87 Cantonment Road, 10250
Penang, Malaysia. Price per copy: US\$10

Interview with a journalist

Edgar Cada Gat is a journalist with the Action News & Services. He formerly worked for two years for the New Alliance of Sugar Producers (NASP) of which Ms. Starke was the Chairperson. Gat resigned his job at the NASP.

Maria: How do you comment on your former employer, Ms. Starke on her reasons for condemning land reforms?

Gat: Ask her to look back in history. Her ancestors was one of the biggest owners who bought the lands from the small farmers by means of lending them capital and letting them be indebted.

During Spanish colonialism, there was a period when the "Encomienda System" was practised. Those who had rendered service to the Spanish King, were granted the right to claim land for themselves when retired.

The lands were not originally owned by them. Ms. Starke only wants to preclude the possibility of land reform.

Maria: Then, how do you view her suggestions?

Gat: Reduction of sugar production is a practical way. But for the rest, she's too naive. There is also an inconsistency over her comment on "over-nationalisation" in Marcos' period and suggestion about "price control". She also suggested the reduction in the cost of production by reducing the price of fertilisers. But how can it to be done? The high price of fertilisers has been created during the time of Marcos. You can hardly just concern about the situation of Negros and superimposed this on the general economic trend without taking the general economy into consideration. As for the development of by-product, it's a sound idea. But it is not simple either, we had the case of alcohol being produced by a company called Asian Alcohol Inc. in Pulupandan and Kooll and a company in Talisay town. These had however to be shut down because of the pollution it has generated. The survival question is a long term problem. What we need is genuine land reform. I'm tired of following these people. Her mind is always changing. They want to have liberalisation of trade to facilitate the export. But liberalisation of trade also means that import also comes in to drain you dollars. You can

hardly have blessings without curses.

Maria: What is your comment on her comparison about life in a hacienda and urban slum?

Gat: The question is not so much about whether landlords personally treat workers well or not, but the system itself. There is a total subordination and dependence in the hacienda. But there is at least more freedom in the slum area.

25th August, 1986

BACK TO THE ROOTS

*Village and Self-Reliance
in a Thai Context*

Seri Phongphit
Editor



Available from Rural Development Documentation Centre, Village
Institution Promotion, 6/14 Soi Thinnakorn Din Dang Road
Bangkok 10400

Indochina :

The Continuing Tragedy

Choi Hang Keung

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it*

- George Santayana -

In contemporary Indochina, "peace" has meant only the inauguration of another new phase of conflict and suffering. A full account of the suffering of the Indochinese from the waves of conflict does not exist, but the little that exists is sufficient to bring to light the extent of their suffering. In the case of Kampuchea, in three-and-a-half-years under Khmer Rouge rule, one to three million Khmers, out of a population of about seven million are estimated to have perished. Famines and destruction caused by war and natural disasters, took place in Kampuchea between 1979 and 1980 killing thousands of people. For the six years since 1975, some 850,000 Khmers have left their country by risking their lives through dangerous mine fields and various other harassments in order to avoid political persecution. About one million Chinese in Vietnam were forced out into the South China Sea around the time of the Sino-Vietnamese War. A third of them were believed to have never reached the shore. By early 1982, 330,000 were still crowded in refugee camps in the Thai-Kampuchean border leading an unstable life. Many of them, for one reason or another, would never have a chance to settle in a third country.

* Those words stand at the entrance of the Dachau Concentration Camp and at the beginning of William Schirer's 'Rise and Fall of the Third Reich'.

The agonies of this generation of Indochinese can be better articulated by taking into account their experiences during the past four decades. The recent wars are just continuations of the two earlier waves of conflicts, conveniently named as First Indochina War and Second Indochina War. The first one followed immediately after the Second World War. The First Indochina War (1946-1954) was basically a war of decolonisation and nationalist struggle that Vietnam and the other peoples of the Indo-China Peninsula waged against their French colonizer at the time Japanese forces were leaving the country. This war of liberation led to a ceasefire in July 1954 with the conclusion of the Geneva Accords, in which the independence of Laos and Kampuchea achieved a year earlier, was confirmed. France also agreed to relinquish her sovereignty over Vietnam, and Vietnam was divided on the 17th Parallel into two parts: the North controlled by the communist Vietcong, and the South governed by the US-backed Ngo Dinh Diem regime.

The separation which could not be anything but transitional, quite naturally resulted in a civil war in 1961 involving the two Vietnams. By interpreting it as a struggle between the communist and the 'free' world, the US escalated the national war into a major international conflict by landing troops onto Vietnam in March 1965. The Soviet Union and China reacted by backing their little brother with massive assistance. This led to what is known as the Second Indochina War and which gradually spread to Laos and Kampuchea where some of the fiercest fightings took place.

Despite their inferiority in weapons vis-a-vis the US, the Vietcong, Khmer Rouge and Pathet Lao managed to liberate and establish communist regimes respectively in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane on April 30th, April 7th and December 2nd, of 1975.

The Second Indochina War was the bloodiest war ever fought in human history, largely attributed to the unrestrained use of force by the US which as a world power enjoyed total superiority in armaments. Total casualties have never been known. Estimates are that 1.7 million Vietnamese were killed and 3.2 million were wounded. A total of 700,000 Khmers were either killed or wounded. In most cases, the big majority of casualties were civilians. The conflict also produced a large number of displaced people. About 17 million, or half of the national population, were made refugees at least one time or the other during the conflict. The environment suffered such an unprecedented damage that it is now referred to one of the worst cases of 'ecocide' known in human history.

The US dumped over 14 million tons of explosives, seven times she did in the Second World War. About twenty three million craters were made by bombs on the surface of the earth. Some of them were so large that they were turned to fish ponds after the war. To deprive food and shelter from the enemy, the US applied 83,000 tons of herbicides to crop and forest lands with strengths 12 to 15 times used in normal cultivation. Between 1962, and 1970, 10% of all the cultivated area and 20,000 square kilometers of forest in South Vietnam were partly destroyed by aerial spraying. The Rome Plows, a kind of bulldozer employed in a program to strip land at the rate of 1,000 acres a day, had already cleared some 750,000 acres by mid-1971.

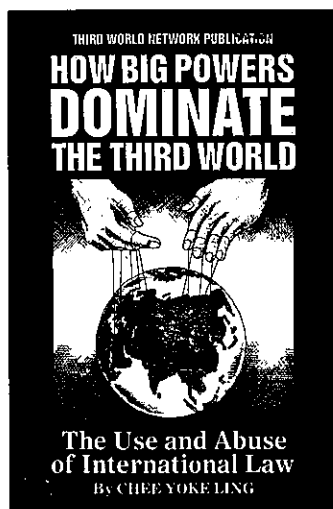
This was what the communist governments inherited in 1975. National rehabilitation, and solidarity among the war-devastated states should have naturally been their paramount concern. However, history proved that this was not to be the case. In the past there always existed conflicts, in which historical suspicion and enmity intensified between these different cultures. But they were buried in the face of fighting a war against a giant common enemy. However with the disappearance of the common enemy, the basis of co-operation and friendship also disappeared. And when the fanatically nationalistic Khmer leaders felt their own positions threatened by a potentially dangerous neighbour, they over-reacted to any of its gestures, malicious or good-willed alike. It was this type of over-reaction that made the Vietnamese leadership conclude that Kampuchea was a pawn installed by her expansionist northern neighbour, China, to curb her development and to make Vietnam permanently weak and dependent. So, she decided to "put an end" before it was too late.

A similiar set of complex Kampuchea-Vietnam-China relations seem to operate on an international level between Vietnam, China and the Soviets. Historically, the relationship between Vietnam, and China has never been one that could be called comfortable. Even their co-operation in the Second Indochina War was really an historical exception. The love-hate relationship of the great power plus the security consideration of individual countries was what led to the Third Indochina War, which inflicted another phase of suffering on the unfortunate people of these countries. They were once more helpless pawns in the stratagem of big powers and power games of nation states.

Self-Inflicted Genocide in Kampuchea?

Not long after the setting up of Democratic Kampuchea by the Khmer Rouge, horrible stories of brutality committed by the new regime began to leak out. The Western media picked up these stories and reported to the world that, widespread executions were being carried out of officials of the deposed Lon Nol regime and their family members, of those who made the slightest complaint of the Khmer Rouge government and of professionals and intellectuals. Stories were coming out about collectivisation and that of people being made to toil at gunpoint by the uneducated and fanatic Khmer Rouge teenagers. Stories of malnutrition and famine that killed tens of thousands of people poured out, while Kampuchea was being described as a living hell.

It is true that a massacre is a massacre and that there is no point quibbling over whether one million were killed or half a million were killed. These type of discussions have taken place in the context of Kampuchea and regarding the role and responsibility of the Khmer Rouge for the loss of life in Kampuchea after the Khmer Rouge assumed power. Films like 'Killing Fields' have even brought on celluloid the violence and misery brought on 'the gentle country'. Yet at the time these reports actually came out, (considering also

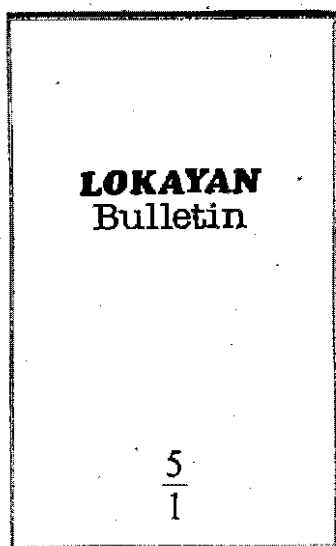


Special rates are available for bulk purchases

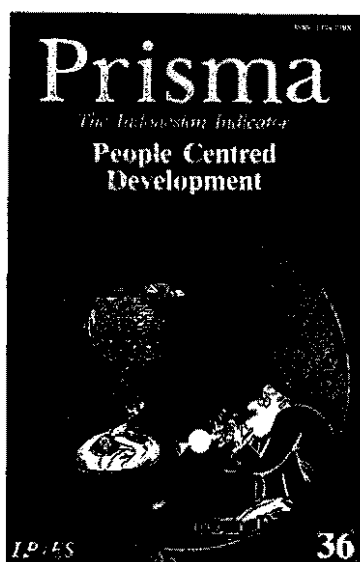
Available from Third World Network, 87 Cantonment Road 10250
Penang Malaysia Price per copy: US\$ 5 (Air Mail)

that the Western media has not always refrained from exaggeration or misreporting particularly when it comes to events in non-Western countries) people did read the reports with some caution. Though some of course tried to deny the entire veracity of these reports as stories of 'imperialist slander' and so on. Now of course, those who support the Khmer Rouge for whatever reasons, would still maintain that the numbers attributed to the killings by the Khmer Rouge are wrong. One then gets into this sickening numbers game where somehow one becomes part of the brutalization that the Kampuchean people went through. All this notwithstanding, one must remain thankful that serious and honest scholarship was still around which could cut through the sensationalism, politics, power games and exaggeration of the initial reports and check the accuracy of the reports. Scholars like Vickery, Kiernan and McCormack did this and were able to record the death, killings and misery of the Kampucheans leading upto and during the Khmer Rouge rule.

It is first extremely necessary, to emphasise as strongly as possible the destruction and devastation brought on Kampuchea by the US. Many reports failed to count the chaos left behind by years of war, and squarely put the blame on Khmer Rouge. During the Lol Nol period (1970-75), the US had conducted such an extensive 'blanket bombing' on the rural area that Kampuchea was described as having been bombed to the 'stone age'. The final USAID (US Agency for



Available from Lokayan,
13, Alipur Road,
Delhi - 110 054.



P.O. Box 493 JKT,
Jl. S. Parman 81,
Slipi, Jakarta Barat,
Indonesia.

International Development) report in 1975, had already warned that slave labour and starvation rations for half the nation's people, would be a cruel but only choice and would follow at least for two to three years. Therefore, if we are talking about Khmer Rouge's responsibility for the tragedy, the debate should not be just focussed on determining singular responsibility but how Pol Pot's rule aggravated these conditions.

The most widely publicized 'brutal act' of the Khmer Rouge was the prompt and near total evacuation of Phnom Penh. It was reported that people regardless of age, sex and health condition were simply asked to leave immediately or within a matter of hours. They streamed out to the rural areas in the direction corresponding to the positions of zones in the capital they lived. Khmer Rouge told the people that the evacuation was intended to evade US bombardment, and they could return in just a few days. Though an attack from the US was a real probability, it turned out to be a convenient excuse. People were never allowed to return and subsequent explanations put forward by government officials revealed that the reasons were linked more to consolidation of power within the Khmer Rouge, though those at related to food problem carried no less weight.

By the end of the war, the population of Phnom Penh had swollen from 600,000 to about two million. Most of them were rural refugees who were forced away from the countryside by US bombing. When the Khmer Rouge successfully encircled Phnom Penh, its source of food came almost entirely from US airlifts from Thailand. The amount of rice, the staple food of the population sent by this programme could hardly prevent people from starving. In 1974, it was estimated that only one third of the requirement was met. In March 1975 alone, over 8,000 deaths were reported from starvation. Although certain optimistic reports indicated that food reserves could last for several weeks after liberation, feeding such a huge population was simply out of question given the fatal blow that the agricultural and transportation system had experienced from the US bombings. The Khmer Rouge seemed to be convinced that the only practical solution then was to move people to the rural areas where they could grow their own food. At the same time, the revival of the rural production system, the backbone of the economy even before the war, depended on strengthening the manpower, which had been crippled by the outflow of refugees.

Food might be an important factor, however, the immediate and disorganized manner of the evacuation seemed to be prompted by other more urgent consideration. The

knowledge of the Khmer Rouge on the country was still feeble. Subversive networks established by the US and the deposed Lon Nol government were still very active. And, unlike their Vietnamese counterparts, the Khmer Rouge had never had the experience of administering a giant city like Phnom Penh. Up till now, most of their organizational life was built around and in rural guerrilla warfare. From their point of view, to reduce the city to manageable size and to shake up the counter-revolutionary networks from the very bottom, an evacuation seemed to be a very sound and wise decision.

Although the population in the city was sent to the rural area as a whole, the evacuees experienced extremely different treatments from different Khmer Rouge factions in the countryside. Before the liberation, the country was divided into different parts and controlled by different leaders who had very different backgrounds and a large degree of autonomy. Their power bases roughly corresponded to the seven post-liberation administration zones: the North, the North-East, the East, the South-West, the West, the North-West, the Central and the Kratie Special Region. The difference in treatments seemed to be one of first manifestations of an internal split, which plagued the entire length of the Khmer Rouge rule, and has proved to be a very important factor in understanding Khmer Rouge history.

It is generally believed that the evacuation order was carried out immediately and faithfully. At the same time there have also been reports that in the eastern and southern parts of the city, people encountered troops which appeared to have come from the Eastern Zone, denied there was an evacuation and ordered people to go home. The confusion lasted for a whole day before the order was accepted.

Those who took the route to the South and South-West said that the evacuation was conducted in an orderly manner. They were allowed several hours and even a day to pack their belongings and they could take as much as they could carry. Not much violence was applied. Some even said that water and food were provided on route, though by no means sufficient. Evacuees from the North Zone told a totally different story. The Khmer Rouge, according to their reports, gave people ten minutes for packing. Looting and arbitrary executions were carried out along the road.

The difference reflected different ideological commitments of different Khmer Rouge factions, which have to be understood by referring to the history of the communist party. There were two echelons of Khmer revolutionaries. The root of the first one could be traced up to 1946 when the

Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) was formed. It was broken up into three smaller national parties in 1951 under the instruction of the Communist International (Comintern), and accordingly, the Khmer communists formed their own party. They were known as the Khmer Issarak and later, the Pracheachon (the citizen) because they had laid down their arms and resorted to peaceful means to achieve their aims.

The second echelon of Khmer communists consisted of leaders such as Pol Pot. Most of them were overseas students studying in France in the 1950's and were members of the Paris Communist Circle. Their difference, as demonstrated by later events, must have been unbridgeable and therefore clearcut. However, their ideas were never fully elaborated. Or if they were, they have never been made available to the outside world. At present, we know only of that they disagreed with regard to policies on Vietnam and domestic development.

The Khmer Issaraks took a pro-Vietnam stance, which is understandable since their inspiration first came from the Vietnamese revolutionary movement during the ICP period, and later they fought hand in hand against the French colonizer. On the other hand, the Pol Pot faction was relatively free of such sympathy. Their utmost concern was to make Kampuchea great, as said in the national anthem, 'more glorious than Angkor'. Angkor was the Khmer empire which existed between the ninth and fourteenth centuries encompassing a vast territory including present-day Kampuchea, Laos, the southern part of Vietnam, Thailand and parts of Burma as far as the Gulf of Bengal. In their view, Vietnam was an aggressor who had already annexed Cochinchina and had an ambition to erase Kampuchea from the map.

To become great, Kampuchea had to achieve self-reliance as soon as possible. And it had to begin with food production which was considered the most important economic activity in a traditional agricultural economy. Therefore, the Pol Pot group disciplined every Khmer to work selflessly. The behaviour of the peasant was to be edified and even sanctified. Deviation from this model of behaviour resulted in punishment even death. This kind of policy was labelled as poor-peasantism by western observers. On the contrary, the Khmer Issaraks preferred a less harsh and a gradual policy. A prominent leader of the pro-Vietnam faction and leader of the Eastern Zone, So Phim, was known to have said that the purpose of the revolution was to improve the standard of living, not to regress from rich to poor or to force people into misery just to learn how it is to be poor.

The Pol Pot faction had already gained an upper hand in the Worker's Party of Kampuchea (WPK), the successor of the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), ever since 1963 when Pol Pot was elected its Secretary General. The WPK renamed itself in 1966 as the Communist Party of Kampuchea, (better known as Khmer Rouge). However, the pro-Vietnam faction was still strong, partly because Vietnam had become one of the main supporters of the revolution that had developed to an open guerrilla war after the US engineered Lon Nol coup in 1970 and partly because military units held a large degree of autonomy during the struggle. It was reported, that only as late as June 1975, did the leaders of each of the zones hand over, their military command to the central committee of the party.

The April 1976 announcement of Communist party leaders revealed that the Pol Pot group still dominated the leadership. At the top of the list was the state presidium, with Khieu Samphan as chairman, So Phim as first vice-chairman, and Nhim Ros as second vice-chairman. The council of ministers, below the presidium, consisted of Pol Pot, prime minister Ieng Sary, deputy prime minister; for foreign affairs; Vorn Vet, deputy prime minister for economy; Son Sen, deputy prime minister for defence; Hu Nim, minister for propaganda & information; Thiounn Thioeum minister of public health; Ieng Thirith, minister for social action; Toch Phoeun, minister for public works; and Yun Yat (Mrs Son Sen), minister for culture, education & learning.

In addition, the ministry of economy had six committees each of whose chairman held ministerial rank. They were Non Suon for agriculture, Cheng An for industry, Koy Thuon for commerce, Mey Prang for communications, Phuong for rubber plantations and Thiounn Mun for energy.

In this government structure, leaders of the pro-Vietnam faction however held important positions. Both So Phim and Nhim Ros who held posts of the vice-chairman of the state presidium, were also secretaries respectively of the East and North-West Zones. Non Suon ran the agriculture committee and Phuong the rubber committee. Chou Chet was a member of the national assembly standing committee and the secretary of the Western Zone.

The struggle of the pro-Vietnam faction against the Pol Pot faction nearly succeeded in September 1976 when Pol Pot stepped down as prime minister for reasons of health. However, he managed to return in a month's time and began his great purge. In just two years' time, he nearly executed all his opponents and became an unchallengeable leader in the

country. At the top, half of the 18 ministers mentioned above were killed: Non Suon, November 1976; Koy Thuon and Toch Phoeun, January 1977; Hu Him, April 1977; So Phim, May 1978; Nhim Ros, June 1978; Vorn Vet, Cheng An and Mey Frang, November 1978. Many of them were purged in the Pol Pot controlled Tuol Sleng prison which was a detention and interrogation center, a vast premise extending to 1.15 sq.km. A total of twenty thousand people were recorded to have once been detained. Nearly all of them suffered systematic torture before they were killed. Information on the relationship with Vietnam or the CIA was the main object of all the interrogation, as was demonstrated in the long lists of collaborators, and was required to be put down in the detainees confessions. These dossiers managed to escape Pol Pot's destruction when he fled Phnom Penh in 1979, and they formed a major source of information on the brutality of the Khmer Rouge.

At the local level, the purge of regional officials took a form described as 'concentric purge' by Ben Kiernan (1982, p.248). Cadres from the South-West Zone, a base of Pol Pot's stern ally Ta Mok, were sent firstly to Northwest and North and then every zone to carry out the purges. Each wave of purges was succeeded by a more ruthless round and subsequently, cadres became tougher and tougher. Very young cadres were recruited. The struggles and later purges apparently caused four coups in 1976 and 1977 referred by Ieng Sary in March 18th, 1978. In addition, another revolt took place in Siemreap, North Zone, in March 1977 that lasted for four days and reportedly thousands were massacred.

The purges of 1977 it was argued was directed against incompetent cadres but pro-Vietnam elements were also targets. Refugees from poor areas said that discipline was stricter after the arrival of the South-west cadres and that food supplies initially improved. However, the improvement was shortlived since most of the additional harvest were moved away from the village either for export or for keeping in the reserve presumably as part of the preparation for war with Vietnam.

The purge of the Eastern Zone, which came quite suddenly in May 1978, was solely devised to crush the pro-Vietnam elements since the Eastern Zone was one of the most productive and best governed areas in Democratic Kampuchea. The Eastern Zone was historically a zone dominated by the Khmer Issarak, perhaps because of the geographical proximity to Vietnam. This was also the zone to which most of the Khmer Hanoi party members who had fled to North Vietnam after the Geneva Conference, returned. Therefore, the crime

alleged to have been committed by Eastern Zone officials was not incompetence or mistreatment of people, but treason, a term which implied collaboration with Vietnam. Before the coup, the eastern people were alleged to have 'Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds'.

In an attempt to pre-empt the purge, So Phim, the commander of the Eastern Zone, tried to stage a revolt. However, he was soon killed and his coup failed. The Pol Pot group lost no time to respond with a bloody suppression. The Eastern cadres were the first ones to suffer, followed by anyone who was believed to have connections with Vietnam or pro-Vietnamese elements. In many cases, local people were also purged. A total of one hundred thousand people could perhaps have been killed. An unknown amount of Eastern Zone people were deported to the Northwest and the number of deaths that took place in the deportation process and after their arrival is also unknown. At the same time, many people took refuge in Vietnam, including Heng Samrin, who became the head of the new government after the downfall of Democratic Kampuchea.

The evacuation of Phnom Penh was not the only large scale movement of people during the period of Khmer Rouge rule. A second transfer took place in late 1976 and early 1977. (The deportation of the Eastern Zone people to the North-West mentioned above was the third evacuation.) At that time a large number of evacuees who had settled in the South and Southwest undertook a long and more deadly trip to the North-West. The apparent reason behind this migration was to ease the population pressure in the South and Southwest, brought about by uncontrolled manner of Phnom Penh execution. Some of the migrants went voluntarily hoping for a higher living standard in the traditionally rich North-West. Some eyed for a better chance to cross to Thailand. Other were obviously forced to take the trip.

The evacuation process had far deeper implications than just a physical movement of people from urban to rural areas. To the people, the move meant not only an enforcement of peasant status, but also a kind of social stratification which distinguished the disadvantaged from the privileged. Evacuees and those who did not live in the revolutionary zones before liberation were classified as 'new people', while local ones were called 'old' or 'base' people. The 'base' people would be treated the same as 'new' people if his or her's father or mother were found to be, for example, a policeman of Lon Nol. If a family member was demoted to a 'new' people status, consequently all the other family members also became 'new'.

New people lived separately from the base people and were quickly organised into work co-operatives. Many evacuees reported that they were more closely supervised by the cadre than the base people. They did most of the back-breaking work but received meagre food rations. After communal dining was introduced after the purge, breaches of the regulation prohibiting eating in private were often tolerated in the case of the base people, who could therefore gather extra food and eat it at home with greater safety than the evacuees.

The abundant supply of labour plus the collectivisation had actually raised food production. Collectives were first set up in May 1973 when the US air bombing exercise was most intensive, to provide a stable source of food and new recruits to the revolutionary movement. At the beginning, joining the collective was voluntary, but it was made mandatory in 1974. Inevitably, some found life in the collective unsatisfactory and fled to the Lon Nol controlled cities.

By 1977, the collectivisation process had almost been completed. Previous fragmented fields were merged into large checker-board-like fields. Before the war, rice output per hectare of land was approximately one ton. In 1977, the production target of three tons per hectare was said to have been realised and the target was revised upward to 3.5 tons for the following year. If the three ton target was realised, each individual would be allowed half a kilo of rice daily. However, refugees reported that their daily ration of rice received rarely exceeded 250 grams - a condensed milk can full, the measure for food ration used by refugees ever since the Second Indochina War period. It is also possible that the production record was inflated by Khmer Rouge cadres. In many cases, however, the local cadres tried to please their superiors by reducing consumption and earmarked more as contribution to the central government. Consequently, people found that they were producing more and more but they were also becoming more and more malnourished.

Those living in the fertile regions and under benign cadres suffered less because they had enough production to meet both local demand and government obligations. In some cases, kind-hearted cadres were even reported to have taken risks by deliberately reducing production figures to reserve more food for their own people. In areas where fishing, hunting or foraging were possible and allowed, people could supplement their meagre food supplies. If no such possibilities existed, malnutrition became inevitable.

Life in the collectives was monotonous, strictly disciplined with hard labour. The production cycle revolved around a ten day week, with the first nine days spent working in the paddy fields or irrigation construction sites. The tenth day was to be spent, attending political education meetings. There were no markets, no currency, no independent exchange and no private land.

In some collectives, refugees reported that men and women were segregated and meetings between couples were limited. The segregation was an extreme moralist measure taken to guard against extramarital sexual relations, which was punishable by death. Marriage in most cases were free. Within their own classes, men and women could freely make their choices. However, 'base people' could risk relegation of their status if they married new people.

On some occasions, forced marriages en masse were reported. Couples were encouraged to raise more children to replenish the diminishing stock of able-bodied adults. There were reports of children being taken away from their parents to be indoctrinated on a separate location. Many refugees however said that their children were merely put together and cared for by old folks when they were out at work. Older children were required to help in small tasks like looking after buffaloes and gathering fruit, although they were also required to work in a serious manner like their parents. In many regions, primary schools were set up where the children were taught basic literacy and arithmetic. Teenagers had to work like everyone else and sometimes were allocated to mobile brigades.

Freedom of religion was guaranteed by the constitution. Nevertheless, it also stipulated that reactionary religions were not permitted. Buddhism was quite within the classification of reactionary religion, since the monks supported the old government and helped spread 'feudal' ideas. In practical terms, religious activities were suppressed because it wasted resources. Therefore, all monks were banned from preaching and they were required to work like everyone else in the fields. Temples were converted to other uses, and common people were not allowed to perform rituals.

Politically, the government deliberately kept the people ignorant about most happenings in the country. There was no official declaration of the liberation and observers thought that the pre-revolutionary government, the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea, was still ruling. Only one

year later in April 1976 did the leadership announce the setting up of Democratic Kampuchea. Common people knew the government only as Angka, the organisation, and nothing more. And only in September 1977 did Angka declared itself a communist party. Its membership was kept secret even as late as 1978.

Contact with UNICEF and US firms was initiated during a brief period when Pol Pot was not in power. Excluding that, external interaction was extremely limited. Foreign trade was carried through trading houses in Hongkong and Singapore by bartering rice for essentials like drugs. The only foreign connection was a bi-monthly flight between Beijing and Phnom Penh. The only foreigners allowed to stay were advisers from China and North Korea. Kampuchea completely closed itself from the world.

Arbitrary killings it is understood to have been not a central government policy, but committed by local cadres who had too much power and autonomy. The worst scenes of these massacres took place at Kompong Cham in the Central Zone after the first few days of the liberation of Battambang in the North West. Persecution of former government officials was also believed to have been carried out. Murder of intellectuals and professionals did not take place just because they were intellectuals but also due to their propensity to disobey orders from largely young and uneducated Khmer Rouge cadres. The harsh treatment inflicted on them, came from a combination of reasons that included making them adopt a peasant attitude, so that intellectuals as a social class could be destroyed. Secondly, there was the mistrust of the urban educated people, who were considered to be not sympathetic to the revolution and to crush their power. The crimes punishable by death were 'laziness', 'resistance' even verbal, to Khmer Rouge policy and 'boasting' or 'pretension'. All in all, the refusal to adopt in every way the manner and attitudes of simple peasants met with punishment.

The Cham minority, who believe in Islam, were reported to have been massacred by the Khmer Rouge. Those who lived in the Centre and East Zones were believed to have been killed in large numbers. However, those living in the North West and North were treated as everyone else. The reason for this discrimination is unknown and might well have been due to differences of local policies.

On the other hand, fatigue, malnutrition, disease, especially malaria, were probably equally potent killers. Many reported human sufferings were in the forest areas,

where a lot of urban people were sent to do lumbering and clearing work. One of such horrible places was Pursat, in the North-West Zone. Death rate in these areas was said to have been as high as 50% of the population, since food and health facilities were extremely inadequate.

On the whole, there was a wide spectrum of living conditions in terms of availability of food, situations of arbitrary executions and attitude of cadres. The East Zone was considered to be the best governed, area where policy was rational and food production was sufficient to meet the basic food needs of the people. While the South-West Zone was traditionally a poor area, food was not a problem apparently because of strict work discipline and good management. The West, the North and the Central zones were politically unstable and production was poor. From a national perspective, there were many areas in Democratic Kampuchea that were affected by famines. There were a number of good areas that could assure the population a secure living.

After the purge, there was a general deterioration of living standards because Pol Pot's "poor peasantry" policy prevailed. The population came under the harsh treatment of pro-Pol Pot cadres who were well aware that if they did not implement policies vigorously, they would be the victims in the next round of purges. In this way, many policies were carried to the extreme. Refugees reported that the already long working days were further lengthened. Food rations were reduced even though food production had by no means decreased. Many people reported that they had witnessed trunks of rice being carried away from the village stores, which they claimed was to be stored as part of the preparation for war with Vietnam. Finally, collective eating was introduced nation-wide in mid-1977, as a measure to put more control on the peasants.

At a later period, in 1978, change of policy for the better took place apparently to create internal solidarity against the imminent Vietnam war. First in the South-West, and later in other parts of the country, the differences between the base people and the new people were abolished. They were usually declared equal before a mass gathering. Treatment of intellectuals improved and in some cases, they were taken out from the work site and given administrative work. These changes of policy however were too late to buy back the hearts of the people.

It was under this situation that the people of Phnom Penh welcomed Vietnam's invasion and called it a second liberation when Vietnamese troops entered the city on January 7th, 1978.

Fraternal Countries at War: The Kampuchea-Vietnam Conflict

The world was stunned when it heard that Kampuchea and Vietnam were fighting a war. Just three years ago, they were great friends fighting for the same cause - communism, the same enemy - US imperialism and getting the same aid from China and USSR. More unbelievable was that these war-ravaged countries chose to squander their meagre resources on wasteful war efforts rather than national rehabilitation programmes.

Perhaps, people found it surprising because in the minds of outsiders they were part of one entity - Indochina. However if one cares to look into their histories and cultures, one will notice vast differences and much historic hostility between them. The present war could well be considered an extension of this animosity, interrupted only by French colonization and subsequent US intervention.

Culturally, Kampuchea is a country with strong Indian cultural influences and embedded with the religious tradition of Theravada Buddhism. While Vietnam was long time under the suzerainty of China and is heavily influenced by her culture. Ever since her independence, Vietnam has embarked on a southern expansion programme known in Vietnamese as 'nam-tien' (literally, march to the south). By the fifteenth century, Vietnam had already occupied parts of Kampuchea and was in direct confrontation with Kampuchea around the Mekong Delta. In the 1830's, most of Kampuchea was already conquered by Vietnam. Vietnam wasted no time in implementing a vigorous Vietnamization programme, by forcing the Khmer to speak Vietnamese, and to wear Vietnamese-style clothes and by persecuting Theravada Buddhists. With the assistance of Thailand, the Khmer people finally drove away the Vietnamese in the latter part of the century.

At about the same time, the western boundary of Kampuchea was being encroached simultaneously by Thailand, which first portrayed itself successfully as a protector (perhaps because they shared a similar culture and religion) then later turned aggressor by encroaching Kampuchean land. Whatever the case, many Khmers, no doubt including Pol Pot, were aware that such encroachment had to be stopped or Kampuchea would cease to exist as a sovereign nation. Kampuchea viewed Vietnam as particularly dangerous, since historically she had demonstrated that she would and could put her will on the Khmer people.

It is in such a background that the Pol Pot group developed its fanatical "Khmer" chauvinism. They did not have much affection for the Vietnamese. From Pol Pot's point of view, co-operation with Vietnam during the First Indochina War resulted in a sell off of Kampuchea's interest, to achieve an easy settlement of Vietnam's problem. In the Geneva Conference, Vietnam had not insisted on a seat and less on a regroupment zone for the Khmer revolutionaries. This arrangement had dealt a heavy blow to the Khmer communists, since about one thousand experienced Khmer Issarak cadres were forced to move to North Vietnam (they were known as Khmer Hanoi) and the rest could only continue their struggle through political means, by forming the Pracheachon group to contest for parliamentary seats.

In the 1960's, Vietnam was reluctant to support an armed struggle of the Khmer Rouge against Sihanouk because it was alleged, Vietnam found its neutrality beneficial to its war effort. A neutral Kampuchea would spare Hanoi a second war effort and allow it to maintain the significant life line of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the southern part of it ran through Khmer soil and terminated at port Kampong Som (previously known as Sihanoukville), through which Vietnam was connected to the outside world.

The Lon Nol coup in 1970 proved to be a turning point in Khmer history. The new government not only involved herself in the Second Indochina War, but also pushed many neutral elements into sympathy with the revolutionary movement.

Once in power, Lol Nol gave an ultimatum to Hanoi demanding that she pull out of Kampuchean soil. Under this new situation, North Vietnam began to pour in supplies to support the communist struggle. Khmer Rouge simply could not refuse this desperately needed aid, though deeply suspicious of its opportunistic nature. Therefore, they rejected joint commands and wherever possible, staged their own operations without any Vietnamese troops. Those Khmer Issaraks sent back in mid-1970 by Hanoi, after twenty years' of exile, were regarded as Vietnamese agents intending to subvert the leadership.

Worst still, Khmer Rouge regarded Hanoi's 1973 Paris Accords with the US as not revolutionary and as unnecessarily prolonging the war of liberation. It successfully resisted Hanoi's pressure to join the truce. Consequently, Kampuchea was heavily bombed by US B-52 fleets, that were released from the Vietnam and Laos war theatres. This was viewed as another betrayal of Khmer interest by Hanoi. By this time, the Pol Pot group had possibly already

identified Vietnam as an enemy, and as not very different from the US and Lon Nol.

Once the common enemy was gone, all buried hostilities began to surface. The century-long border problems emerged immediately after their liberations. Before the colonization period, Vietnam had already occupied a large piece of Kampuchea territory traditionally known as Cochinchina (or in Khmer language, Kampuchea Krom, meaning lower Kampuchea). It includes present-day Ho Chi Minh City and its southern area. Under French rule, Kampuchea was absorbed in 1864 into the Indo-Chinese Federation which was divided into four protectorates: Annam, Tonkin, Laos and Kampuchea, and the colony of Cochinchina. The whole federation was ruled under a French governor-general. France accepted the de facto Kampuchea-Vietnam boundary for administrative convenience, and Kampuchea's claim to Kampuchea Krom was irrelevant to the French at that time. To complicate the issue, France, as any colonizer, adopted a divide and rule policy by encouraging a large number of Vietnamese migrants into Kampuchea, some of them as colonial officials, and some of them as settlers. Many sections of the boundary were therefore inhabited by a mixture of people from both countries. Pol Pot was keen on reclaiming this large piece of territory, despite the fact that Sihanouk in 1967 had agreed on an 'unambiguous acceptance' of the French frontier with Hanoi and the communist movement in South Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, supposedly in exchange for an unilateral right to demarcate the frontier of disputed zones.

Thus, immediately after the liberation of Phnom Penh, skirmishes were reported on some coastal islands in the bay of Siam and along the border, territories which Kampuchea claimed to be hers. These conflicts were initially settled relatively amicably, through consultations and exchanges of delegations, because the pro-Vietnam faction was still strong in the Kampuchean government. An interval of peace ensued between May 1976 to early 1977, which coincided with the temporary removal of Pol Pot from power.

From early 1977 onwards, the border conflict escalated rapidly with both sides operating clearly beyond the disputed zones. After an unsuccessful attempt on June 7th, 1977 to invite Kampuchea to the negotiation table, Vietnam launched on December 16th, 1977 a 14 division attack and occupying the strategic Parrot Beak area. Kampuchea broke off relations with Vietnam on January 1st 1978.

Vietnam made another futile peace initiative on February 5th, 1978. In May, the Eastern Zone revolt was crushed and

Vietnam's last hope of a peaceful solution had been shattered. She was convinced of a full scale intervention at this point and she began to solicit support, first from the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) by taking its membership in June, and then from the Soviet Union by concluding a Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in November 3rd, 1978. On December 22nd, 1978, an all-out offensive, was staged by Vietnam on the grounds that a peace-keeping request had been made by the Kampuchean National United Front of National Salvation (KNUFNS) formed by Eastern Zone dissidents twenty days earlier. Vietnamese forces took just 17 days to capture Phnom Penh on January 7th, 1979. This left no choice for the Khmer Rouge but to resort to guerrilla warfare from the Thai-Kampuchea border area. Three days latter, the KNUFNS declared the establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. By February 18th, Vietnam's Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, visited Phnom Penh and a treaty of friendship and co-operation between the two countries was signed.

The Khmer Rouge particularly the Pol Pot group, however seemed to harbour very strong anti-Vietnamese sentiments and extreme Khmer nationalism that translated itself easily into anti-Vietnamese sentiments. According to Sihanouk, soon after the liberation of Phnom Penh Ieng Sary told him that 'their soldiers were "displeased" with "the party", because the latter did not give them their approval to take back Kampuchea Krom...'. The area was once part of the Angkor Empire and was occupied by Vietnam in the 18th century. In 1978, everyone in the Kampuchean army talked about such an adventure. A broadcast by Radio Phnom Penh on May 10th, 1978 (Kiernan 1983, P.232) indicates the kind of fanatical anti-Vietnam sentiment that prevailed:

'So far, we have attained our target: 30 Vietnamese killed for every fallen Kampuchean So we could sacrifice two million Kampucheans in order to exterminate the 50 million Vietnamese - and we shall still be 6 million...'

On the part of Vietnam while she could not definitely tolerate any aggression by Pol Pot's Cambodia, her invasion of Kampuchea was not just an act of self-defence as she claims. Before its actual invasion, Vietnam had already been alleged to have involved in a number of coups to topple the Pol Pot leadership. Her repeated proclamation of building a 'special relationship' with her two Indochina neighbours was equally suspicious. According to a speech presented by Nguyen Duy Trinh, foreign minister of Vietnam, to the Fourth Party Congress at the end of 1976, this 'special relationship' was founded on 'the principle of total

equality, mutual respect of each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity'. However, this was doubtful, from the experience of Laos which signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Vietnam on July 18th, 1977. This resulted in the stationing of forty to fifty thousand troops in every part of Laos and Vietnamese advisors taking deputy positions in nearly every ministry.

Even though Vietnam might not aim at building a Vietnam dominated Indochina Federation, as alleged by Kampuchea, the kind of special relation she had in mind might be very similar to that of Laos. Therefore, the fear of eventual annexation by Kampuchea was not a totally baseless speculation. The friendship and co-operation treaty that was later signed with the Peoples' Republic of Kampuchea demonstrates this intention. The treaty stipulates, that both parties pledge all possible aid to the other, if one of them is forced to defend the inviolability of its territory. Furthermore, it noted the 'traditional solidarity and fraternal friendship among the peoples of Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam'. Although short of a federation in the sense of a unified government structure, this treaty together with the one signed with Laos in March 23rd, 1979, could be seen as de facto alliance with a high level of co-operation and consultation on all areas.

An Interplay of Superpower Interests: The Sino-Vietnam Conflict

Perhaps, Vietnam would have tolerated Khmer Rouge's antagonism a bit longer, if China had also not been a supporter of Pol Pot and Sino-Vietnam relations had also not deteriorated to such an extent. Vietnam was well aware that the Kampuchean adventure would disrupt her already ailing economy and incur international condemnation.

In Vietnam's perception Pol Pot's chauvinism was emboldened by China. By planting a hostile government in Kampuchea, Vietnam's resources had to be consistently diverted from national rehabilitation to defence expenses. This would keep her persistently weak and dependent on Chinese support. Vietnam naturally feared losing Kampuchea, as a buffer from foreign threats to her western border. If this happened, she would be completely encircled by the hostile US-China bloc: China in the north, China-backed Kampuchea in the east, and US backed ASEAN, especially Thailand, situated in the vicinity.

If Vietnam saw encirclement intolerable and even a war necessary to avert this danger, the same was true for China.

After the Second Indochina War, Vietnam had gradually depended more on Soviet Union which China regarded as enemy number one since their split in early 1960's. China felt threatened by a huge Soviet army in her northern border and her restless ally, Vietnam, in the south. In addition, Vietnam-controlled Kampuchea would confirm China's nightmare of being encircled.

Supporting an anti-Vietnam Kampuchea, however seemed to be the second best choice for China, since a benign relationship between both Kampuchea and Vietnam would equally serve her interest. Therefore, when Pol Pot visited China on September 1977, it was reported that China had urged Kampuchea to settle her grievances with Vietnam through peaceful means. Later, China reportedly tried to mediate in their dispute but the initiative was turned down by Vietnam. A further attempt was said to have taken place on January 18th, 1978 when Deng Ying-chao, Chou En-lai's widow, visited Phnom Penh. She made use of the aid issue to press Kampuchea to negotiate, but without success. Meanwhile, Chinese aid continued to flow into Vietnam though it kept decreasing in size. As late as January 10th, 1978, an aid agreement was concluded between China and Vietnam. However, Pol Pot's fanatic anti-Vietnamism ruled out any possibility of reconciliation and Vietnam had to make its choice.

At about the same time, Sino-Vietnam relationship was rapidly deteriorating, largely due to Vietnam's shift of her loyalty to the Soviet Union, first overtly expressed in her joining of the COMECON. Seeing her own security being threatened, China threw her lot behind Kampuchea hoping that she would be able to put certain restraints on Vietnam. Vietnam found this shift of China's stand too hard to swallow and was determined to strike before Kampuchea, which was reported well on the road to recovery, grew too strong for Vietnam to deal with.

Just two months after Vietnam launched her massive attack on Kampuchea, China declared a 'punitive war' on Vietnam. To serious observers, the latter was no surprise since the Vietnamese attack had intensified the Sino-Vietnam hostility. What was surprising was the timing; the attack came so late that it had little effect on Vietnam.

To have a better understanding of the Sino-Vietnamese hostility, we have to trace their disagreements back to the Second Indochina War, and perhaps even to events far back into history. Beginning from the 1960's, the world witnessed an historical shift in the relationship between the US, the Soviet Union, China and Vietnam. At first, China and the

Contd.

Without Comment

Extracts from an article titled: **China, Cambodia and Vietnam: Dialectical Chauvinism** by Nayan Chanda, in 'The Truth Unites - Essays in Tribute to Samar Sen', Ashok Mitra(ed), Published by Subarnarekha, Calcutta.

Admirers of a heroic Vietnam and a revolutionary China, puzzled by Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and China's punitive attack on Vietnam, are confounded by propaganda that the people of the other side have always been the aggressors and that their communist leadership has been carrying on the policy of their emperors and feudal rulers; proof whereof has been found in the history of predatory acts or invasions that took place several hundreds, even a thousand years ago.

Propaganda has made an abstraction of the 'expansionism' of the other side: the present-day rulers, no matter who they are, have been carrying on, or are almost destined to carry on, the aggressive policy of their feudal ancestors. This has not, of course, been the only reason advanced: proletarian internationalism, the need to counter Soviet and Vietnamese hegemony, the struggle against Chinese expansionism and Sino-American collusion, a special solidarity between the peoples of Indochina - all these have been used by the parties in the conflict to justify their actions.

Democratic Kampuchea's leaders, who had so far limited themselves to internal propaganda, also unleashed in 1978 a campaign unprecedented in its crudeness. "Whether in the feudalist era, in the French colonialists' period, in the U.S. imperialists' period or in the Ho Chi Minh period", a Democratic Kampuchean foreign ministry document declared, "the Vietnamese have not changed their true nature, that is the nature of the aggressor, annexationist and swallower of other countries' territories." There was not even a perfunctory attempt to differentiate between the people and their feudal rulers; the 'Black Paper' in fact proudly proclaims that the Kampuchean people foster 'a deep national hatred' against the Vietnamese and that since the epoch of Angkor they have called them yuon, 'savage'.

But more important than the distortion of history is the specific use that distorted history is being put to. Since in the past the military might of the Vietnamese - 'the whole leaf' - covered 'torn leaves' such as the weakened kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia, Hanoi is arguing, in effect, that the Vietnamese should now take over the protectorate of those two countries. Comprehensive co-operation - an euphemism for the leadership of Hanoi in key areas of policy - between the three Indochinese countries has become the 'indispensable law of history'. Thus a truncated history of Indochina is being offered as the ultimate argument for the vietnamese domination of the peninsula. The Chinese could perhaps take a leaf out of the Vietnamese book and argue that suppression of that inglorious chapter of Vietnamese imperial expansion into Cambodia indicates a secret approval for such a policy.

Neither Beijing nor Hanoi, not to speak of the deposed leaders of Democratic Kampuchea, seem in the least hesitant about rewriting history to fit the needs of current policy. An article in the September 1981 issue of the Vietnamese Communist Review stated that the task of the Marxist science of history in Vietnam was to 'discover the essence for the tradition of the nation and the victories and experiences in the process of struggling to build and defend the country ... cultivate the patriotism and self-reliance and intensify the struggle of our people today to build and defend the country'. The article concluded that history 'has clearly proven that Vietnam has always been a factor of stability in Indochina and Southeast Asia'.

Only historians with full access to Chinese and Vietnamese historical and archaeological records can access the evidence put forward by Hanoi and Beijing, and the extent of the influence China had over Vietnam. But that is perhaps a vain search for bourgeois objectivity and, in any case, useless in settling their quarrel. Meanwhile, 'Marxist' historians and propagandists of China and Vietnam make the feudal past serve the revolutionary present.

Soviet Union went through a period of bitter ideological differences in the early 1960's. Vietnam tried to keep neutral in the rivalry so that she could obtain maximum aid from both countries. China's hostility with the Soviet Union deepened to such an extent, that China put Soviet ahead of the US, on her enemy list. The changing perceptions vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the US, gradually moved China closer to the US, and Vietnam with the Soviets thus rocking the basis of the Sino-Vietnam friendship.

In an attempt to isolate the Soviet Union's interest in Indochina, Chinese Communist Party's Secretary General Deng Xiao-ping offered in late 1964, to pay all the war expenses in South Vietnam if Hanoi broke relations with Moscow. Vietnam refused with a view to maintaining a broader front against US imperialism. When the US directly intervened in the Vietnam war in 1965, China rejected in March of the same year, an initiative to organise joint aid programmes with the Soviets. Even worse, in a bid to reduce the risk of direct confrontation with the US, China announced openly that she would put her troops in the Vietnam theatre only if she was attacked. According to Hanoi, this left the US a free hand in South Vietnam, without any deterrence from China.

Most serious of all, Vietnam viewed with great suspicion the normalization of contacts between China and the US beginning from the late 1960's. Kissinger's first trip to China in 1971 led to an outcry from Vietnam. She was probably afraid of a secret deal between China and the US and that China would exchange her interest in Vietnam with the US's in Taiwan.

The Paris Accords in 1973, was a major watershed in the Sino-Vietnam relationship. With the pull out of US troops in Indochina, China worried that Soviet interest would be extended unhampered in this region. China's policy therefore was directed against a total elimination of US role, and the destruction of the US backed South Vietnam government. Zhou En-lai reportedly to have urged Hanoi's leaders Le Duan and Pham Van Dong to 'relax' for a few years before overthrowing the Nguyen Van Thieu regime in the south, arguing that it would be difficult for the US to land troops to save South Vietnam again after that interval. With this line of thinking, Zhou offered the same level of economic assistance but no military aid. Again in 1975, China warned Hanoi against the final offensive saying that it would bring back US troops.

Vietnam, viewed China's stand with suspicion given also that Vietnam's history was dotted with struggles against the dominance of China, since the time it became independent in

939 A.D. The Vietnamese interpreted China's foreign policy as a product of 'Great Han Chauvinism', since China wanted to keep Vietnam within her sphere of influence, so that Vietnam would become her buffer zone against hostile foreign powers. To achieve that, Vietnam had to be kept weak, divided and dependent on China. Therefore, China was ready to accept a divided Vietnam in the Geneva Conference of 1954, and repeatedly advised against military actions for unification.

After the liberation of Saigon, a variety of conflicts combined to further worsen their relationship. Of these, territorial disputes, the overseas Chinese issue and aid problems forced Vietnam to get closer to Russia.

China and Vietnam had also three unsettled disputes over, 1) the sovereignty of the island groups of Paracels and Spratly, 2) maritime boundary of the Gulf of Tonkin and, 3) the demarcation of the land border. In January 1974, China sent a marine force to control the Paracels group. The defunct Saigon government retaliated by occupying six islands of the Spratly group. Even before capturing Saigon, Hanoi dispatched troops to take over the Spratly islands. These unilateral actions created bad feelings on both sides.

Attempts to define the maritime boundary on the Gulf of Tonkin also failed, when Vietnam's proposal was rejected by China in a August 1974 meeting. It seemed that both sides agreed that the dispute could not be solved in a short time and they preferred to close the disputed area from oil exploration pending further agreements.

Although the land border between them was well demarcated, there were certain sections which were blurred. In 1974, local Hanoi officials were reported to have accused Chinese railway workers, of misplacing wayback in 1955, the junction of the Hanoi-Youyiguan Railway, 300 meters inside Vietnam territory. It was said that about 100 similar disputes were reported in 1974 and 40 in 1975.

A more tangible dispute which later proved to be a source of embarrassment to both countries was the dispute over Hoa, the overseas Chinese in Vietnam. Their number in 1978 was about 1.5 million, of whom over 250,000 lived in the North. As other overseas Chinese in South East Asian countries, the Hoa dominated the local economy, and due to geographical proximity, they had maintained a close relationship with China. This intimacy, however caused them much trouble when Sino-Vietnam relationship turned sour. They became the victims of one of the saddest contemporary tragedies, where hundreds of thousands of them were forced

out and sailed as refugees in their flimsy boats.

The storm began to gather when the new Vietnamese government asked all Hoa in the south, to register for the February 1976 national assembly election, under the nationality they had acquired in the Ngo Diem regime. Since Diem had enforced Vietnamese citizenship on virtually all Hoa in 1956, this meant the Hoa were not given a choice. China protested in June 1976, claiming Beijing had a right and responsibility to protect their interests.

The real crisis did not take place until 1978, when the Vietnamese government sped up the socialist transformation programme, by nationalising all industries and trade. On March 23rd, 1978, 30,000 guards were suddenly mobilized to cordon off the Chinese section - the Cholon, of the Ho Chi Minh City, where the Hoa's goods were confiscated. The next day, all wholesale and big business activities were outlawed. Later, a new dong was issued and the Hoa claimed to have suffered when they exchanged it with the old currency. Although these actions were directed at the citizenry as a whole, the Hoa regarded them as discriminatory to them, as they dominated the capitalist and merchant class. Furthermore, they were threatened to be sent to new economic zones in rural areas and their children conscripted to the army, as all Vietnamese did.

The Hoa who led the first exodus did not come from the south, but they were another group who lived near the Sino-Vietnam border area and who had been under socialist rule for decades. On April 1977, the Vietnamese tried to 'purify' the border area, by repatriating illegal Chinese migrants to the Chinese side. This exercise had already created tension on both sides of the border. Before the nationalisation in the south, a similar campaign was launched in Hanoi and Haiphong, where the Chinese had been allowed to operate private business in the past. This gave rise to unrest and agitation in the cities.

When the conflicts between Kampuchea and Vietnam escalated in early 1978, various rumors, like 'imminent war between China and Vietnam' and 'the Hoa would be punished by the Chinese troops as traitors unless they returned to China immediately', spread throughout the Hoa community and created panic. Both sides accused the other of instigating the rumors, but refugees reported that Vietnam did try to calm and discourage the Hoa from leaving in the early stages of the exodus.

By the end of May 1978, 100,000 were reported to have

already gone to China. China then began a major media campaign on May 24th, 1978 accusing Hanoi of 'ostracizing, persecuting and expelling' the Hoa. Two days later, China unilaterally decided to dispatch ships to Vietnam to evacuate 'victimized Chinese residents'. This action gave further impetus to the flight to the border and a large number of Hoa in the Cholon section, were said to have lined up in the Chinese embassy, to apply for repatriation. By July, the refugees to China had already swelled to 140,000. China realised that this huge number of repatriates would disrupt her economy. She closed her border on July 11, 1978 and demanded Vietnam take back some who were willing to return.

The willingness of the Hoa to leave the country showed that their loyalty could no longer be trusted. China's closure of her border and sending the Hoa back were considered as plots to destabilize Vietnam. This fear could have been taken for real, since China announced at the end of 1977, a new policy which asked all overseas Chinese to contribute to China's four modernisation programme and to participate in an 'international united front against hegemonism'. This was an important reversal, since China previously discouraged overseas Chinese to engage in their national politics.

In a step to get rid of the undesired elements, the Vietnamese government encouraged and co-ordinated in a semi-official way the departure of Hoa by sea. The exodus by sea gathered momentum from September 1978, when the land exodus began to dwindle. At the same time, her economy was also in a very bad condition. Her agricultural policy was found to be not conducive to production and food shortage remained a serious problem. To aggravate the situation, widespread flooding in 1978, destroyed a substantial amount of the harvest, which she had to make up by soliciting more foreign aid. However, international assistance was not forthcoming.

As early as September 1975, when Le Duan rejected China's advice to accept an 'anti-hegemony' stance during his visit to China, he was informed that China could not continue the 1973 level of aid promised by Zhou En-lai. Later, China notified Vietnam that grants would be terminated after 1976 and that she would grant only half of the requested loan, for the 1976-1980 five year plan. It was probably after a purge of pro-Chinese elements in her party leadership, Vietnam was told in February 1977, that China could not extend any new loans, citing reasons such as economic disruption by the 'gang of four' and earthquakes. China's assistance was totally terminated during the peak of the Hoa crisis in July 1978, when China claimed that she had to divert resources to

cater for the returnees or refugees.

Trying to avoid an over-dependence on the Soviets, after the termination of Chinese aid, Vietnam attempted in mid-July 1978 to revive the normalisation process with the US, begun one year earlier, by hinting to foreign diplomats that she would drop the condition of reparation. However, the US showed no significant interest, because she had reservations about Vietnam's attack on Kampuchea and the greater priority accorded by the US for normalization of ties with China.

During a May 1978 visit to China, US presidential advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski said that, 'US recognizes - and shares China's resolve to resist the efforts of any nation which seeks to establish global or regional hegemony' - where regional hegemony referred to Vietnam. This statement clearly marked China's success in drawing the US, in a front against Vietnam and the Soviets. This formed the common ground for a formal diplomatic relationship between the US and China, which was announced in December 15, 1978 and became effective on the first day of 1979.

A recapitulation of the events that took place around June 1978, shows that Vietnam's situation, both internally and externally, was very grave. Fighting was escalating on her border area with Kampuchea, which had not responded to Vietnam's peace proposal made four months earlier. Meanwhile, the Hoa exodus had created a disruptive drain on her economy, and considerably tarnished her international image. The progress of economic development was far from satisfactory and became more difficult without China's aid.

Confronted with this situation, Vietnam's party leadership in June 1978 made some fateful decisions, including the identification of China as the main enemy, the launching of an offensive in Kampuchea, the establishing of closer relationship with USSR, and the scrapping of the existing five-year plan and reorienting the economy for security requirements.

In June 27, 1978, Hanoi finally applied for COMECON membership, to which she had been an observer since 1961 and was granted membership swiftly under Soviet auspices. Subsequently, COMECON agreed in September the same year to take up all aid projects left behind by China. Two months later, Hanoi took another important step by concluding a friendship treaty with the Soviets. In article six of that treaty, the two parties pledged to take 'appropriate effective measures' to help each other in case one of them is attacked or threatened. Assured of Soviet military

commitment, Vietnam began the final offensive against Kampuchea on December 22nd, 1978.

Viewing Hanoi's action as a threat to her own security, China began to think of a punitive attack. This idea was communicated to her new ally, the US, during Deng Xiao-ping's visit to the US in January 1979. The US was later reported to have had reservation with China's plan. However, China believed her new relationship about the US, could deter Soviet retaliation. China initially declared, that her intentions were limited and that the attack would last only two weeks, but later mounted a massive operation against Vietnam on February 17th, 1979. Shortly after capturing Lang Son, a provincial capital near the border on March 2nd, China announced her withdrawal.

Although widespread damage was inflicted to the border area, Vietnam did not take this 'lesson' seriously. The attack did not achieve anything because Vietnamese troops were not forced out of Kampuchea. The Hoa did not stop from braving the wild seas. Instead, another wave of exodus was reported to have gathered momentum immediately after the Chinese invasion and the treatment of those remaining in Vietnam markedly deteriorated.

To Vietnam, the invasion was a clear proof of the expansionist intentions of China and therefore, her control on Kampuchea became even more important. The establishment of ties between China and the US immediately before the attack, also confirmed to Vietnam, that this new relation was directed against her, although later events showed that the Sino-American relationship was not one of such close cooperation. In the view of the Vietnamese, time had shown the Soviets to be more trustworthy. An even more intimate relationship was foreseen in the future.

This new reversal of great power roles in Indochina, turns out to be another irony of recent Asian history. The US, fought in the Second Indochina War against Hanoi and the Sino-Soviet bloc because of its security fears arising out of the spread of communism in the region. However, in just three years' time, the US had accepted communist China as a friend and the long term communist comradeship between China and the Soviets, was further rocked and their rivalry turned out to be a major cause of the Third Indochina conflict. All these power rivalries and machinations of states, finally had their greatest impact, in only worsening the situation, of an already long suffering people. Nothing more was achieved or is being achieved by this meaningless and senseless rivalry among the states involved in the Indo-China situation.

The Plight of the People: The Refugees

The number of the refugees caused by the continuing Indochina conflicts is staggering. In September 1978, a total of 8,558 boat people reached the South East Asian Coast, and the number increased every month, to 12,540 in October and 21,505 in November (Wain 1981). At the same period, freighters commissioned by overseas Chinese businessman and supported by Vietnamese officials were doing a booming refugee trade. As early as April 1978, the South Cross carried 1,250 to Indonesia, to be followed by Hai Hong bringing 2,500 to Malaysia in September, Huey Fong bringing 3,318 to Hongkong in December 78, Tung An bringing 2,300 to Philippines that month and finally, Skyluck bringing 2,651 to Hongkong in February 1979.

The number of refugees reaching the coast of Asian countries showed a small drop (compared to November) in December, 1978 to 13,730, apparently related to the Geneva international conference on refugees convened in that month. The conference brought together 38 countries to discuss aid and refugee quotas, and pressure was exerted on Vietnam to stop the human outflow. Vietnam responded and boat people arriving in January 1979 declined to 9,931, and 8,568 in the following month. Immediately after China's invasion, in March, 1979 the number of boat people shot up again to 13,423, and continued to rise to 26,602 in April, 51,139 in May and finally reached an all time high of 56,941 in June of the same year.

Most of the boat refugees went to Malaysia, Indonesia and to a smaller extent, Hongkong, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. At first the Asian countries treated these people in a humanitarian manner by providing them shelter and food, but they made it clear that the reception was temporary. The only exception was Singapore which imposed a monthly ceiling of 1,000. Since it had accepted that number, refugee boats would be ruthlessly towed out of Singapore territorial waters, regardless of their condition.

By early 1979, the more lenient Asian countries changed their attitudes as tens of thousand of refugees continued to arrive their coast with no sign of stopping. At the same time the number of resettlement in permanent asylum countries lagged far behind the incoming rate. Malaysia hardened her policy in January by banning all incoming refugees, except the sick and those on board unseaworthy vessels. All intruding vessels were given food, water, fuel and then towed

out to the international waters. Thailand, Indonesia and other countries followed suit, fearing that those rejected would find their way to their own countries. Many of the rejected were subsequently killed by pirates or died in the journey to a second shore. (Wain, 1981)

The fear of these Asian countries is perhaps understandable. Most of the refugees in this period were ethnic Chinese, who are seen as a potential problem to these countries which already had a sizable Chinese population. Ethnic tensions in the past have caused bloody riots, not to mention that these sudden number of unexpected people were bound to strain the already overstretched local economies. Although the countries that offered first asylum were promised that all refugees would be resettled in third countries, the sluggish intake rate by Western Countries made the first asylum countries fear that they would be left with hoardes of old and unskilled refugees with no foreign countries willing to accept them.

The urgency of the problem led to the second international conference in Geneva July 1979. By that time, 293,000 boat people had already registered in the UNHCR camps around the South East Asian countries. As before, the conference pressed higher refugee intake quota and more aid from the Western countries. Perhaps yielding to international pressure, or because by now Vietnam felt that the undesirable elements had all gone she put a stop to this exodus. As demonstrated by the number of refugees who arrived on Asian coasts: 17,839 in July, 9,734 in August 9,533 in September and 2,854 in October 1979. Vietnam had kept her promise. Interviews with refugees in this period also confirmed that they could only escape by taking secret routes. At the same time, an expanded Orderly Departure Programme was installed to provide a safe and humanitarian way.

Although the exodus from Vietnam stopped, people still tried all possible means to get out of the country. In 1983, 28,000 newcomers were registered in UNHCR centres. The number declined to 24,800 in 1984 and 22,250 the following year. By that time, the refugees were mostly motivated by economic reasons and their composition was dominated by more ethnic Vietnamese.

Those who could reach foreign shores were the lucky ones who survived the hazards of the journey, which included being attacked by pirates. UNHCR figures showed that every third boat was assaulted and thousands of refugees, especially young women, have been murdered, raped or abducted. The

refugees still have to wait patiently for years in closed camps before they could migrate to a third country. After the exodus, the first asylum countries such as Hong Kong have imposed a policy of 'humane deterrence', where refugees are confined in prison - like austere camps.

There are no exact figures of the boat people who have died in their journeys. However Wain estimated in a May 1st, 1985 article in the Asian Wall Street Journal, that 50,000 Vietnamese have died at sea in the past ten years. At the same time, 556,000 had successfully completed their journey and however restrictive the orderly departure program was, still about 81,000 have left Vietnam through this program. It is estimated that one million Vietnamese in total escaped the country since the communist victory and the same number would like to leave if they have a choice.

Excluding the boat people, about 265,000 Hoa from north Vietnam, since 1977 have taken the land route back to China. And some 340,000 Laotians crossed the Mekong River to Thailand. Most of the refugees from Laos belonged to the Hmong minorities who were allegedly persecuted by the communist Pathet Lao government, since they supported the US in the Second Indochina War. Finally, a lot of Khmers took the advantage of the collapse of the Khmer Rouge rule to move to Thailand.

During the Pol Pot period, an estimated 150,000 Khmers had fled to Vietnam and 50,000 to Thailand. Most of the Khmers crossed the Thai border at the Aranyaprathet and Pailin areas. A camp has been opened for them in the former location. Another influx crossed into Thailand after the fall of Democratic Kampuchea. The first batch of the refugees largely consisted of former urban residents, educated or relatively well off people. Some of them were traders, smugglers or those who sought to migrate to a western country. The Thai army feared that these people would cause further burden to a country which had already had a large number of refugees, by forcefully repatriating some 42,000 of them to a difficult area inside Kampuchea. Thousands were allegedly killed. The second batch arrived from July. Most of them followed the retreating Khmer Rouge forces voluntarily or involuntarily. They were exhausted by the journey, which took them months to tread from the interior parts of Kampuchea, and the battering of the chasing Vietnam force, plus malaria, hunger and internal struggles. The number of refugees near the border area, as estimated by the Thai government in October 1979 is said to be 600,000.

The forced repatriation in June had already aroused an

uproar from the international community. Thailand bowed to this pressure by opening her border in October. At the same time, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was requested to prepare food and shelter for some 300,000 refugees, which implied the willingness of the Thai government to offer shelter to the refugees at least temporarily.

Although the Thai government offered shelter to the refugees, its policy was clear that the intruders were regarded as 'illegal immigrants' only and therefore not enjoying 'refugee' status as implied by international law. Therefore, their stay in Thailand was temporary, either to be sent to a third country or to be returned to Kampuchea. In the same line of understanding, the refugee camps opened by UNHCR were called 'holding centres'. The first one of these holding centres were opened in October 24th, 1979 at Sa Kaeo, in which the Thai army moved from the border some 31,000 dying and sick Khmers. In November, one of the largest refugee camps by world standards was set up at Khao-I-Dang and was planned to accommodate 300,000 people.

The centers however were never full. In December, there were a total of 119,000 in all of them. The peak number was 177,000 achieved in May 1980 and from then onwards, the total diminished. By February 1982, there were only 93,500 of them in the holding centers, 28% of the total 330,000 refugees taking shelter in camps controlled by various guerrilla groups along the border area (Kiljunen, 1984, p.50). Actually the Thai government closed its border again in January, although a lot of refugees could still buy their way into the territories. At the same time, it was reported that a total of 20,000 refugees were illegally transferred to the guerrilla camps between late 1980 and early 1982. The Thai military also foiled UNHCR effort to repatriate 9,000 refugees, who were willing to go back to Kampuchea, by indirectly guiding the Khmer guerrilla to attack the returnees. Dozens of death were reported. The UNHCR stopped repatriation since then.

All this reflects Thailand's intention, of setting up a refugee buffer zone along the border area, so that any direct assault from the Kampuchean side would firstly be absorbed by this human shield, a policy which has alarmed the international humanitarian agencies working there and consequently international opinion. Such a policy was also aimed at helping the resistance since the refugees can be used in many ways. Politically, they could show the world that they were still supported by a large number of people. Furthermore international aid delivered to the refugees could

be creamed off, directly or indirectly to support the resistance armies, not to mention that new members could be recruited in the camps. By February of 1982, 122,000 people lived in camps controlled by Khmer Rouge, 101,000 in KPLNF camps and Moulinaka camps.

Living standards were generally acceptable in the holding centers, where there were regular food supplies, well equipped hospitals and good schooling. Their living conditions, were generally better than local Thais, and the aid agencies were working to narrow down the difference since this was a potential source of tension between the refugees and the locals.

However, those living in the border camps were less fortunate. Because the camps were located in fighting zone, clashes between the Vietnamese and the guerillas, between the Vietnamese and Thai, and infighting among the guerilla factions for control of camps, has created a sense of insecurity. While a lot of people were willing to leave these refugee camps, either to a third country or go back home, the limited quota offered by third countries, the impossibility of crossing conflict lines and the extensive mine fields between the warring parties, forced the refugees to remain in these border camps.

Between November 1984 and March 1985, the Vietnamese launched their most intense border offensive and all the resistance's camps were attacked or burnt. During the conflict, more than 200,000 civilians were evacuated to Thailand and were consolidated into four centers. Each of the three guerilla factions were allowed to control one centre and those living inside were considered as illegal immigrants. The remaining one, Khao-I-Dang (KID), was administered by the UNHCR with 24,000 inmates. Out of all the refugees in Thailand, only 16,737 registered in the KID are legally recognised as such and in principle entitled to resettlement in a third country. Though, in practice, many applications have been rejected by recipient countries because of their low skill and education level.

Their fate was in further total uncertainty, when the Thai government closed the KID in January 1987, allegedly because of the diminishing willingness of Western countries to accept the refugees. Except those who have already had a refugee status, all of the rest are regarded as displaced persons and do not get a chance to be resettled. In this situation, the refugees can either go back to Kampuchea or accept the camps as their homes. The first alternative seemed to be more difficult now than before since land mines

and booby traps have been planted in large numbers along the border to prevent guerilla penetration after Vietnam's 1984 dry season offensive.

It seemed that as long as the guerilla war is carried on, and international aid is in the pipeline, the refugees will remain there. What is sad to see is that a lot of innocent children, a quarter of the population now, were born in the camps and with only the unpleasant histories of their parents as inheritance they face a uncertain future. All of them are innocent victims of power and fanaticism and unfortunate helpless pawns of international hypocrisy in continuing the tragedy.

The Flight of the People: People's Republic of Kampuchea

The refugees who arrived on the Thai border following the occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnam narrated stories of horror and atrocities inflicted by the Heng Samrin regime. The Vietnamese were accused of mass executions, arbitrary arrests, re-evacuation of cities, looting of rice and valuables, shooting of people who tried to cross the border, mismanagement of aid, and vietnamisation of the Khmers, including forced marriage and pushing the use of Vietnamese language.

However, these reports were found to be full of ideological prejudices, and in many cases more wishful thinking on the part of refugees, who already scared by Khmer Rouge rule imagined similar incidents within any other regime that was called socialist. (Vickery , 1984, P.203-236) These reports were exaggerated by the DK, the Khmer Serie, or the Thais and reported as truth to the world.

Careful checking of refugee reports induced Vickery to conclude that there was no evidence of massacre, and actually even isolated incidents of execution was uncommon. Only those arrested and subjected to harrassment were former Khmer Rouge cadre and the rest of the people were free of physical abuses. Evacuation of towns was a outright fabrication. Only in some cases people were prevented to move into cities because of food shortage. People reported that they could harvest the crops left in the field and eat what they have, and it seemed quite implausible that robbery by Vietnamese could take place at the same time. The report of trucks carrying loads of rice to the east could be the supplies being sent to the devastated East Zone. Educated and skilled people without any Khmer Rouge connections were immediately recalled by the government and assigned to government posts commensurate to their qualifications, although salaries were

always very low. Movement was relatively free, although passes were required. The harrassment of refugees trying to escape through the borders came more from Khmer Rouge, Khmer Serei, Thais and bandits rather than the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese language was not taught in school. No people were ever found to be forced to marry the Vietnamese. Finally, the PRK government did distribute only a small portion of the food aid to the rural people, since most of them were rationed to the urbanites who could not grow and forage as the rural folks did.

Therefore, the PRK promises on the abolition of collective labour, freedom of belief, reuniting of families and revival of urban economies, as laid down in the declaration of KNUFNS during its formation on December 2nd, 1979 were to a large extent carried out. They regarded themselves the faithful followers of the tradition of the Khmer communist revolutionary movement, while the Pol Pot group were seen as the usurpers and deviationists. It is also why they continue to celebrate April 17th as their national day.

Not surprisingly, Vietnamese forces still had an important role in the early days of the regime. At the peak an estimated 220,000 to 200,000 troops were present in Kampuchea. The Vietnamese were found to have interfered little in people's daily live. At the village level, the presence of Vietnamese were kept to a minimum and cadres were Khmers. Since 1980, there was a general reduction of the presence of Vietnamese troops except in the north West. It was reported that during 1980 there were not more than 10% to 20% of the villages, where Vietnamese armies were stationed.

At the top level, Vietnam still had a good hold of the government. Two factions were discernible in the PRK: the Eastern Zone insurgents represented by Heng Samrin, and the Khmer Hanoi who returned after 1979 represented by Pen Sovann. Most probably because Vietnam favoured his background, Pen Sovann was the man in real power who controlled both the party and army. Observers at that time were speaking of the 'Pen Sovann Regime' and heralded the end of Kampuchean independence at his hands. This picture was confirmed after the state election and of the convening of the National Assembly in 1981. Pen Sovann was appointed Prime Minister, while Heng Samrin became the President of the symbolic State Council.

Then all of a sudden Pen Sovann was sacked in December of 1981. The popular impression was that he was ousted because of "playing the Soviets against Hanoi". Though it is

a bit difficult to believe this given the fact that relations between the Soviets and Kampuchea continued to improve and showed no sign of deterioration. The exact cause of Pen Sovann's sacking is still unclear. Chan Si, another Vietnam veteran and Defence Minister at that time, took up the post of Prime Minister. The post of Defence Minister was taken by Bou Thang, another Vietnam veteran who had returned in 1970 but broke with Pol Pot before 1975. Though the more nationalist Heng Samrin replaced Pen Sovann as Party Secretary, another powerful post, the Central Organisation Committee of the Party, was filled by Say Phouthang, a person with similar background as Bou Thang.

The lives of people however was really hard, and food production was still far from being sufficient. The anarchic situation, following the abrupt change of rule from DK to PRK, gave people the chance to consume whatever food that was available like fowl, pig and even draft animals. Much of the harvest could not be done in time, since a lot of people abandoned their fields to go back home, or search for their lost relatives. Moreover the escaping Khmer Rouge destroyed or carried away whatever they could of the rice reserve.

A famine took place in the latter part of 1979. According to PRK international appeal in July 1979, two million Khmer people, out of an estimated population of six to seven million, were threatened with starvation. Aid, first come from the Soviets and Vietnam and later from Western countries, which helped Kampuchea avoid a calamity.

Although international aid has helped the country to survive through these difficult years, a decade of destruction has made Kampuchea from a major rice-exporter to one that cannot feed its own population. In 1984, both flood and droughts caused the government to issue another emergency request of 265,000 tons of rice for a minimal diet, while western aid officials suggested a more realistic requirement of 300,000 tons. Expecting the country would run out of food in six weeks before the harvest, another appeal for 152,000 tons was issued in July 1985. A FAO expert estimated in 1986 that Kampuchea was producing food which amounted to only 89% of normal caloric requirement of 2,220 calories per person per day. Malnutrition among children is a serious problem. It is predicted that Kampuchea will take at least another decade, may be even another generation, for her to fully recover to normal grain production levels.

Although a proclaimed communist regime, PRK's agricultural policy is directed to stimulate the peasants initiative and provide incentives to grow more, rather than

mere hasty collectivization. PRK continued DK's practice of national ownership of land. Minor adjustment of land allocation has been carried out with little resistance. The basic farming unit is still the family. Ten to fifteen families, depending on the local situation, are encouraged to form a solidarity group. Draft animals, farming implements and other resources are pooled together while owners still retain their ownership and earn extra remuneration from them. The solidarity groups were allowed to divide all their products to their members, after making sufficient provisions for seed and rewards for non-farming personnel like teachers, nurses, children and pregnant women. In addition, each family is allocated a small private plot of 1,500 to 2,000 square meters to grow their own food or cash crops. Rewards from economic activities outside the collectives are privately owned and their products can be traded in the free market.

At first, there was no tax and no compulsory payment to the government. The government seemed to rely on foreign aid to feed the urban dwellers. Only since 1983 was a form of tax, euphemistically called 'patriotic contributions', has been levied. The exact amount depends on the fertility of the soil, and it was estimated to be 8% to 10% of production. And in 1984, the government ordered solidarity groups to contribute part of their agricultural products to the state in exchange for industrial goods.

However, recovery is still a remote goal for this nation. A dearth of manpower is said to have seriously inhibited her potential. It is estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 died in the second Indochina War. Another one million died under the Khmer Rouge. About a million have fled the country since 1975 and more than 200,000 others live a precarious existence in the Thai-Kampuchea border area. Male adults were decimated to such an extent that nearly 80% of the present population are women, children and old people. Out of the remaining ones, some 30,000 are conscripted to fight the guerrilla war. And since September 1985, men aged 18 to 30 have to serve in the army for five years.

Agricultural technicians, like other kinds of experts, were in shortage. One agricultural official said that there were only about four agricultural engineers, two forestry engineers and one fisheries expert left behind in the country in 1979. Agricultural extension was practically non-existent.

Shortage of draft animals was another factor that has limited agricultural production since they are probably the

only available and usable energy in a country, with serious fuel shortage. A lot of cattle and water buffalo were killed during 1970-75. Many others died of disease in the Khmer Rouge period. Only 768,000 were left in 1979, compared with 1.2 million heads in 1967.

Although, the introduction of high yield varieties have improved per hectare yield, however, the lack of fertilizers and pesticides has inhibited their potential development. At present, only one of the two fertilizer factories operate and that too with international aid and assistance.

Industrial development is very slow. Although the Pol Pot regime did not destroy all the factories and some of them did run up to several days before the DK government was overthrown. In the transitional period that followed, there was a lot of looting and damage to the machineries. Furthermore, many of the workers and engineers have left the country. In this situation, many of them have to be rebuilt from scratch. In recent reports, factories complained of lack of power and raw materials, particularly those that have to be imported, preventing them from operating to full capacity. Rehabilitation of the industry was also slowed down by the international ban on United Nation agencies to provide industrial assistance, which was regarded as development aid and seen as providing indirect recognition of the PRK government.

While state run factories are still in disarray, private petty commodity production seems to flourish. This sector produces a lot of the basic necessities and its importance could no longer be ignored. In February 1986, the national assembly even had to legalize private enterprises by amending the constitution to recognize the private sector, in addition to the state, the co-operative and the family. At the same time, government began to collect license fees.

Another booming business is trading. Once PRK government let people move back to the cities, traders began to flourish immediately since a lot of people were still holding a large amount of wealth, most commonly gold. The gold has been used to buy and sell a lot of products carried from the Thai border to the towns to meet the demand that have arisen after years of deprivation. The PRK government seemed to realise the positive effects of this largely 'illegal' trade in rebuilding the country. As early as 1980, it had tried to protect the trade by prohibiting unnecessary checking, searching or obstructing transactions. To facilitate the trade, a new currency, the riel, was issued in March 1980 to replace the Vietnam dong and or Thai baht circulating widely

in the country. In this way, trade was carried out in completely unfettered style and even taxation was introduced only in 1983.

For political reasons, western aid has been given only as emergency relief. The U.S. has ruled out any rehabilitation and development projects that could contribute to recovery under Vietnam's occupation. Similiar policy is imposed on private U.S. organisations. Aid shipments require government licences. The United Nations and its agencies are also severely constrained since the PRK is not recognised by the UN. In this way, the UN Development Programme and other UN agencies with primary responsibility for development aid have not been allowed to operate in Kampuchea since 1979. In these situations, most of the rehabilitation aid and assistance has come from the Soviets, Vietnam and other socialist bloc countries.

The Plight of the People: Vietnam

Vietnam did not fare any better than Kampuchea. Before her foray into Kampuchea, Vietnam's economy was already in very serious disarray. Decades of war plus inflexible economic policies and unprecedented flood damages had sent food production in 1978 down to an all-time low of 10.5 million ton. On an average, each person had a ration of only 251 kg of food, a decrease of 22% compared with 324 kg during the Second Indochina War period. Starvation, is reported, to have even pushed people to the streets in protest.

Her invasion of Kampuchea and conflict with China dealt another serious blow to the feeble economy. Her army was expanded to over one million to prop up her protege Kampuchea and guard the border with China. Civilian experts were also sent to train the inexperienced PRK administration. They were all thus drawn away from the reconstruction of her own economy not to mention the resources that had to be diverted to feed these people.

In retaliation against the invasion, Western countries cut off aid that Vietnam desperately needed to rebuild her war ravaged economy. The aid was in a bid to force Vietnam to withdraw from Kampuchea. Japan has postponed all aid negotiations. Australia and Canada have suspended small projects. Britain and the European Economic Community claim to have redirected their aid to help the boat people instead. The US stood firm on her trade embargo imposed five years ago, and escalated her pressure even if symbolically, by refusing licence for export of 250 tons of wheat by a private American relief agency in 1980. In 1980 an FAO request of

400,000 tons of emergency food for Vietnam met with a cold response internationally.

China abandoned 80 assistance projects and suspended aid valued at US\$500 million in 1978. Her attack in February 1979 thoroughly destroyed a major part of the infrastructure, like mines, factories, power plants, and bridges in the border areas. Furthermore, the human exodus has drained Vietnam of precious expertise in the fields of coal mining, fishing, ceramics and textile. China is also alleged to have tried to isolate Vietnam in international business circles by threatening to cut off business ties with firms who traded with Vietnam. (Indochina Issues, 69, pp.1-6)

In the face of such adversity, Vietnam had no alternative but lean more on USSR and her allies. Soviet economic aid to Vietnam since 1978, is estimated at one billion US dollars. In 1981, Soviet aid provided 90% of Vietnam's food imports, 70% of its fertilizers and 80% of its metals. The Vietnamese military machine depended entirely on Soviet assistance for petroleum products, uniforms and equipment. Between 1979 and 1983, Soviet arms deliveries totalled about US\$2.5 billion. About 7,000 Soviet advisors are said to operate in Vietnam, 3,000 in Kampuchea and 1,500 in Laos.

Realizing her economic policy is not conducive to growth, she has begun since autumn 1979 to reform her economy by decentralising and allowing more material incentive to farmers. Before the reform, a period of fast co-operativisation process took place in 1978, especially in the fertile Mekong delta area. This process is reported to have been strongly resisted by the people. Extreme measures, like the abolition of private plots, plus poor directives from the largely North-Vietnamese-dominated bureaucracy have agitated the local population. Furthermore, poor farm prices offered by the government coupled with heavy taxation on food surplus have deterred people from growing more than their family needs. It is said that even if farmers produced a surplus, they could hardly find consumer goods to trade with. At the same time, the government actively encouraged urban people to engage in agricultural production in the countryside.

During the Second Indochina War, thousand of people were forced to migrate to cities to avoid the fighting. Particularly in Ho Chi Minh city, the population has swelled four times to four million in 1975 during the past 15 years. These large settlements were not only a burden on the agricultural system, but also deprived rural areas of

Contd.

BROKEN DREAMS

Blustry winds whip black leafless branches against lowering skies as 200 people cheerfully crowd into a London community centre to feast on pork and sweetmeats and take wine in paper cups. The scene is typical of most family festivities. Grandads on sticks, grandmas in best hats, matrons bustling to fill plates, and husbands sagely nodding. Young girls, pert as Gigi, eye youths who remain awkwardly aloof, and infants dash and dance across the floor to the beat of a band.

But how does it continue for 20,000 Vietnamese refugees in Britain today? The first of them arrived in the UK in 1975 and were welcomed with open arms. The earliest newcomers were orphans, rescued from Saigon to be adopted into the homes of childless British couples. Then, with news of the Boat People quotas of thousands of homeless, stateless people arrived

Early arrivals were mostly the resourceful middle-class of the south, but gradually the flow changed and so did the difficulties. Peasants, farmers, and fishermen — many of whom were illiterate even in their own tongue — found it doubly difficult to fathom a language so very unlike their own in which there is no word for 'I' and no tenses. In addition, they had no understanding of the earth, waters or climate of this foreign place.

The refugees had not arrived in a land of milk and honey, but a place hit badly by the world recession. Social services had already suffered severe cut-backs and community purse strings were tightly gripped. Three million of the indigenous population were unemployed and holding out their hands for financial support. Many local authorities balked at taking in any extra problems without extra funding — and that was not forthcoming.

Homes mostly became available in areas of high unemployment and soon people who had been surrounded by fields and had areas of land on which to grow produce found themselves isolated in high-rise flats, or on housing estates, where residents mostly treated them with suspicion, and they were cut off from communicating their value by language problems.

They often faced harassment from both white and black residents, and, worse, found that any new jobs were more likely to be given to the British. The least wanted jobs, like dish washing, floor, toilet or street cleaning, were the best they could immediately expect.

Faced with everything foreign, and with not enough back up from their own kind because they were settled in fragmented units, many were placed in a climate of chronic emotional and physical isolation.

In addition, without knowledge of their ways, events turned against many in unexpected ways. Medical treatments can differ widely from place to place. A sick baby was removed from its parents' care when bruises were discovered all over its body. It was thought that the child had been maltreated. But when the baby first became ill the couple had taken it for pressure treatment, which had left the bruising which caused society's concern.

Many counselling bodies now employ Vietnamese helpers full-time to bridge the cultural gaps, and their contribution is invaluable. But groups like the Ockenden Venture, Refugee Action and many others which come under the British Refugee Council dread the day that funding will end — perhaps in a year's time. There is much to do, and too little time to achieve it all without financial strength.

Today, as the government still debates a further intake of refugees, more than 80 per cent of those already in residence are unemployed. In addition, a survey has shown that it takes a minimum of three years for a Vietnamese to integrate into a community. These are tough considerations in the argument to take in more refugees.

The greatest worry is for the elderly. Understanding language and lifestyle is beyond many of them. "What has happened to us is a disaster," said a former translator for the British Embassy in Saigon. "Our children are our only hope; they go to school and learn how to live here and make friends. One day they will become British citizens and will have a better chance to work. We must have someone to sponsor us to become citizens. But who would sponsor me? I am old. If I had a British passport I could visit Vietnam, but the government there does not recognise my passport. I shall probably not see my country again. It is a disaster for many of us."

**Extract from Land of Broken Dreams Brenda Marsh
Asia Magazine, April 19, 1987, Hong Kong.**

valuable manpower. A program to transfer 1.5 million Ho Chi Minh citizens, to areas long left fallow or to new economic zones in virgin areas, had only achieved half of the aimed target by the summer of 1979, partly because life was so hard that a lot of people simply deserted and went back to the city.

In late 1979, principles of reform were established. Two years later, a contract system was promulgated in the rural areas. Under this system, farmers, either as a group or individuals, negotiate and enter into contracts with their cooperatives to produce a certain amount of food on an assigned piece of land for a limited period. The level or quota depends on the fertility of the soil. On the other hand, the government would supply key inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and seeds. After the harvest, the producer is expected to sell his quota to the government at the price set down in the contract. He can keep the surplus, if there is any, by selling it in the free market or to the state. Certain jobs like plowing and irrigation are done collectively as before, but individuals are now responsible for planting, weeding and harvesting.

Even though this policy is said to have successfully reverted the declining production, output is still far from enough to feed the population. The 1985 production was a recordbreaking 18.2 million tons, and on an average each person could be allocated 300 kg annually. However, 300,000 tons of food still has to be imported.

Who Will Endure the Final Victory?

As soon as Vietnam successfully established herself in Kampuchea, there was a chorus of world condemnation. It was proposed that Prince Sihanouk be invited back to form an independent and neutral government, which would accommodate all different factions. This was seen as the only plausible solution to end the conflict. Understandably, Vietnam was unwilling to give in. She made it clear, that Sihanouk would only be welcomed back to head the government, if he accepted the existing People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) government and severed all his relations with China.

Threatened by Vietnam, the ASEAN countries pooled their efforts, to orchestrate a coalition of three resistance forces, hoping that such a coalition would earn them international legitimacy and consequently aid. The ASEAN countries expected to a lesser extent that by achieving their aims their own viability, as a counterforce against Vietnam

would be enhanced.

Under heavy pressure, Sihanouk of the Moulinaka (Movement de Liberation National Du Kampuchea), Khieu Samphan of Khmer Rouge and Son Sann of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), joined hands very unwillingly in June 1982, to form the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. They respectively took the post of president, vice-president and prime minister in the new government. The coalition was estimated to have about 50,000 fighters. The Khmer Rouge alone accounted for 60% to 80% of the force, while the Moulinaka had fewer than 2,000 soldiers at that time.

The forming of the coalition, in practical terms really did not increase the military pressure against Vietnam, since the factions had such diverse interests. They were mutually hostile that coordination of their actions, not to mention joint-operation, did not quite materialize until 1985. Actually, popular support is said to have been minimal, since the Khmer people understood well enough that the murderous Pol Pot faction, was strong enough, to control the future government, if the coalition won.

Since the formation of the coalition, ASEAN initiated a number of peace overtures to Hanoi, but none of them succeeded. Both sides supported the principles of withdrawal of foreign troops, national reconciliation, and establishing a neutral and independent Kampuchea through self-determination. The main obstacle however was Hanoi's pre-condition: elimination of the Pol Pot group before a political solution. ASEAN remains unwilling to heed to this demand, since it sees any such political solution as a Vietnam dictated one. It also realizes that with the exclusion of Pol Pot's group, any pressure through armed force that could be brought to bear upon Vietnam will be eliminated. All this underscores, the 'irreversability' of the present situation in Indochina. Hanoi has also sufficiently indicated to ASEAN, that any change in Kampuchea, must be within the orbit of the present government and Vietnam's dominance.

Among the ASEAN countries, Indonesia and Malaysia are more sympathetic with the position of Vietnam than Thailand which borders Vietnam. Indonesia and Malaysia also perhaps fear China more, because of having faced communist revolts in their own countries in the 1960's from movements which were closely aligned to China. The two countries therefore, have tried on many occasions to mediate and to bring about a peaceful solution. However, Hanoi's refusal to recognise

Khmer Rouge and ASEAN'S refusal to recognize the PRK government has thwarted Malaysia's proximity talk proposals.

At the same time there has been no breakthrough on the battle front. The coalition is simply incapable of ousting a better equipped and war-tested Vietnamese force numbering over 140,000. As long as Thailand continues to provide the sanctuary and third countries continue to donate sufficient aid, Vietnam also remains unable to wipe out the resistance in any near future, even though she keeps trying, as was demonstrated by the lack of success of her massive operation in 1985.

The stalemate however, is said to be advantageous to Vietnam since time will create a fait accompli. She may have already got sufficient breathing space, that it has made it possible for Vietnam to announce in mid-1986, that a general election would take place in 1987 and a total withdrawal in 1990. Strategies of economic sanction and political isolation that the US has been orchestrating, which had failed to put pressure on Vietnam even during her worst years in 1979 and 1980, have very little chance of succeeding now and in the future.

There is no doubt that a lasting solution to the Indochina problem can be found, if of course there is a genuine desire among all parties concerned to see such a solution. Such a desire would have to be based on how to end the decades of suffering and indignity that has been heaped on the peoples of Indochina. This however could be wishful thinking if one were to take into consideration that the major players on the Indo-China scene are themselves victims of the power-politics and power-equations of another era.

The general image that the United States tries to convey internationally is that of a great country, taking a "noble" and "detached stand" on the whole Indochina question. Indirectly, she has extended aid to support the non-communist resistance faction. A total of US\$16 million was contributed in 1985 to U.N. relief agencies and the International Red Cross, which fed Khmer refugees along the Khmer border, among them families of the resistance. Covert CIA aid, worth US\$15 million is said to have been channelled indirectly through ASEAN to the resistance since 1982. A further annual five million in economic or military aid was authorized in 1986 under strong congress request. That's the story if one follows just what the media reports.

Contrary to the impression that the US tries to maintain a detached moral high ground on the Indochina problem, it is

quite heavily involved. According to two British film makers who have made two television documentaries on the extent of Pol Pot's crimes in Kampuchea and the complicity of Western governments in sustaining the Khmer Rouge, the US government has, since 1980 funded the Khmer Rouge with a massive \$85 million. "This unpublicised figure will help to explain" according to the filmmakers, "why the United States appeared to give publicly just \$5 million to the coalition of which the Khmer Rouge is the controlling force". This figure of \$85 million, details of which have been supplied the US Congressional Research Service, reveals that during 1980, the US gave Pol Pot \$54,550,000. This figure is listed as "government to government" aid and given directly to the Khmer Rouge.

China has led a much more active role in containing Vietnam. However, her explicit position of allowing no Chinese troops in Kampuchea, and her failure to launch a 'second lesson' against Vietnam during the critical situation in the 1984-85 dry season offensive, have sufficiently demonstrated that her commitment to contain Vietnam is limited. Instead, she has tried what is called a 'bleed white' policy by exerting military pressure on the Sino-Vietnam border so that Vietnam's economy is continually heavily burdened with heavy defence expenditure and thus 'bleed white' economically. The policy of 'bleeding' a country or economy is not restricted to the Chinese alone. The US administration policy in relation to Vietnam is also seen as having the effect of "bleeding" the Soviets through Vietnam, which is seen as a Soviet protege. A policy considered a 'neat' double-edged foreign policy. The net effect of this "bleed white" policy is that it is making Vietnam more dependent on the Soviets. Though China from her own experience of the 1960s with the Soviets, does hope that this dependence of Vietnam on the Soviets will eventually backfire and that Vietnam will find it too costly to be permanently subservient to Moscow.

In such a background, Vietnam understandably is edgy and irritated by the new phase of Soviet peace initiatives to China. On July 28th, 1986, the new Kremlin leader Gorbachev delivered in the eastern port of Vladivostok a substantial speech on the improvement of relationship with China, apparently trying to prevent China from forming an axis with the US and Japan. Vietnamese dependence on the Soviets is ofcourse not one-sided, the Soviets have benefited equally. Their support and "special" relationship with Vietnam has among other things given them access to the use of the important naval base and warm water port facilities of Cam Ranh Bay, and thus enhancing her influence in Asian affairs. This is perhaps also why Gorbachev made concessions to two of

China's three preconditions for normalisation of relations, viz. withdrawal of a number of troops from Afghanistan and the Sino-Soviet border, but mentioned nothing on the third, the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea.

In the near future any major international effort to solve the Kampuchea issue seems to be very unlikely. According to some observers, all great powers stand to gain from the conflict. Both the US and China will be happy to see Vietnam exhausting her energy in Kampuchea and causing no troubles to her neighbours. The Soviets would like her only Asian protege to depend more on her so that her influence would be entrenched. Even Vietnam may also find current situation favourable since she can have a free hand to consolidate her relationship with her protege-Kampuchea! Long term development, however, will depend on whether Vietnam can produce a class of docile administrators, and build a benevolent image that can overcome the presently restrained historical enmity of the Khmers for the Vietnamese.

Some Khmers however may consider Vietnam as a necessary evil to be tolerated for the time being rather than return to Khmer Rouge rule. However, if Vietnam stays too long and tries to 'Vietnamise', as she did in the nineteenth century, the nationalistic feeling of Khmer people may become strong. It is this nationalism that had forced Vietnam in the past to leave Kampuchea during her two previous occupations in history.

Two incidents reportedly demonstrate the actual undercurrents of the relationship between PRK and Vietnam. In December 1981, Vietnam's hand-picked general secretary of the Khmer communist party, and prime minister of PRK, Pen Sovan was alleged to have played the Soviets against Vietnam. He was sacked in favour of Heng Samrin and Chan Si. However, this event had no impact on Kampuchea's relationship with the Soviets and actually Soviet aid increased thereafter.

It has also been reported that a total of 150,000 to 200,000 Vietnamese have settled in the relatively underpopulated Kampuchea, and local people have shown their dissatisfaction to the presence of this large number of foreign subjects on Khmer soil. Phnom Penh tried to clarify this in a mid-1983 statement that the Vietnamese settlers were mere returnees who had fled during the period of Khmer Rouge persecution and their number was only 56,000, compared with 500,000 in 1970.

As stated earlier, there is no doubt that a solution to the continuing tension, violence and conflict in Indo-China can be found. This requires possibly a humanitarian approach to peace in Indo-China, though having said that one might have also to concede that it may be naive to expect that such an approach might ever become a reality. This because as also stated earlier, the Indochina countries and its people are unfortunate victims of power equations and power relations that are enmeshed in such a complex layering of history, race, politics, strategic ambitions and super-power strategems. The suffering of the people, very cynically, therefore continues.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burns, R.D. & M. Leitenberg (1984), **The Wars in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos 1945-1982: A Bibliographic guide.**

Chanda, Nayan (1983), **Vietnam's Economy: 'Bad, but not Worse'**, *Indochina Issues*, 41, pp.1-6.

Chanda, Nayan (1986), **The United States: Does Washington Have a Policy?**, *Indochina Issues*, 64, pp.19-23.

Chang, Pao-min (1982), **The Sino-Vietnamese Dispute over the Ethnic Chinese**, *The China Quarterly*, 90, pp.195-230.

Chang, Pao-min (1980), **The Sino-Vietnamese Territorial Dispute**, *Asia Pacific Community*, VIII, pp.130-165.

Chanthou Boua (1983), **Observations of the Heng Samrin Government (1980-1982)** in David P. Chandler and Ben Kiernan (Ed.) **Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea Eight Essays**, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, USA.

Duiker, William (1985), **Vietnam Since the Fall of Saigon**, revised Ed., U.S.A Ohio University.

Garrett, Banning (1981), **The Strategic Triangle and the Indochina Crisis**, in David Elliot (Ed.) **The Third Indochina Conflict**, pp.69-137, Colorado, Westview Replica.

Heder, Stephen (1981), **The Kampuchean-Vietnamese Conflict**, in David Elliot (Ed.) **The Third Indochina Conflict**, pp.69-137, Colorado, Westview Replica.

Hiebert, Murray (1981), **The Food Weapon: Can Vietnam be Broken?**, *Indochina Issues*, 15, pp.1-7.

Hiebert, Murray (1984), **Contracts in Vietnam: More Rice, New Problems**, Indochina Issues, 48, pp.1-7.

Hiebert, Murray (1986), **Cambodia: Guerrilla Attacks Curb Development**, Indochina Issue, 69, pp.1-6.

Hsu, Victor (1979), **The Indochina Conflicts: Basic Elements**, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches.

Kiernan, Ben (1980), **Kampuchea Stumbles to its Feet**, in Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua (Ed.) **Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1984-1981**, pp.227-317, London, Zed Press.

Kiernan, Ben (1982), **Pol Pot and the Kampuchean Communist Movement**, in Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua (Ed.) **Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981**, pp.227-317, London, Zed Press.

Kiernan, Ben (1984), **How Pol Pot Came to Power**, Verso, London.

Kiernan, Ben (1986), **Indochina Seven Years on: Kampuchea Revisited**, Inside Asia, No.10, Nov-Dec 1986.

Kiljunen, Kimmo (1985), **Power Politics and the Tragedy of Kampuchea During the Seventies**, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars XVII (2) , pp. 49-64.

Kiljunen, Kimmo (1984) (Ed.), **Kampuchea - Decade of the Genocide**, Zed Books, USA.

Mack, Andrew (1981), **America's Role in the Destruction of Kampuchea**, Politics, XVI(1), pp. 135-145.

McCormack, Gavan (1980), **The Kampuchean Revolution 1975-1978: The Problem of Knowing the Truth**, Journal of Contemporary Asia, X(1-2), pp.75-130.

Morrow, Michael (1979), **Vietnam's Embargoed Economy: In the U.S. Interest?**, Indochina Issues, 3, pp.1-11.

Ngo Vinh Long (1980), **View from the Village**, Indochina Issues, 12, pp.1,4-7.

Osborne, Milton (1978), **Kampuchea and Viet Nam: A Historical Perspective**, Pacific Community XI(3), pp.249-263.

Porter, Gareth (1981), **Vietnam's Ethnic Chinese and the Sino-Vietnamese Conflict**, Bulletin of Concerned Asian

Scholars, XII(4), pp.55-60.

Porter, Gareth (1981), **Vietnamese Policy and the Indochina Crisis**, in David Elliot (Ed.) *The Third Indochina Conflict*, pp.69-137, Colorado, Westview Replica.

Quinn-Judge, Paul (1986), **Vietnam: 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall'**, *Indochina Issues*, 64, pp.2-5.

Serge Thion (1983), **Chronology of Khmer Communism**, in David Chandler and Ben Kiernan (Ed.) *Revolution and its Aftermath In Kampuchea: Eight Essays*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, USA.

Shawcross, William (1979), **Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia**, Fontana Paperbacks.

Siber, Irwin (1986), **Kampuchea: The Revolution Rescued**, Line of March Publications, California.

Simon, Sheldon, (1986), **The Soviet Union: Projecting a Military Presence**, *Indochina Issues*, 64, pp.16-18.

Solomon, Richard, (1986), **China: Coping with Encirclement**, *Indochina Issues*, 64, pp.11-14.

Spragens, John, Jr., (1980), **Cautious Policy Reforms**, *Indochina Issues*, 12, pp.1-4.

Spragens, John, Jr., (1984), **Hunger in Cambodia: Getting Beyond Relief**, *Indochina Issues*, 43, pp.1-5.

Sutter, Robert (1981), **China's Strategy towards Vietnam and its Implications for the United States**, in David Elliot (Ed.) *The Third Indochina Conflict*, pp.69-137, Colorado, Westview Replica.

Thion, Serge (1983), **Chronology of Khmer Communism, 1940-1982**, in David Chandler & Ben Kiernan (Ed.) *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea: Eight Essays*, pp.291-319, U.S.A., Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

Vickery, Michael (1983), **Democratic Kampuchea: Themes and Variations**, in David Chandler & Ben Kiernan (Ed.) *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea: Eighth Essays*, pp.212-229, U.S.A., Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

Vickery, Michael (1984), **Cambodia, 1975-1982**, Boston, South End Press.

Vickery, Michael (1985), **Phnom Penh Revisited: Gone is the Gloom**, Inside Asia, NO.5, Sept-Oct 1985.

Vickery, Michael (1986), **Kampuchea, Politics, Economics and Society**, London, Frances Pinter.

Vongsrisart, Kosol et. al. (1980), **The Indochinese Refugees**, Bangkok, Office for Human Development, Refugee Desk.

Wain, Barry (1981), **The Refused: The Agony of the Indochina Refugees**, Simon and Schuster; New York.

Wain, Barry, **Vietnamization and the lot of the Average Kampuchean**, Asian Wall Street Journal, April 3, 1983.

Wain, Barry, **Vietnam's Wave of Refugees Is Unabated**, Asian Wall Street Journal, May 1, 1985.

Weatherbee, Donald (1986) **ASEAN: Indonesia's 'Dual Track' Diplomacy**, Indochina Issues, 64, pp.7-10.

PostScript: To resolve the long continuing Indochina tragedy, a situation of multi-polarity must be recognized and the problems of Indochina viewed as involving multiple and even conflicting interests. Solutions based on a perspective of bi-polarity, that sees the conflicts and tensions as simply relating to China and Vietnam or the two super-powers must be rejected. Efforts must be made to promote relations and exchanges between the peoples of these countries and people in the other Asian countries. Already Christian ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, a number of Catholic and other religious, non-religious relief and aid agencies are engaged in humanitarian projects in the Indochina countries. These non-governmental organizations should make a special effort to share their experiences with people in other countries in Asia and be among the vehicles of promoting people to people cooperation in Asia and thus also more lasting peace in Indochina. Through such means it may also be possible to create a regional political climate that makes it possible for Vietnam to end her military presence in Kampuchea. In promoting greater regional interaction and using regional and sub-regional processes within Asia to work towards genuine peace, the UN University and its programmes, in particular the UNU Asian Perspectives Project and the Peace and Global Transformation Project have a very crucial role to play.

- Editor

A Tribute to Senator Jose Diokno

Jose Diokno known more affectionately by young and old in Philippine society as Pepe Diokno, passed away on Feb 27th, 1987. Pepe Diokno over the years had come to symbolise the struggles of people, not only in the Philippines but elsewhere in Asia, for human rights, justice and freedom. Like so many other organisations concerned with justice, development and the rights of people, ARENA was also fortunate in having the benefit of his wise counsel, guidance and passionate social commitment. In a special issue of the ARENA Bulletin, 'Asian Exchange', focussed on the Philippines and published in December 1983, we had carried an interview with Senator Diokno. To cherish his memory and as our humble tribute to his indelible contributions to the aspirations of the peoples of Asia, we republish excerpts from that interview in this issue of 'Asian Exchange'

SURENDRA: You are one of the credible leaders of the Philippine opposition now. Many of the opposition leaders, including yourself, were part of the political processes prior to martial law. As a Senator you were also very much part of mass politics and a form of parliamentary democracy then, you were also for some time Minister of Justice, what were your notions of politics, of justice, of rights then? Looking back now, how do you assess the period leading up to martial law and your participation in politics then?

DIOKNO: My notion of politics, right, justice have not changed much, since before and during martial law. I think they have evolved as a result of the experiences, the Nation and I have undergone.

Fundamentally, I have been and continue to be a firm believer in liberal democracy. This is the aim and aspiration of the Filipino people long before the American occupation and Colonial period. We formulated the first Democratic, Republican Constitution of Asia in 1899. I believe, we call it the Malolos Constitution. It was modelled after the French Constitution since most of our

intellectual leaders at that time were European-oriented, unlike now when they are American-oriented. It had a bill of rights which would be a model today specially because it was drafted at the height of the euphoria of liberation from Spanish rule and therefore contained very clear-cut provisions on what could be done under States of Emergency. They also indicated for good or for bad, the trial of civilians under military courts, because this was one of the common abuses under Spanish rule.

Now this concept of democracy was the one for which the nation lost hundreds and thousands of lives and continued to do so in the course of our history. In that sense, most of us who were involved in what may be called today "traditional politics" were committed to that ideal. We were of course aware of the defects of the process, the very large divergence between the "ideal" and the "real". Principally because of the inequity of our social institutions - the very broad gap between the rich and poor. We were aware for democracy to be fully workable, in the sense that people could truly participate, required that the majority of the people should have atleast a minimum standard of living and security. So, at the end of the 60s and early 70s, the emphasis was on social and economic reforms with a very strong nationalist content, since we were aware that the inequities was a product of the colonial past and continued domination by the United States of our Society. All the concepts I think, germinally were there before martial law.

I then had two years of detention, where I had time to reflect on these ideals, ideas and aspirations and refine them in the light of what I was undergoing and the nation was undergoing. Then when I left detention, I was very much involved with Human Rights work and again that helped to further refine these concepts and give them very concrete content.

SURENDRA: At the time of declaration of martial law, you were arrested and sent to solitary confinement. You have yourself pointed in your speeches and interviews, that this experience shocked you very much, particularly the realisation of the fact that if somebody like you was arrested and kept detained without any charges being filed, what was the plight of the rural poor and others. This later led you to set up FLAG - which has become a pioneering group for the protection of and fight for human rights not merely in the Philippines but remains an important experiment and model for other Asian countries. Your involvement with FLAG has also made you

internationally one of the well-known campaigners for Human Rights in the Philippines, and one of the important voices among the critics of the present government. Today you are very much involved in the mass movement of Filipino people, clamouring for justice, for democracy and for a more open society. How has this come about? What do you see are the inter-linking threads and also are there any contradictions in this move from a man of politics to a human rights activist and now transition back to a man of politics?

DIOKNO: I don't really think there is any fundamental contradiction between human rights, economics and politics. In a developing country like the Philippines, these cannot be set apart in water-tight compartments. All of them inter-relate. For instance the recognition and enforcement of human rights is fundamentally a matter of political will. Development itself has to transcend the purely economic aspects. We have to discuss and find equitable methods of sharing the benefits and costs of development, unlike what has been happening heretofore in our country and in most other developing countries, where the costs are disproportionately borne by the poor and the benefits disproportionately reaped by the rich and the middle class. So, I would suppose, the shifts in emphasis are not really contradictions but more responses to the situations as they evolve. For example, before martial law I thought that the answer to our problems lay in an improvement of the democratic process. During martial law, because the processes of democracy had been dismantled, the most feasible avenue I saw to keep alive the concepts of democracy and of humanity itself, was human rights work. Today, there is another opening, apparent opening anyway, for more political action, that goes beyond human rights and that is why, I am involved in it now.

SURENDRA: Even a cursory reading of the Philippine political history, we can realise Philippines-US relations have always played a major role in Philippines politics. One notices that in the past even important Filipino Nationalists like Recto have been accused of being anti-American. From a Nationalist perspective you have yourself taken a very consistent position against US involvement in your country, against US Bases and so on. How would you describe this nationalism of yours and others like you, fighting for Philippines Sovereignty. What are the dilemmas and difficulties facing Nationalists like you vis-a-vis US involvement in your country?

DIOKNO: There isn't really very much of a dilemma in the matter, since those of us who have taken this position

are confident that the Philippines possesses the human and material resources, to be able to attain a self-propelled and self-reliant development. Our difficulty arises from the fact that so many of our people have been educated under the American system and have yet to rid themselves of the myth that America is a benevolent power, interested primarily in the good of the Filipino people which of course clearly is a myth. Another factor or obstacle is that a lot of Filipinos and this is true of many Europeans and other Asians, see the American way of life as the best approximation of their own aspirations. Consequently many would think of migrating to the US or have friends or relatives there and therefore a position which directly attacks US government policies has to overcome these emotional ties. Yet, one cannot be an authentic Filipino today without being anti-American, in the sense of being opposed to the policies of the United States government which seeks to perpetuate dominance over Filipino life. From the very beginning, US policy towards the Philippines has been, to see to it that the Philippines is always under a government that the US can control or rely and of course that puts the US government policy on a collision course with Philippine Nationalism. Now, we are also aware of the immediate difficulties that attempt to delink the nation from dependence on the US, will bring about. Certainly the Americans have tremendous power to destabilise any nationalist government. At the same time we feel that if we nationalists do our work well, there is relatively little to fear in that respect. We think it extremely unlikely that the US will try to "do a Grenada" on the Philippines. Therefore US attempts to destabilise would come in the form of economic subversion, cooptation of pro-American elements and an extreme measure like the imposition of an embargo on the Philippines. But we feel that given a great deal of preparatory work we could overcome these difficulties.

SURENDRA: My last question is related to what you have said. In your fight for Democracy in the Philippines and nondependence on global power blocs, do you see any relevance in a Forum like the Non-Aligned Movement. The military alliance with the US has disqualified the Philippines from membership in the Non-Aligned Movement. Though, interestingly the Asian origins of the Non-Aligned Movement, began in your country, at the Baguio Conference in 1955 called by President Quirino to form a US linked and supported alliance of Asian countries against basically China and Chinese Communism. India and Indonesia objected to the alliance since they felt it would invite big power meddling in the affairs of smaller Asian nations. This

later led to the Bandung Conference, where the Non-Aligned Movement was born. Some people feel it has outlived its usefulness. Some people feel in the present state of global tensions and politics, the Non-Aligned Movement has still a role to play. Viewed from the Philippines, do you think the Non-Aligned Movement has any value to you all in your struggles for an Independent Philippines?

DIOKNO: Let's take it historically. Long ago when the Philippines was involved first in its revolution against Spain and later in the war against the US, the most articulate of Philippine nationalists, made it very plain, that the Philippines experiences constituted a danger to all colonial powers, because if the Philippines had succeeded, then it would provide an example to other Asian countries under colonial rule, to struggle against colonial rule in the way that we had struggled for our liberation. In the sense what Filipino nationalists today are doing constitutes a danger, no longer to colonialism, but to this new type of neo-colonialism of both the West and the East. Certainly we have no illusions about the magnanimity of any super-power, in that sense the ideal or ultimate objective of the Filipino nationalists is to help the Non-Aligned Movement. We are aware however, that as a tactical matter, it may not be possible to achieve it immediately. We believe also, that in this task, we need the sympathy and moral support of people outside of the Philippines. There must be ways of putting pressure on the United States Government and other developed countries to let Third World people find their own path. If history has taught us anything or is teaching us anything, it is that there is no single model of development, that any Third World country can borrow uncritically. This struggle between the super-powers, in a very real sense, the kind of missionary struggle to make the world over in their own image, creates the very opposite of what these countries are actually aiming to do. I think principally, the super-powers are concerned with their own security. The best way to achieve their security is to let the Third World alone. But the moment one super-power tries to influence the Third World to follow a particular model it automatically leads to the other super-power trying to subvert this process. This of course leads to instability in the Third World and of course instability that can destabilise the whole world system. For pressure to be maintained on the developed world to leave the Third World alone to find its own path of sovereignty and salvation, requires the help of freedom-loving people all over the world and of a forum like the Non-Aligned Movement.

GRAM : ICSSORES

PHONES : D : 385969
R : 624155

भा सा वि अ प

ICSSR

सामाजिक विज्ञान प्रलेखन केन्द्र

SOCIAL SCIENCE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

SERVICES AVAILABLE

1. compilation of short/selected bibliographies tailored to the needs of the scholars,
2. facility to study on all days of the year except three holidays (i.e., 26 January, 15 August & 2nd October) in the premises of SSDC ; publications not available in the library are procured from other libraries on inter-library loan basis,
3. supply of photocopies of articles/documents of interest from out of a rich collection of back and current issues of journals/serials as well as unpublished theses and research reports, subject to the provision of the Copyright Act,
4. facility to get cyclostyling/rotating/electric scanning,
5. financial assistance under Study Grant scheme for visiting libraries for collection of material for research.

Kindly address all enquiries to:

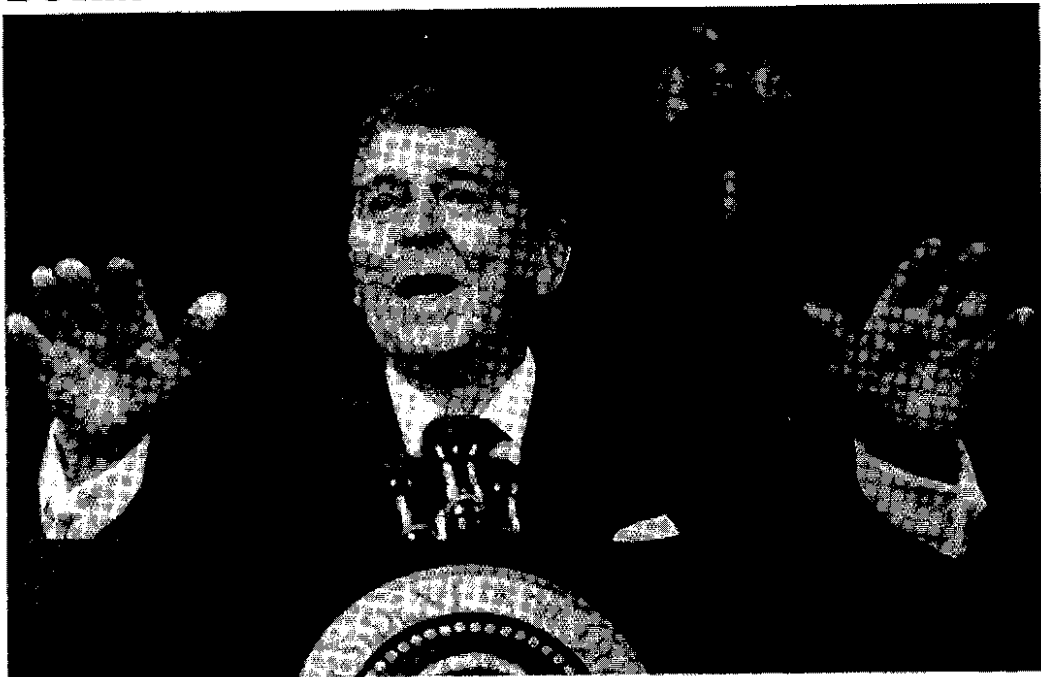
The Director

SSDC-ICSSR,

35, Ferozeshah Road,

New Delhi-110 001, INDIA

Document :



"For key members of the Reagan Administration, Armageddon is the basis of policy."

Reagan, God and the Bomb

by F.H. Knelman

In the USA, many fundamentalist Christians are convinced that a nuclear Apocalypse is part of God's divine plan for Mankind—the Armageddon which will usher in the Second Coming of Christ. True Christians will be saved from the nuclear holocaust by being spirited to safety in Heaven. President Reagan, who owes much to the Religious Right for his election and re-election, has stated that he himself "sometimes believes we're heading very fast for Armageddon". His Secretary of State for Defence, Caspar Weinberger, is a 'born-again' Christian. Could a nuclear war be triggered because the Reagan administration confuses an Act of Man for an Act of God?

The strange amalgam of forces that brought and returned Ronald Reagan to power has been referred to collectively as the 'New Right'. Its membership ranges widely, from a small group of influential security intellectuals, to veterans of the Old Right, to the Moral Majority of the fundamentalist evangelicals of 'electronic pastors'. This latter group has played a particularly crucial role in the political actions of the New Right. Their literal and often liberal interpretation of the Bible, coupled to a blind and absolute belief in the Word, has profound implications for the likelihood of an all-out nuclear war.

Reagan is not the first president to claim God as his personal and national ally: but he is probably the first president openly to write religion into politics and to cater to religious fanatics. The Reagan cosmology, with its utter simplicity and depth of belief-uncluttered by any rational process of judgement, never confused by the facts, never obliged to follow the dictates of evidence-incorporates the more dangerous characteristics of the apostles of the New Right. The politics of the sophisticated "Wizards of Armageddon" merge with the world view of the fundamentalist true believers, with whom Reagan supporters share a commitment to destroying the 'Evil Empire', if necessary through the battle of the 'Final Days' on this earth. This binding commitment is strong enough to overcome the internal political differences within the New Right, and to create a hard-line, undifferentiated, ultra-conservative perception of the Soviet threat.

Religion and Nuclear War

The position which US fundamentalist/born-again religious organisations have taken on nuclear war stands in stark contrast to that of other churches in the West. In the vanguard of peace, the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church have both condemned nuclear war. The Lutheran Churches of the Netherlands and the two Germanys have also played a prominent role in the peace movement. Many groups and individuals in the Third World have shown their concern and become part of the global peace network. Some Third World leaders, such as Gandhi and Nyerere, have gained prominence in the search for justice and peace. In the US Roman Catholic bishops have taken a surprising, courageous and incisive position and have spoken out against nuclear war with vigour and clarity. This provides hope that moral vitality still persists in American life. It stands in sharp contrast to the moral position of the Moral Majority and their electronic churches.

God on Our Side

There is little precedent for the direct association of religion and politics in the US, the separation of church and state being written into the Constitution. But, presidents from Truman to Reagan have invoked God, good, and evil in the name of the USA's "mission" to be superior in nuclear arms, remain superior, and, if necessary, fight and win a nuclear war. Even Richard Nixon said in 1980, "It may seem melodramatic to say that the US and Russia represent Good and

Evil, Light and Darkness, God and the Devil. But if we think of it that way, it helps to clarify our perspective of the world struggle."(1)

Nixon's statement indicates his pragmatism. But in the voices of Ronald Reagan, Caspar Weinberger, and the unholy alliance of the New Right, any hint of pragmatism or politics disappears, drowned, out by the shrill, clear voices of the true believers, the nuclear holy crusaders. Nuclear armament is linked to moral rearmament and crusades for a holy Christian war against "godless communism," Reagan's favourite phrase. They have buttressed their preaching with plans for a huge arms build-up to fight and win any nuclear war or to destroy Soviet communism by blackmail, coercion, or economic suffocation. The danger lies in the sincerity of their belief. When Reagan said, "It is time for us to start a (military) build-up and it is time for us to build to the point that no (one is) against us, and in this way we will preserve the peace"(2), he really meant it.

God vs The Evil Empire

When Reagan spoke at the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, he deliberately linked the belief in God to opposition to a nuclear freeze, and to support of a massive build-up in US arms. As he put it, "There is sin and evil in the world and we are enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it, should deterrence fail." He went on to say, "Soviet communism is the force of evil in the modern world... (they) possess the aggressive instincts of an evil empire."(3) Lewis comments, "But it is not funny. What is the world to think when the greatest of powers is led by a man who applies to the most difficult human problem a simplistic theology, one in fact rejected by most theologians?" Can the concept of good and evil be applied "to the contentious technical particulars of arms programmes... or whether 10,000 nuclear warheads are enough, whether the United States needs a first-strike weapon against the Soviet Union...(or) whether a nuclear freeze is likely to make the world more or less safe"?

To be fair, the US has long rejected deterrence in favour of a "warfighting" doctrine. At various times, Robert McNamara, James Schlesinger, Donald Rumsfeld, and Harold Brown preferred the "strategic doctrine" of a limited nuclear war. Former President Jimmy Carter gave this doctrine substance in his presidential directive PD-59. Harold Brown, secretary of defence under Carter, used the expression "countervailing" strategy, which really meant that US must

develop the capacity to "prevail" at any level of escalation in a nuclear conflict. Supporters of Brown's strategy argued that it had merit for deterrence, although the more sane, in their moments of candour, expressed doubt that a nuclear war could be "surgically controlled." No such doubts cloud the official policy of the Reagan administration. Armed with the primitive belief that God is not only on their side but also guiding their mission, they have developed policies and plans to fight and win a limited, protracted, or all-out nuclear war.

Armageddon and the Bomb

In its most frightening aspect, the Reagan administration couples its warfighting policy with a fundamentalist, religious world view. The end of the world is engrained in the minds of the reborn. Armageddon is not a mere tenuous prophecy, but an absolute prediction. For key members of the administration, Armageddon is the basis of policy. In a radio interview on "Washington Talk" on 23 August 1982, Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger was asked if he believed the world was going to end and, if so, "Will it be by an act of God or an act of man?" Weinberger replied, "I have read the book of Revelation and, yes, I believe the world is going to end-by an act of God, I hope... I worry that we we will not have time to get strong enough... I fear we will not be ready. I think time is running out... but I have faith." (4) Former Interior Secretary James Watt stands on record with the same belief and thus his policies were designed to make the environment expendable.

One hundred religious leaders have accused the Reagan administration of taking the position that "reconciliation with America's adversaries is ultimately futile." (5) At a conference of religious leaders in the Washington Hotel on 23 October 1984, the Christic Institute claimed to have collected eleven statements by Reagan that suggested the imminence of Armageddon. In the second Mondale-Reagan debate, Reagan characteristically brushed this charge aside, but Rabbi Brickner claimed Mr Reagan had "talked about it (Armageddon) in a serious, frightening way." The Internal logic is terrifying, if the world is going to end and if God is on your side, then "an act of God" becomes "an act of God."

In the USSR, one can find a mirror-image rhetoric that replaces God with communism and a mirror-image paranoia about the US. However, the USSR leaders declared a "no first-use" commitment on 15 June 1982. (6)

-The "Final Days"

The current fundamentalist theology of Armageddon is convoluted and complicated. The "born-again" group expressly believes that at present the world is in an age of satanic control (the "evil empire"). Shortly, Soviet, European, Iranian, Arabian, African, and Chinese armies will invade Israel and be totally destroyed, possibly by a nuclear war. A remnant of Israelites will be saved to accept Jesus as their messiah. Christ and an army of saints will then return to earth to punish the unbelievers and destroy the forces of anti-Christ in the "big one", the battle of Armageddon. We have already seen how Caspar Weinberger believes in the "end of the world".(7) Reagan has been quoted as saying: "Never has there been a time in which so many (biblical) prophecies are coming together. There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming, and so forth, but never anything like this"(8), and "Jerry I some-times believe we're heading very fast for Armageddon"(9).

Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority, predicted the Russians would have come from across the Mexican border by 1981, "if Reagan had not been elected in 1980"(10). In an interview with Robert Scheer, in the Los Angeles Times, Falwell stated: "We believe that Russia, because of her need of oil-and she's running out now-is going to move in on the Middle East, and particularly Israel, because of their hatred of the Jew, and that it is at that time that all hell will break out. And it is at that time when I believe there will be some nuclear holocaust on this earth".(11)

The "exact" prophecy of the Bible tells the fundamentalists that their God, who created a fully equipped, fully inhabited universe exactly 5,988 years ago, is about to bring it to an end. Independent fundamentalist ministries such as Second Coming Incorporated produce an unappetising array of television productions and magazine publications-It's Happening Now, Bible Prophecy News, and the Endtime Messenger-that prophesy the final days. Hal Lindsey's book The Late Great Planet Earth has sold over fifteen million copies and won him the title of New York Times's bestselling nonfiction writer. Falwell's television specials, his booklet Nuclear War and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and his book Armageddon and the Coming War with Russia have sold millions, and give the lie to Falwell's later attempts to deny that he associated nuclear war and religious prophecy.(12) In effect, he has marketed the end of the world.

Today, according to the fundamentalists, the world has approached the end of the "Church Age", epitomised by the rise to power of Reaganism, and the signs of the beginning of the "Tribulation" period have begun to appear everywhere: the rise of feminism, the sexual revolution, the divorce rate, legalised abortion, the absence of school prayer, herpes, AIDS, and most of all, communism. This Armageddon doctrine "seems to justify nuclear war as a divine instrument to punish the wicked and complete God's plan for history...In the Armageddon world view, this final era (the battle of Armageddon) is foretold in Holy Scripture, constitutes God's plan for humanity, and cannot be prevented."(13)

Rapture: Saving the Elect

Fundamentalists believe that they will survive the coming Holocaust through a concept termed the "Rapture". The development of this notion began in Scotland, after a young Glaswegian woman claimed to have had a "vision". Darbyites, members of a Scottish fundamentalist Protestant group, produced the major version of the Rapture in the Scofield Reference Bible in the 1820s. According to Scofield, exactly seven years before the final battle, the period of "Tribulation" begins. During the Tribulation, God will take "true christians" bodily away from earth and into heaven.

Many cultures and religions share an "end of the world" notion. The Koran refers to it: "Have faith in Allah and the Last Day-these shall be rewarded" (Koran 4:6). The Bible says, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen.49:1); and "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1). The Rapture is not in the Bible, but Jerry Falwell actually distributes a bumper sticker with the words, "If the driver disappears, grab the wheel."

The Rapture allows Falwell to say in one of his cassette tape sets: "Hey, It's great being a Christian. We have a wonderful future ahead...So we don't need to go to bed at night wondering if someone's going to push the button between now and sunrise." In April 1983, Falwell informed his followers, "Well, nuclear war and the Second Coming of Christ, Armageddon and the Coming war with Russia, what does this have to do and say to me?... None of this should bring fear to your hearts, because we are all going up in the Rapture before any of it occurs."(14)

Jerry Falwell, Ronald Reagan, Caspar Weinberger, and the

rest of the "good" will suddenly vanish; the Soviets will invade Israel; and wood will replace metal through a superadvanced technology of instant transmutation. How could the Bible be wrong. According to Writ, Russia will lose exactly 83 per cent of her soldiers and then be repulsed. The remaining seven years of Tribulation will be occupied entirely with burying Soviet soldiers and burning wooden shafts.

Next, according to Falwell, "the Antichrist will move into the Middle East, place a statue of himself in the Jewish temple holy of holies and demand that the whole world worship him as God." (15) The "nonraptured" world-all Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, atheists, primitives, homosexuals, feminists, pro-abortionists, communists.etc.-will flock to worship anti-Christ. Then the "hero" (Ronald Reagan) will

Contd.



return and, in a nuclear duel in which Armageddon, a city near Jerusalem, becomes ground zero, he will destroy all the followers of anti-Christ. At the Second Coming, Jesus, floating on a white (mushroom-shaped?) cloud, will return to bring the Millenium. After one thousand years of a world of Falwell, Reagan, and Weinberger clones, eternity brings "eternal bliss and joy for those in Heaven, eternal suffering and torment for those in hell", -that is, non-Christians, homosexuals, feminists, communists, etc.

Is Reagan a Believer?

The crux of this issue is whether the most powerful man in the world, the president of the United States, Ronald Reagan, believes all this. Falwell told Robert Scheer of the Los Angeles Times in March 1981 that he and Reagan have discussed biblical prophecy and "that Reagan agrees with him".(16) Reagan led the battle to return prayer to the schools and declared 1983 to be "The Year of the Bible." He has addressed the National Religious Broadcasters convention during each year of his presidency. Reagan invited Jerry Falwell to a private briefing by the National Security Council. Ronald Goodwin, Falwell's second-in command, wrote to their followers, "He (Falwell) met with President Reagan in the White House and the President personally instructed him to thank every member of the Moral Majority for defending the President's programme to save America from Soviet nuclear blackmail".(17)

But Reagan has even more direct linkages with the Moral Majority. Morton Blackwell, special assistant to the president in the Office of Public Liaison, and Paul Weyrich, of the Heritage Foundation, masterminded the successful fundraising campaigns for Reagan sponsored by the political action committees of the New Right. Their activity has extended to the campaigns of Britain's Conservative Party, and created the Coalition for Peace through Security in opposition to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The trans-Atlantic linkages of the Old and New Right converge in the policies which now hold sway in NATO and which subvert attempts for nuclear disarmament and arms control.

The Moral Majority asserts its moral superiority but offers no intellectual analysis of nuclear war. No questions are asked about the notions of Justice or whether war can ever be just. No questions are raised about the strategy or doctrine of nuclear warfighting. The bankrupt assumption of morality based on the oversimplified virtues of family and

faith has neither form nor content. Their church has become the town meeting place for propounding a red-neck theology, tainted by elements of racism and chauvinism. Images of fire and brimstone in-still fear and blind adherence. God and evil are de facto concepts, presented without analysis on justification.

That the two most powerful political figures in the USA, President Reagan and Caspar Weinberger, may be performing their official duties according to the fundamentalist interpretation of the bible propounded by Moral Majority is truly terrifying.

Acknowledgement: This article is an edited extract from F.H.Knelman, 'Reagan, God and the Bomb', Prometheus Books, 700 East Amherst Street, Buffalo, New York 14215, USA. It was first printed in the Ecologist, Vol.17, No.1,1987 with the kind permission of the author and publisher. Prof.F.H.Knelman teaches at the Department of Science and Human Affairs, Concordia University, Montreal.

We felt it was very relevant to reprint it in this issue of ASIAN EXCHANGE and that it was important to bring to the attention of the readers of ASIAN EXCHANGE this edited extract and the book by Prof.Knelman. We have reprinted it here with much thanks to our friends at the Ecologist magazine.

References:

1. D.Ford et al, 'Beyond the Freeze:The Road to Nuclear Sanity', Beacon Press, Boston, Mass.1982
2. CBS Evening News, June 14th ,1981
3. A. Lewis, 'Reagan Calls on God to Support Missile Stand', The Gazette, Montreal, March 13th, 1983, p.133
4. R. Scheer, 'With Enough Shovels:Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War', (Preface) Random House, New York, 1982.
5. New York Times, October 24th, 1984
6. L.S Weiler, 'No First Use: A History', Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 39, No.2, 1983, pp.28-33.
7. Scheer, op.cit.(supra note 5).
8. New York Times, op.cit.(supra note 5).
9. Boston Globe, May 2nd. 1982.
10. F.Fitzgerald, 'The Reverend Jerry Falwell', New Yorker, May 18th, 1981, p. 132.
11. Scheer, op.cit. (supra note 4)
12. New York Times, op. cit. (supra note 5).
13. New York Times, op. cit. (supra note 5).
14. L.Kowolowski, 'Rapture'. Sanity, July 1984, p.31.
15. Ibid. p.32.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.

Book Reviews :

The Stones Cry out - A Cambodian Childhood 1975-1980, by Molyda Szymusiak published by Hill and Wang, New York 1986.

"The Stones Cry Out" by Molyda Szymusiak is an account of her childhood years spent after the take over of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge. It was originally published in French in 1984 as "Les Pierres Crieront". The English translation by Linda Coverdale was published two years later. Molyda Szymusiak (her adopted name), the twelve year old daughter of a high Cambodian official was still leading a 'relatively normal life' (according to information on the book's dust jacket) when the Khmer Rouge seized power in April 1975. Her family of seven members together with the family of her aunt and uncle numbering twenty in all, were among the people driven to the countryside when the Khmer Rouge forcibly emptied Phnom Penh. Molyda now lives in France and was one of the few lucky ones who not only managed to survive the terror of the Khmer Rouge but live to write about it.

The first problem for Molydas family was to keep their identity a secret from the Khmer Rouge who would execute them if their 'bourgeoise' background was revealed. From then on, it is a struggle as the family gets accustomed to living under constant fear, learning to survive the hardship of manual labour overwork and hunger. They take on peasant names and garb to conceal their identity. Her family through all the ordeals somehow manages to remain together and be of comfort to each other. This situation however does not last long, one by one the entire family except Molyda become victims of the extreme food shortages and die of starvation and sickness.

This book is not simply a personal story of a twelve year old girl from a doomed family, but a portrayal of a people subjected to humiliation, robbed of their dignity through all the misdirected, wrong policies of the Khmer Rouge, which was constantly assuring them that these sacrifices were being made for the country. The fanaticism of the Khmer Rouge cadres, their blind faith in the 'Angka' without any realisation of the human costs, coupled with the relative inexperience of the cadres in running the country, the absolute power they had over the lives of the people resulted in utter chaos. People were not even permitted to show human emotions for each other. Even falling in love and

getting married without permission resulted in death. "We'd become quite skilled, so the bundles of grass piled up, but then as if in unspoken agreement, we moderated our pace, fifteen bundles were quite enough. If we worked too fast, he'd make as do twenty. We returned to camp at noon, but via a different path. When we came to a small clearing where the grass had been trampled, we were horrified to see, lying under the trees, five or six naked couples holding hands their throats cut our guard who walked at the head of our group, tossed back over his shoulder. 'They got married without permission.' How did he know and why did he take us by this place? The bodies were still quite fresh without the slightest trace of decomposition which begins so quickly in our climate. He knew where he was leading us. 'Rules must be obeyed.'" Mistrust of each other and spying on neighbours was encouraged.

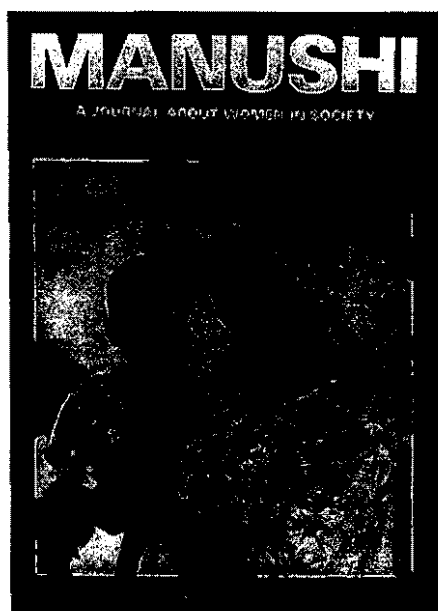
Molyda herself matures from a child into a little woman through all this harrowing experiences as she retains her sensitivity and humanity. People had been so brutalized and were becoming totally dehumanized, driven by hunger and starvation. A woman digs up human corpses to satisfy her hunger. "A baby was dying over at our neighbours. She was a very close neighbor, because we all shared the same roof, seperated by a blanket hanging from the ceiling. The child's mother suggested to my mother that they eat the baby when it died". "If you don't denounce me , I will give you half." When Molyda was reaching fifteen years of age, Vietnamese forces occupied Kampuchea which most people welcomed. She managed to escape to the refugee camp in Thailand (along with three of her cousins, all younger to her), from where they found asylum in France.

There is no question as to the necessity of recounting such accounts of personal suffering, not only as an outlet for the emotions of the victimized people but also as a remainder for the future. It also proves how dangerous running a country can be by individuals who carry through drastic changes, with a fanatical anti-intellectualism borne out of their own middle class backgrounds and consequently with no regard to history and the objective condition of the people. Put more simply, the Khmer Rouge were perhaps a cadre with only beliefs but no humanity.

To find answers to questions about how a 'peace loving and calm people' as the Cambodians are always portrayed inflicted such savagery upon their own people, one should go further than this book, deeper into Cambodian history prior

to the Khmer Rouge. We need also to ask and answer a lot more other questions. Questions such as, when did the brutalisation of the people start? Was it just Pol Pot and the communists? Why and who overthrew Sihanouk, a man who tried, though unsuccessfully, to keep Cambodia on a path of non-alignment and neutrality? How is it that those responsible for the holocaust and brutality even long before Pol Pot, can today go around pretending, as if they are elder statesmen? One's mind goes back among others to Nixon and Kissinger. Individuals who go around counselling the world, writing wise newspaper columns and who are feted in world capitals, though they still carry the blood of innocents on their hand; villains, who had ordered the 'saturation bombing' of Cambodia. Bombing raids, that were largely carried out on civilian targets and which were cynically code named 'breakfast', 'supper' etc. Then there are others like Pol Pot who is now supported as a "freedom fighter". What kind of morality does the world have or even claim to have as the twentieth century draws to a close? Is there any racism involved in treating the suffering of the Cambodian people and the survivors of Pol Pot's holocaust differently from the survivors of Nazism? Molyda Szymusiak's story even if it does not answer these questions, at least tells us what happened at the end of the tunnel for the Cambodian people. The tragedy for the Cambodian people is that there is still no light at the end of the tunnel.

Pushpa Somaiah



Available from Manushi Trust, C-202 Lajpat Nagar I, New Delhi
-110024

Working Women in South East Asia - Development, Subordination and Emancipation, Noeleen Heyzer, Open University Press, 1986.

This is a useful book and a very welcome contribution both to the literature on Women and Development and to feminist perspectives on Working Women. Noeleen Heyzer in her preface to the book says, "In a society where the academic tradition is relatively new and people are (healthily) more action-oriented, I am always confronted by the question whether writing about these issues makes any difference. I have not resolved this problem but have felt within myself the pressure to write in order to capture, clarify, reflect and think. This book is an effort at sharing these thoughts and reflections." In spite of her doubts, it is good that she wrote and presented this book. In Asian societies and largely ex-colonial societies where (no matter whether academic tradition is new or not), the intelligentsia is at best spineless and cowardly and at the worst collaborative, in terms of a system preserving role that perpetrates the repression and injustice, it is easy to become anti-intellectual. It is easy to relegate the need to think and analyse, in a manner crucial to social change and the emancipation of people suffering under layers of control and subordination. Such anti-intellectualism gets reinforced, when a kind of "action" mania, generated largely by middle-class guilt complexes, tries to terrorise against necessary theoretical and intellectual activity. All necessary thinking, theorising, reformulation, attempts at holism that inspire and make for creative social intervention get termed "academic". It is a situation that is sad and depressing, worrying but not fortunately alarming. It is good therefore people like Noeleen Heyzer write and share and it is therefore necessary to make the above statement in noticing her book here in these pages.

Her book is organized into eight chapters, with a really good and extensive bibliography - useful as a resource on its own. The first chapter is 'Women and Development: A Theoretical Overview' and is truly excellent, done in a very concise manner in less than ten pages. This section also includes a useful section on "The Debate on the 'Informal' Sector". The 'informal' sector is presently in a way having a resurgence in terms of writing on it. Whether this 'resurgence' is due to a more visible presence of 'the informal economy' itself - given the prolonged crises in most developing countries, or the fact that 'the informal economy' is gaining normatively in new meaning and value, with some even going to the extent of calling it 'the peoples economy', it is presently not very clear. Some sort of 'debate' does seem to emerge or potentially to emerge, particularly in the context of evolving

alternatives, survival strategies and articulating frameworks for less externally dependent economic growth. Even if Noeleen is not getting into all these, her review of the debate on the informal sector and the questions she raises are useful.

The next chapters cover 'Women and Rural Change', 'Women, Migration and Income Generation', 'The Trade in Female Sexuality', 'Women and the Plantation Sector', 'Women and the Relocation of the Textile Industry', with the final two chapters covering 'Subordination and Emancipation' and 'Women's Organization and Mobilization'. In last chapter she makes a quick review of NGOs and Grassroots Women's Movements in South East Asia and looks at some examples of organization and mobilization. It is true that this chapter by itself could be subject of a book - a book that is useful to social activists and researchers and which can represent serious scholarship of social relevance of the kind Noeleen has attempted through her book. Her last chapter however seems a bit too condensed, concise and perhaps a little abrupt. She concludes by saying,

"The task ahead is certainly to spread the ethics of care and concern. This concern entails an alternative conception or vision of what is possible in human society. It is a vision in which women and men will be treated as of equal worth; a vision in which every one will be responded to and no one will be left to struggle at subsistence level. The implementation of this vision requires certain reordering of human activities in terms of different priorities which will often conflict with major vested interests which will act to prevent fundamental changes from taking place. The struggle is how to ensure that sensitivity and care are values that will make for the functioning of alternative organisations. Only when economic, social and political arrangements of society are no longer taken for granted and are formed according to the ethics of care, concern and sharing will there be the erosion, even if slowly, of discriminatory social formations and gender inequality."

Echoes of a slightly rosy-eyed idealism and a vision of change rooted in gradualism? Maybe, but not necessarily negative in itself. Yet one needs to shape the vision and make continuous impact on actual social reality, from a perspective of social change as a continuum, which can create the needed changes in consciousness which in turn can reorder inequitable, subordinated relationships and thus contribute to more fundamental social transformation. @

Food As A Human Right, edited by Asbjorn Eide, Wenche Barth Eide, Susantha Goonatillake, Joan Gussow and Omawale, United Nations University, 1984.

This book is a compilation of the papers presented at a workshop organised by the UNU in 1981, which aimed at exploring the possibilities and benefits of approaching the food problem from a human rights perspective, through an 'interparadigmatic' dialogue among a number of scholars from the disciplines of international law, social sciences and nutrition.

The workshop was conducted more as a brain-storming rather than to arrive at any consensus about how to achieve the marriage of food and human rights. Various scholars presented different approaches to the problem of food, drawing on the nutrition, development and human rights fields. Anyway, the thread running through this book can be summarised as follows : Humans need an adequate correct and regular supply of nutrients that constitute their food. However food supply is filtered through socioeconomic processes which deny an adequate supply to many while providing excess to a few. This volume looks at the possible remedies to the pressing problem of hunger through a human rights approach. Nevertheless, the success of the approach depends very much on advocacy at the national and international level, and based on obligations that nation states will accept. This book represents an attempt to induce dialogues on norm-setting with regard to the right to food, and to make nations responsible for the realization of the right to food for all.

The book consists of four broad sections. Section I examines the causes of hunger at both a case-study and theoretical level, which encompasses the particular economic, social and political dynamics of peripheral capitalism, the nature of the world economic system, and the ecological survival of the globe as well as the internationalisation of the food system leading to both hunger and denial of cultural identity by the elimination of traditional food habit. Section II reviews at both a theoretical level and a level of actual practice, the manner in which the legal arguments in the human rights field can be combined with the 'developmentalist's concern' with food. Section III evaluates the successes and failures of some examples of international action. Finally, section IV concludes by bringing us back to the central theme the usefulness of viewing the food problematique through a human rights lens. ☐

About the Contributors

Shiv Visvanathan and Rajni Kothari are at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, India. Their article on Bhopal first appeared in the Lokayan Bulletin, Special Double Issue, Vol.3, Nos.4 & 5, and from which it has been reprinted in Asian Exchange. We at ARENA thank Shiv Visvanathan and Rajni Kothari for their contribution.

Tsui Lai Si (Maria) is a Research Associate at the ARENA H.K. Centre. Prior to joining ARENA, as the International Relations Secretary of the H.K. University Students' Union she organized in Hong Kong a very successful programme to raise awareness about and funds for the famine victims of Negros called 'Tears are not Enough'. Her visit in August, 1986, as a staff member of ARENA to Negros Occidental, to gather material for writing this article was also for her a personal statement. Apart from her article on Negros, she took care of almost all aspects of the production of this issue of Asian Exchange. We are fortunate to benefit by her dedication and diligence.

Choi Hang Keung is Co-Director of the Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), Hong Kong. We deeply appreciate his painstaking background research for this article, spirit of collegiality and putting up in good humour with the long, arduous process that it takes at ARENA for a Bulletin to be produced, from concept to final printing. We thank him for allowing us editorially to highlight and emphasise certain parts of his article. For this we also take editorial responsibility.

As always this issue of Asian Exchange had the help and inputs of several others:

Smitu Kothari and Harsh Sethi, the Editors of Lokayan Bulletin, New Delhi, for inspiring this issue of Asian Exchange and permitting us to use the article on Bhopal.

Maitet Diokno and Clarence Pascual of IBON Data Bank for several useful comments on the article on Negros.

Pushpa Somaiah for her book review contributions, checking, correcting and editing various parts of the Bulletin.

Beatrice Lee, Haretta Chick and Daley Lee for their special and patient contributions in handling the practical production aspects of the Bulletin.

Lawrence Surendra

sipri

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

sipri

Herbicides in War
The long-term ecological and human consequences

Herbicides in War

The Long-term Ecological and Human Consequences

edited by
Arthur H. Westing



Taylor
&
Francis

sipri

a **sipri** publication from



Taylor & Francis
London and Philadelphia

